

The Ernest E. Kennedy Center

Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective April 14, 2003

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

We understand that information about you may be sensitive and personal. It is because of this that we are fully committed to:

- **Collecting and handling information about you in a responsible, professional, and ethical manner**
- **Protecting and safeguarding your information to the best of our ability**
- **Ensuring information that is kept is as accurate as possible**
- **Abiding by all laws and regulations governing privacy and security**

When you enter services at the Kennedy Center, a client record is put together for you. Information is kept in both electronic and hardcopy formats. Typically, this information includes such things as:

- Name, address, age, race, ethnicity, etc.
- How you got referred to us and who referred you
- What you are seeking services for
- A history of things concerning your background, health, family, alcohol and drug use, etc.
- Diagnosis
- Recommendations for services
- Treatment plans including specific goals and objectives
- Progress Notes
- Payment and billing information

This record serves as:

- A legal medical record / document
- A basis for planning and tracking your care and services with the Kennedy Center
- A means of communicating among ourselves and other appropriate service providers
- A basis for accurate billing and collections
- A source of data for determining successes and outcomes
- A source of data for program and service planning

Understanding what is in your record and how this information is used helps us to provide you with better accountable services and it helps you to feel more confident in the care and services you receive.

Your Specific Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of the Kennedy Center, the information belongs to you. In accordance with federal laws (42 CFR Part 2 and 45 CFR 164) you have the right to:

- Access, inspect and copy your record
- Request that the information in your record be amended
- Obtain a listing of information that has been disclosed to others
- Request restrictions on the use of your information
- Request that we communicate with you in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, requesting that we not call you at home or that we send mail to a specific address
- Revoke your authorizations (written permissions) that allows us to disclose information to others
- File a complaint if you feel we have not met our responsibilities in the handling of your privacy

Our Responsibilities

We are required by law to:

- Maintain and safeguard your privacy to the best of our ability
- Notify you of our privacy practices
- Abide by all applicable laws concerning privacy and confidentiality
- Attempt to accommodate reasonable request you may make concerning your information
- Notify you if we are unable to accommodate any of your requests
- Notify you of any changes to our privacy policies, procedures, and practices

Who Do These Privacy Laws and Regulations Apply To?

The laws, regulations, policies, procedures and practices concerning privacy and confidentiality apply to anyone who works for and/or represents the Kennedy Center. This includes all of our employees, contractors, students / interns, and volunteers.

When We Can and Can't Disclose Information About You?

Generally, we may not say to a person outside of our agency that you attend services here, or disclose any information identifying you as a client *except in the following cases*:

- You give us written authorization
- In case of a medical emergency
- In cases of suspected child abuse
- When a crime is committed on premises or against one of our staff
- When we receive a court order
- To qualified personnel in the course of research, auditing, or program evaluation
- To law enforcement subject to certain requirements
- To the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

For Treatment Purposes

The Kennedy Center provides its services in an environment of teamwork. As a result, we will share information about you with each other in the course of your treatment / services. For example, a counselor may need to discuss specific things about you with other counselors or their supervisor. This is to ensure that you receive the best care and services possible.

For Billing Purposes

We may use your information in order to bill and receive payment for the services we provide. For example, we may have to contact Medicaid or your insurance company in order for you to receive certain services and for them to be able to pay us for those services. Typically, they require us to disclose to them the types of services you are receiving, your diagnosis, your treatment goals and your progress.

For Operational Purposes

We may also use your information in the course of operating our facility, programs and services. For example, supervisors and managers may have access to your information in order to make sure you are receiving appropriate services and so we may plan for services and programs in the future. In addition, we have a quality assurance program that conducts audits of records to ensure accuracy, administers surveys to determine the successes of our services, and generates numerous reports concerning the status of our clients and services.

Other Service Providers and Business Associates

Many of our clients are referred to us by other service providers and many times we refer clients to others. In most all cases, we will ask for you to specifically authorize us to communicate with them. However, we do have written agreements with many of these providers that allow us to share basic information concerning your referral and status. For example, if you are referred to us by the Department of Social Services, we may notify them that you have made your appointment with us, that you have participated, etc. However, we may not talk to them about your diagnosis, your specific history, etc. unless we have written authorization from you to do so.

Others that may come in contact with your information are covered by written agreements that state they will abide by applicable laws and that they cannot release the information they have to others without your written permission.

These arrangements help us to provide you with the best possible services while helping to maintain your privacy and confidentiality.

Family Members, Significant Others and Personal Representatives

In most cases, in order for us to talk with your family members or significant others about your care and services, we would need to have your written authorization. If you have someone who has been legally appointed as your personal representative and they have written evidence of this, we may communicate certain information with them.

Minimum Information Necessary

Whenever the Kennedy Center discloses your information to others – whether that is internally or externally – we will only provide the minimum amount necessary to fulfill the purpose of that disclosure. For example, if you have a medical emergency, we may disclose to a paramedic that you have a history of seizures or we know that you are taking a certain medication, but we would not need to tell them about your DUI three years ago.

To Report A Problem or For More Information

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated or compromised you may file a complaint with either the Kennedy Center Privacy Officer or the Office for Civil Rights:

**Kennedy Center Privacy Officer
(843) 719 – 3007
306 Airport Drive
Moncks Corner, South Carolina 29461**

**Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201**