

Living Well Counseling Services, LLC: **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

Effective Date: This notice is effective on May 1, 2004.

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW CAREFULLY.

Our Duty to Safeguard Your Protected Health Information: Individually identifiable information about your past, present, or future health or condition, the provision of health care to you, or payment for the health care is considered "Protected Health Information" ("PHI"). We are required to extend certain protections to your PHI, and to give you this Notice about our privacy practices that explains how, when and why we may use or disclose your PHI. Except in specified circumstances, we must use or disclose only the minimum necessary PHI to accomplish the intended purpose of the use or disclosure. We are required to follow the privacy practices described in this Notice.

How We May Use and Disclose Your Protected Health Information: We use and disclose PHI for a variety of reasons. We have a limited right to use and/or disclose your PHI for purposes of treatment, payment, or our health care operations. For uses beyond that, we must have your written authorization unless the law permits or requires us to make the use or disclosure without your authorization. If we disclose your PHI to an outside entity in order for that entity to perform a function on our behalf, we must have in place an agreement from the outside entity that it will extend the same degree of privacy protection to your information that we must apply to your PHI. However, the law provides that we are permitted to make some uses/disclosures without your consent or authorization. The following offers more description and some examples of our potential uses/disclosures of your PHI.

Uses and Disclosures Relating to Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations. Generally, we may use or disclose your PHI as follows:

For treatment: We may wish to disclose your PHI to another health care provider or a hospital if it is necessary to refer you to them for diagnosis, assessment, or treatment of your health condition. We will do so only if you have signed a Release of Authorization for us to provide such information.

To obtain payment: We may disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for your health care services. For example, we may release portions of your PHI to the Medicaid/Medicare program and/or an insurance insurer, and HMO, or PPO to get paid for services that we delivered to you.

For health care operations: We may disclose your PHI in the course of operating our program. For example, we may use your PHI in evaluating the quality of services provided, or disclose your PHI to our accountant or attorney for audit purposes.

Appointment reminders: Unless you provide us with alternative instructions, we may call you with appointment reminders and occasionally send materials that may be of interest to you to your home.

Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization: For uses and disclosures beyond treatment, payment and operations purposes we are required to have your written authorization, unless the use or disclosure falls within one of the exceptions described below. Authorizations can be revoked at any time to stop future uses/disclosures except to the extent that we have already undertaken an action.

Uses and Disclosures Not Requiring Consent or Authorization: The law provides that we may disclose your PHI from mental health records without consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

When required by law: We may disclose PHI when a law requires that we report information about suspected abuse, neglect or violence, or relating to planned criminal activity, or in response to a court order. We must also disclose PHI to authorities that monitor compliance with these privacy requirements.

For health oversight activities: We may disclose PHI to the agency responsible for monitoring the health care system for such purposes as reporting or investigation of unusual incidents, and monitoring of the Medicaid program.

