

# Bowdoin College Counseling Service

## Notice of Privacy Practices

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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.

**Explanation of Forms.** Bowdoin College Counseling Service handles clinical information about you, and law regulates how that information is handled. To comply with the law, Bowdoin College Counseling Service asks you to receive this notice and, in some circumstances, to sign an authorization form.

Bowdoin College Counseling Service will not use or disclose information about you without an authorization including for the purposes essential to providing care (treatment and operation of Bowdoin College Counseling Service).

An authorization allows Bowdoin College Counseling Service to use and disclose information about you for any reason that is indicated by you in the authorization. Bowdoin College Counseling Service may not refuse to treat you for refusing to sign the authorization. Other rules about your rights regarding medical information are described in this notice.

**Types of Uses and Disclosures.** Medical information about you may be used by Bowdoin College Counseling Service for treatment and health care operations. Treatment includes consultation, diagnosis, provision of care, and referrals. Health care operations include things Bowdoin College Counseling Services does to assess quality of care, train staff, and manage Bowdoin College Counseling Service business. Some examples of disclosures and use are as follows:

- *Example of Treatment Disclosure.* Bowdoin College Counseling Service may disclose clinical information about you to your treating physician, a hospital or other providers to help them diagnose and treat an injury or illness.
- *Example of Health Care Operations Use.* Bowdoin College Counseling Service may use clinical information about you when it hires new staff whose training requires information about the medical needs of our patients.

Bowdoin College Counseling Service will not disclose information about you without an authorization except as required by law.

Bowdoin College Counseling Service may also contact you to provide appointment reminders or cancellations. We may leave this limited information via an email or voicemail at the numbers provided by you unless you request a restriction regarding this method of communicating your protected health information.

**Special Notice-** If you are covered by private insurance, your off-campus treatment may be disclosed through an EOB to the guarantor. You must notify us to make alternative payment arrangements if you do not wish for services to be billed through your private insurance.

**Other Uses and Disclosures.** We may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include:

- *As Required By Law.* We may use or disclose your protected health information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law.
- *Public Health.* We may disclose your protected health information for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information. The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability. We may also disclose your protected health information to another government agency that is collaborating with the public health authority.
- *Health Oversight.* We may disclose protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.
- *Abuse or Neglect.* We may disclose your protected health information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose your protected health information if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information.
- *Food and Drug Administration.* Bowdoin College Counseling Service may disclose a patient's health information to a person subject to the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration if that person has responsibility to report adverse events, product defects or problems, or biologic product deviations; to track products; to enable product recalls, repairs or replacements; or, to conduct post marketing surveillance.
- *Legal Proceedings.* We may disclose protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process.
- *Law Enforcement.* We may also disclose protected health information, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes. These law enforcement purposes include (1) legal processes and otherwise required by law, (2) limited information requests for identification and location purposes, (3) pertaining to victims of a crime, (4) suspicion that death has occurred as a result of criminal conduct, (5) in the event that a crime occurs on the premises of Bowdoin College Counseling Service, and (6) medical emergency (not on Bowdoin College Counseling Service premises) and it is likely that a crime has occurred.

- *Research.* We may disclose your protected health information to researchers when the research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your protected health information.
- *Criminal Activity.* Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, we may disclose your protected health information, if we believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public
- *Military Activity and National Security.* When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose protected health information of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel (1) for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities; (2) for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs of eligibility for benefits, or (3) to foreign military authority if you are a member of that foreign military services. We may also disclose your protected health information to authorized federal officials for conducting national security and intelligence activities, including for the provision of protective services to the President or others legally authorized.
- *Workers' Compensation.* Your protected health information may be disclosed by us as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally established programs.
- *Required Uses and Disclosures.* Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the law.

**Others Involved in Your Healthcare.** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your protected health information that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may use or disclose protected health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or any other person that is responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death. Finally, we may use or disclose your protected health information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts and to coordinate uses and disclosures to family or other individuals involved in your health care.

**Authorized Uses and Disclosures.** Additional uses and disclosure may be made if you have given written authorization, which may be revoked at any time in writing delivered to the Director, except to the extent Bowdoin College Counseling Services acted in reliance on the authorization.

**Restrictions.** You have the right to request restrictions on the use and disclosure of medical information about you; however, Bowdoin College Counseling Services will only be bound by the restrictions if Bowdoin College Counseling Service notifies you that it agrees with them.

**Confidentiality.** You have the right to have Bowdoin College Counseling Service use only confidential means of communicating with you about medical information. This means you may have information delivered to you at a certain time or place, or in a manner that keeps your information confidential.

**Access.** You have the right to see and receive a copy of information about you kept by Bowdoin College Counseling Service under most circumstances.

**Amendment.** You have the right to have Bowdoin College Counseling Service amend its records of information about you. Bowdoin College Counseling Services may refuse to amend information that is accurate, that was created by someone else, or is not disclosable to you.

**Accounting.** You have the right to see a list of certain disclosures of medical information about you by Bowdoin College Counseling Service, which includes the purposes and recipients of the information.

**Copy.** You have the right to receive a paper copy of this notice.

**Privacy Notice.** Bowdoin College Counseling Service is required by law to keep clinical information about you private and to give you this notice. Bowdoin College Counseling Services must abide by this notice; however, Bowdoin College Counseling Service reserves the right to amend this notice and make such change applicable to all clinical information maintained by Bowdoin College Counseling Service. Bowdoin College Counseling Service will provide a revised notice to clients by posting the new notice in the waiting room of the Counseling Service and on our website.

**Complaints.** You may complain to Bowdoin College Counseling Service if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by giving a written complaint to the Privacy Officer at Counseling Services, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME Tel: (207) 725-3145 Fax (207) 725-3876.

You may also complain to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bowdoin College Counseling Service will not retaliate against you for making a complaint.

**Effective Date.** This notice is effective from January 1, 2007 until revised by Bowdoin College Counseling Service.