**Behavioral Health Providers Sharing Your Information:**

**What You Need to Know!**

## As a patient, you have the right to choose whether your provider can share your Behavioral Health information with other providers. It is your decision what information is given out and to whom.

**How is My Health Information Shared?**

**Behavioral Health information refers to mental health or substance use disorders and/or treatment.**

Health information can be shared in many ways. It may be shared by fax, phone, or secure email. Many healthcare providers are now using

electronic health records. Some of these providers

may be able to share health information using Health Information Exchange, or HIE, which is a faster way to communicate. No matter how health information is shared, the goal is to give patients safer, more coordinated care.

**We want to help you make informed choices about sharing your Behavioral Health information. Please feel free to talk to us about any concerns you may have.**

# How Does Sharing My Health Information Help Me?

## When information is shared with the right people at the right time, providers can treat serious problems quickly and safely.

**Better Care Coordination**If your doctor refers you to someone else, both providers can agree on a clear, sensible plan for your treatment.

**Benefits of Sharing Health Information:**

 **Better Care Coordination**

 **More Efficient Care**

 **Safer Care**

**More Efficient Care**Imagine not having to repeat your history or medication list to each provider, saving time and keeping the focus on what’s most important to you during your current visit. Also, sharing information allows your doctor to get test results from another provider, so you aren’t sent for the same test twice.

**Safer Care**Healthcare providers can make better decisions about your medicines if they know what medicines you already take, and what medicines you might have taken in the past that

caused a bad reaction or didn’t work well for you. If you go to the emergency room, doctors can often give you better care when they can get information from your other healthcare providers.

# How Is My Health Information Kept Safe?

There are laws that all healthcare providers have to follow to keep health information safe and private. Everyone who has permission to see your health information also has rules about what they are allowed to do with it. If they do the wrong thing, they can face serious penalties.

There are special laws about managing sensitive health information. Providers must protect your Behavioral Health information by taking extra steps before sharing it with other providers.

There are also laws about how to keep electronic health information private and secure. It must always be protected by a password, and information that moves over the internet must be “encrypted”

**Encrypted means that information is in code. Only the computers that send it, receive it, or store it can break the code and see what’s there.**

# Can I Limit What Is Shared?

You should talk to each of your healthcare providers about how they share information and what your choices are. You can choose to give permission to some providers and not others. You may want to keep certain information just between you and your Behavioral Health provider. If you

do not want your Behavioral Health information to be shared, make those wishes known. Some providers may ask you to fill out a form, called a consent form; for other providers, you may only need to talk about your choice.

**A consent form is a written record of your choices about sharing your health information.**

# Can I Decide Who My Behavioral Health Provider Gets Information From?

YES. You can say who your Behavioral Health provider has permission to request information from.

# Can I Decide Who Can Get Information From My Behavioral Health Provider?

YES. You can say which healthcare providers have permission to get your Behavioral Health information.

# Do I Need to Decide Today?

NO. Take your time to read the information. Have a conversation with your providers and ask any questions you may have. Think about your choices and make an informed decision. When you are ready, share your decision with us.

# Can I Change My Mind?

YES. You can always change your mind about whether your Behavioral Health provider has permission to share your information. You might need to complete a new consent form. But if a provider has already shared information, they cannot take it back.

# Why Can’t I Be The One To Share My Information?

You can, but sometimes it’s better for healthcare providers to communicate directly with each other. This allows them to share and review information prior to your visit, saving valuable time at your appointment. They can be sure to ask the right questions and gather important information

about your health.