

Important Information About Your Mental Health Information & Privacy

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.

Synchrony of Visalia, Inc. (hereinafter "Synchrony") recognize that collecting and sharing information about you, or a family member referred to us, helps us to this. This notice explains Synchrony's information collection, maintenance and sharing practices and lets you choose whether Synchrony may share certain information about you.

This notice describes the privacy practices of Synchrony and its related programs, including:

- FREE Collaborative
- Early Mental Health Program
- Children's Trust Funds

(We refer to these collectively as "Synchrony" for practices and services governed by the laws of the State of California and the laws of the United States of America.)

Our Security Procedures Protect Your Information

The staff at Synchrony will make every effort toward keeping your information secure. For example our information security policy:

- Governs retention of sensitive information
- Restricts access to information and information systems
- Delineates the particular methods and conditions under which information is shared
- Restricts unauthorized and unlawful access and review of patient/client information

Our practices and procedures meet those standards established by Federal and State law. We share only the information we believe is needed to offer effective services.

Information We Collect As Providers of Services to You

Understanding Your Mental Health Record Information

Each time you visit a hospital, or other mental healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, current purposed treatment and plan for future care and treatment. This information is often referred to as your mental health or medical record. While all of the information may not apply in your particular case, at Synchrony your mental health or medical record could serve as:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among the many mental health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal documents describing the case you received
- Means by which you or a third party-payer can verify that services billed by Synchrony were actually provided
- A tool in educating other mental health professionals
- A source of data for medical and other research
- A source of information for public mental health officials charged with improving the mental health of the nation
- A source of data doe facility planning and marketing
- A tool with which Synchrony can assess and continually work to improve the care Synchrony renders and the outcomes we achieve

Understanding what is in your record and how your mental health information is used helps you to:

- Ensure its accuracy
- Better understand who, what, where and why others may access your mental health information
- Make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

Your Mental Health Information Rights

Although your mental health record is the physical property of the mental healthcare practitioner or the facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Request restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522
- Obtain a paper copy of the notice information practices upon request
- Inspect and obtain a copy of your mental health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.525
- Amend your mental health record as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your mental health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Request communication of your mental health information by alternative means or at alternative locations
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose mental health information except to the extent that action has already taken

Synchrony's Responsibility

Synchrony is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your mental health information
- Provide you with notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information Synchrony collects and maintains about you
- Abide by the terms of this notice
- Notify you if Synchrony is unable to agree to a requested restriction
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate mental health information by alternative means or at alternative locations

Synchrony reserves the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected mental health information maintained by Synchrony. Should our information practices change, Synchrony will mail to you a revised notice to the address you've supplied us.

Synchrony will not use or disclose your mental health information without your authorization except as described in this notice.

For More Information or to Report a Problem

If you have any question and would like additional information, you may contact Edwyn Ortiz-Nance, Psy.D. (Synchrony's Privacy Officer) at (559) 635-4252.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with Dr. Ortiz-Nance or with the United States Secretary of Mental Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

Examples of Disclosure for Treatment, Payment and Mental Health Operations

Synchrony will use your mental health information for treatment.

For example: information obtained by a therapist, an evaluator, their agent, or other members of Synchrony's mental health care system will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. Your therapist will document in your record his or her expectations, or when applicable, the expectations of other member of the mental health care team. Your therapist or member of your Synchrony mental health care team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, your therapist will know how you are responding to treatment.

Synchrony will also provide subsequent mental healthcare providers and agencies with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in follow up care or continued treatment once treatment from Synchrony is terminated or for other reasons discontinued.

Synchrony will use your mental health information for payment

For example: Members of the Synchrony professional staff, or their designates, under professional staff direction, may use the information n your mental health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and other like it. this information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the services Synchrony provides.

Allied service providers: there are some services that are provided to you through or as a result of our contacts with other service providers agencies. Examples include recommendations for additional or adjunct services, admission to specific programs, assessment and interactions with the judicial system. When these provider agencies are contacted Synchrony may disclose your mental health information to the provider agent or agency to support the request or so that they can perform the requested or necessary services Synchrony may have asked of them. To protect your mental health information, Synchrony requires the agent or agency to appropriately safeguard your information.

Notification: Synchrony may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or another person responsible for your care, your location and general condition.

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

Research: Synchrony may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviews the research proposal and established protocol to ensure the privacy of your mental health information.

Marketing: Synchrony may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives, training/educational opportunities or other mental health related benefits and services that may be of benefit to you.

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

Correctional institutions: Should you be an inmate of a correctional facility, housed in a juvenile detention facility or other court ordered facility, Synchrony may disclose to the institution, facility or agents thereof mental health information necessary for your mental health and the mental health of and safety of other individuals.

Law enforcement: Synchrony may disclose mental health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

Federal law makes provision for your mental health information to be released to an appropriate mental health oversight agency, public mental health authority or attorney, provided that a workforce member or business associate believes in good fait that Synchrony have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more clients, patients, workers or the public. //////////////////////////////////////