

POLICY FOR REQUESTING TO REVIEW OR COPY YOUR MENTAL HEALTH RECORDS

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“The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule provides consumers with important privacy rights and protections with respect to their health information, including important controls over how their health information is used and disclosed by health plans and health care providers. Ensuring strong privacy protections is critical to maintaining individuals’ trust in their health care providers and willingness to obtain needed health care services, and these protections are especially important where very sensitive information is concerned, such as mental health information. At the same time, the Privacy Rule recognizes circumstances arise where health information may need to be shared to ensure the patient receives the best treatment and for other important purposes, such as for the health and safety of the patient or others. The Rule is carefully balanced to allow uses and disclosures of information—including mental health information—for treatment and these other purposes with appropriate protections.” -U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

In addition, Washington State has laws protecting your mental health records. To review those rights, please refer to the Revised Code of Washington for details.

By law you are allowed, in most circumstances, to obtain a copy or to review your patient records upon the receipt of a written request. Verbal requests are generally not sufficient means to request records. I prefer to review records with clients in person so that I can address any questions you may have. This can be done during normal business hours. If you would like a copy for your records, please submit a dated written request including your printed full name, date of birth, date of the request, specific items you would like requested and your signature. In order to best safeguard your confidentiality, these documents will be mailed to you directly or you may schedule a time to pick them up in person. I generally will not fax or email these records due to lack of confidentiality.

According to WAC 246-08-400 I may charge a reasonable fee for providing the health care information and is not required to permit examination or copying until the fee is paid.” Fees must be paid prior to copying and obtaining records. The fee for obtaining records is \$26 clerical fee plus \$1.17 for the first 30 pages and \$0.88 for each additional page. Records will be released within 15 business days of receipt of the fees due. Records which are requested but not picked up within 30 business days after the date of request will be destroyed. You will be required to resubmit your request along with additional records fees if you would like to obtain records as copies will have to be processed again.