

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

The term “you” as used in this document refers to you personally or to the parent of a minor child or to a client’s guardian.

Understanding your Case Record/Personal Information

As part of the services you receive, this organization originates and maintains case records describing your history, problems, services, and any plans for future service provision. This information serves as:

- A basis for planning services
- A means of communication among the professionals who contribute to your service plan;
- A means by which a funding source or third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- A tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the service we render and the outcomes we achieve
- A tool in educating social service professionals

Your Information Rights

Although your case record is the physical property of Adoption Resources, the information belongs to you.

You have the right to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your personal information that may be used to make decisions about your services. Usually, this includes case records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. To inspect and/or obtain a copy of personal information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing.

A summary of your information may be provided; if you request a copy of the information we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request.

We may deny your request to inspect and/or copy your personal information in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to personal information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another licensed professional will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

You have the right to amend. If you believe that information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have a right to request an amendment for as long as the information is maintained by Adoption Resources.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- Was not created by us
- Is not part of the information kept by or for Adoption Resources
- Is not part of the information you would be permitted to inspect and/or copy
- Is accurate and complete.

You have the right to an accounting of disclosures. To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12 month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing that list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time.

You have the right to request restrictions or limitations on the information we use or disclose about you for service provision, payment, or human service operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the personal information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your service plan or for payment, like a family member or friend.

We are not required to agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide emergency treatment.

In your request, you must tell us 1) what information you want to limit; 2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both; and 3) to whom you want the limits to apply.

You have the right to request confidential communications. You may request that we communicate with you about personal matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must be in writing and specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time.

All requests to inspect and/or copy your personal information, amend your personal information, receive an accounting of disclosures, restrict or limit disclosures of personal information, or requests for confidential communications must be in writing, must specify the dates of service or range of dates of service to which your request pertains, and should be directed to:

Betsy Hochberg, LICSW
Adoption Resources
1430 Main Street
Waltham, MA 02451
1-800-533-4346

Our Responsibilities

Adoption Resources is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your personal information
- Provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms of this notice
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate personal information by alternative means or alternative locations.

We will not use or disclose your personal information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

Changes to This Notice

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for health information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future.

Examples of Disclosures for Service Provision, Payment, and Operations

We will use your personal information for provision of services. For example, information obtained by a social worker may be used to determine the course of your service. We may also provide your other professionals with copies of various reports that will assist with overall services.

We will use your personal information for payment. For example, a bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your services.

We will use your personal information for standard human service operations. For example, members of the human service staff, the utilization review committee, the quality improvement manager, or quality improvement team may utilize information in your case record to assess the services provided, as well as outcomes of your case and others like it. This information will be used to continually improve the effectiveness of the services provided by Adoption Resources.

Other Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures

Business Associates: Some services are provided by Adoption Resources through contracts with business associates.

Examples include transcription, auditing, and data aggregation. To protect your personal information, we require the business associate to properly safeguard your information.

Communication with family: Human service professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend, or any other person you identify, personal information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

Marketing and Fundraising: We may contact you to provide information about Adoption Resources services that may be of interest to you. We may contact you as part of a fundraising effort.

Workers' Compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public Health: As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

Law enforcement: We may disclose information for law enforcement purposes, mandated reporting, or in response to a valid subpoena, as required by law.

Mandated Reporting: If as Adoption Resources professional has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse/neglect, elder abuse, or abuse/neglect of a disabled person has occurred, they are mandated to report it to the proper state authorities.

Uses and Disclosure of Information that Requires Your Written Authorization

Information that state law recognizes as "privileged" (sensitive) can only be shared in administrative and medical proceedings with your written permission. Sensitive information includes information that relates to domestic violence counseling, sexual assault counseling, mental illness or retardation, confidential details of psychotherapy, drug or alcohol dependency/abuse, venereal disease, abortion, and HIV/AIDS.

To Report a Complaint:

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may contact the person listed below.

Amy Donahue, Privacy Officer
Adoption Resources
1430 Main Street
Waltham, MA 02451
781-647-5327

All complaints must be submitted in writing. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

Effective Date: 8/1/2004; 2/1/2005; 1/5/2006