



SIMS

SIMS Foundation P.O. Box 2152 Austin, TX 78768-2152

Confidential Clinical Numbers: Phone 512-494-1007

Fax 512-542-9965

www.simsfoundation.org

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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

Your health record contains personal information about you and your health. This information about you that may identify you and that relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health condition and related health care services is referred to as Protected Health Information (PHI). This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law and professional code of ethics. It also describes your rights regarding how you may gain access to and control your PHI.

SIMS is required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI. We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. Any new Notice of Privacy Practices will be effective for all PHI that we maintain at that time. We will provide you with a copy of the revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting a copy on our web site, sending a copy to you in the mail upon request or providing one to you at your next appointment.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:

For Treatment: Your PHI may be used and disclosed by those who are involved in your care for the purpose of providing, coordinating, or managing your health care treatment and related services. This includes consultation with clinical supervisors or other treatment team members. We may disclose PHI to any other consultant only with your authorization.

For Fundraising: SIMS is a non-profit agency that is funded through donation and grants. In support of fundraising efforts we may use and disclose de-identified health information so that we can engage in activities including applying for grants and statistical reporting to major benefactors. This type of reporting would generally be of client aggregates and statistical in nature, referring to the client population that SIMS serves. Any such reporting would not include information that could be associated with any one SIMS client.

For Health Care Operations: We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order to support our business activities including, but not limited to quality assessment activities, employee review activities, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business activities (e.g., bookkeeping or claims payment) provided we have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI. We may use your PHI to remind you of appointments or to follow up with you regarding your treatment and to assess the quality of services you receive.

Required by Law: Under the law, we must make disclosures of your PHI to you upon your request. In addition, we must make disclosures to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of investigating or determining our compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule.

Without Authorization: Applicable law and ethical standards permit us to disclose information about you without your authorization only in a limited number of other situations. The types of uses and disclosures that may be made without your authorization are those that are:

- Required by Law, such as the mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect or mandatory government agency audits or investigations (such as the Social Work Licensing Board or the Health Department).

- Required by Court Order.
- Necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. If information is disclosed to prevent or lessen a serious threat it will be disclosed to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.

Verbal Permission: We may use or disclose your information to family members that are directly involved in your treatment with your verbal permission.

With Authorization: Uses and disclosures not specifically permitted by applicable law will be made only with your written authorization, which may be revoked by you.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI (Personal Health Information)

You have the following rights regarding PHI we maintain about you. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer at: SIMS, P.O. Box 2152, Austin, TX 78768-2152.

- **Right of Access to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right, which may be restricted only in exceptional circumstances, to inspect and copy PHI that may be used to make decisions about your care. Your right to inspect and copy PHI will be restricted in those situations where there is compelling evidence that access would cause serious harm to you. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for copies.
- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that the PHI we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information although we are not required to agree to the amendment.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an accounting of certain of the disclosures that we make of your PHI. We may charge you a reasonable fee if you request more than one accounting in any 12-month period.
- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the use or disclosure of you PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. We are not required to agree to your request.
- **Right to Request Confidential Communication.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location.
- **Right to a copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a copy of this notice.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint in writing with our Privacy Officer at: SIMS, P.O. Box 2152, Austin, TX 78768-2152 or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at: 200 Independence Ave., S. W., Washington, D.C. 20201 or by calling (202)619-0257.

We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Above information based on a document originating with the National Association of Social Workers. © Popovits & Robinson, P.C. 2003.

Attention Provider: Although the client must read this form during their initial session, it does not need to be returned to SIMS. You will need to return the related form, Receipt & Acknowledgement of Notice of Privacy Practices after they provide their signature, to SIMS ASAP following their initial session.