

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES/STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

This notice includes a description of how medical information may be used and disclosed and how this information is accessed. Please review it carefully.

1. Program Overview

Mercy House is a community based center offering intensive outpatient mental health and drug and alcohol counseling. Mercy House also offers individual, family and couples counseling as well. We are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health to provide outpatient services for drug and alcohol counseling.

2. Confidentiality

Federal and state law and regulations protect the confidentiality of your treatment record. The principal purpose of maintaining information about you is to document your assessment, intervention, and follow-up activities. The highest professional standards will be adhered to by Mercy House in maintaining your record.

The two federal laws that protect your health information are the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the Confidentiality Law 42 C.F.R part 2. Under these laws, Mercy House of Meadville, Inc. and your counselor may not inform others that you attend Mercy House or disclose any other protected information except as permitted by federal law.

DISCLOSURES OF INFORMATION

Under federal and state regulations, certain disclosures of information may be made:

1. When the client consents in writing. Any such written consent may be revoked in writing as well as with a verbal request.
2. Pursuant to an agreement with a qualified service organization/business associate.
3. To other mental health practitioners who are involved in providing your mental health care, as long as information does not pertain to substance abuse. **Substance abuse treatment releases to third parties are restricted to: with clients consent—nature of project, whether or not the client is in treatment ,the prognosis of the client, a brief description of the progress of the client, a short statement as to whether the client has relapsed into drug or alcohol abuse and the frequency of such a relapse.**
4. When the disclosure is allowed by a valid court order. Client will be advised of disclosure as soon as possible.
5. When the disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency or when the disclosure is made in a non-identifiable form to qualified personnel for research, audit, or program evaluation. Client will be advised of disclosure as soon as possible.
6. For research, audit or evaluations.

Violation of the Federal and state law and regulations by Mercy House is a crime. Suspected violations may be reported to appropriate authorities. You may complain to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated under HIPAA. You will not be retaliated against for filing such a complaint.

3. Quality Management

With your consent, Mercy House staff may follow-up with you by mailed questionnaire and/or telephone to evaluate the effectiveness of our program and your satisfaction with our services. This contact will assist us in monitoring and improving the quality of the program.

4. Your Rights

Under HIPAA you have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your treatment information. Mercy House may not use or disclose any information which you have restricted except as necessary in a medical emergency. Client will be advised of disclosure as soon as possible.

You have the right to request that we communicate with you by alternative means or at an alternative location. Mercy House will accommodate such requests that are reasonable and will not request an explanation from you. Under HIPAA you also have the right

Mercy House of Meadville, Inc. 13180 Leslie Road, Ste. 2, Meadville, Pa 16335

to inspect and copy your own health information maintained by Mercy House of Meadville, except to the extent that the information contains psychotherapy notes or information compiled for use in a civil, criminal or administrative proceeding or in other limited circumstances. Such requests are to be made in writing. Access will be provided no later than thirty days after receipt of the request. If the requested information is not maintained or accessible at the program's site, then the program has sixty days to process the request. A reasonable fee for copying may be imposed.

Under HIPAA you also have the right, with some exceptions, to amend health care information maintained in your records, and to request and receive an accounting of disclosures of your health related information made by Mercy House during the six years prior to your treatment. You also have a right to receive a paper copy of this notice.

5. Mercy House's Duties

Mercy House of Meadville, Inc. is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. Mercy House of Meadville is required by law to abide by the terms of this notice. Mercy House of Meadville reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and to make new notice provisions effective for all protected health information it maintains.

6. Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Mercy House clients have the right to file complaints and grievances about services received. Complaints and grievances may be filed by contacting facility director, Cindy Kightlinger, and submitting the complaint in writing to Mercy House of Meadville. Upon receipt of a complaint or grievance, the facility director will conduct an investigation of the circumstances leading to the complaint and provide a response within seven business days, in accordance with established policies and procedures. Clients also have the right to file an appeal of any decisions made by EAPC in response to a complaint or grievance by submitting a written appeal request. The facility director will review appeals, and a formal response to the appeal will be issued within fourteen working days, in accordance with established policies and procedures. Clients have the right at any time to request a full copy of the policies and procedures related to the filing and resolving of complaints.

My signature below means I have read this document, understand it, have been given the opportunity to ask questions for clarification and have received a copy of this notice.

Print Client Name

Signature

Date

Print Witness Name

Signature

Date

This notice became effective on April 14, 2003. For further information, call Mercy House of Meadville, Inc. at 814-337-6180 and ask for the Facility Director .