



Policy 5.19: HIPAA Privacy Standards – Privacy Policy

Status: ADOPTED

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Policy:

It is the policy of Bridge Health that all personnel must preserve the integrity and the confidentiality of medical and other sensitive information pertaining to our individuals. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents have the necessary medical and other information to provide the highest quality medical care possible while protecting the confidentiality of that information to the highest degree possible so that Individuals do not fear to provide information to Bridge Health for purposes of treatment.

Procedure:

To that end, Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents will:

- I. Collect and use individual medical information only for the purposes of providing medical services and for supporting the delivery, payment, integrity, and quality of those services. Bridge Health and its staff, leaders and agents will not use or supply individual medical information for non-health care uses, such as direct marketing, employment, or credit evaluation purposes.
- II. Collect and use individual medical information only:
 - A. To provide proper diagnosis and treatment.
 - B. With the individual's knowledge and consent.
 - C. To receive reimbursement for services provided.
 - D. For research and similar purposes designed to improve the quality and to reduce the cost of health care.
 - E. As a basis for required reporting of health information.
- III. Recognize that medical information collected about Individuals must be accurate, timely, complete, and available when needed. Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents will:
 - A. Use their best efforts to ensure the accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of data and to ensure that authorized personnel can access it when needed.
 - B. Complete and authenticate medical records in accordance with the law, medical ethics, and accreditation standards.
 - C. Maintain medical records for the retention periods required by law and professional standards.
 - D. Not alter or destroy an entry in a record, but rather designate it as an error while leaving the original entry intact and create and maintain a new entry showing the correct data.
 - E. Implement reasonable measures to protect the integrity of all data maintained about Individuals.
- IV. Recognize that Individuals have a right of privacy. Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents will respect individual dignity at all times. Bridge Health and its officers, employees, and agents will respect Individual's privacy to the extent consistent with providing the highest quality medical care possible and with the efficient administration of the facility.
- V. Act as responsible information stewards and treat all individual medical record data and related financial, demographic, and lifestyle information as sensitive and confidential. Consequently, Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents will:
 - A. Treat all individual medical record data as confidential in accordance with professional ethics, accreditation standards, and legal requirements.

- B. Not divulge medical record data unless the Individual (or his or her authorized representative) has properly consented to the release or the release is otherwise authorized by law, such as communicable disease reporting, child abuse reporting, and the like.
 - VI. When releasing medical record data, take appropriate steps to prevent unauthorized re-disclosures, such as specifying that the recipient may not further disclose the information without the Individuals consent or as authorized by law.
 - VII. Implement reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of medical and other information maintained about Individuals.
 - VIII. Remove Individual identifiers when appropriate, such as in statistical reporting and in medical research studies.
 - IX. Not disclose financial or other Individual information except as necessary for billing or other authorized purposes as authorized by law and professional standards.
 - X. Recognize that some medical information is particularly sensitive, such as HIV/AIDS information, mental health and developmental disability information, alcohol and drug abuse information, and other information about sexually transmitted or communicable diseases and that disclosure of such information could severely harm Individuals, such as by causing loss of employment opportunities and insurance coverage, as well as the pain of social stigma. Consequently, Bridge Health and its staff, leaders and agents will treat such information with additional confidentiality protections as required by law, professional ethics, and accreditation requirements.
 - XI. Recognize that, although Bridge Health owns the medical record, the Individual has a right of access to information contained in the record. Bridge Health and its staff, leaders, and agents will:
 - A. Permit Individuals access to their medical records except when access would be detrimental to the Individual under the so-called therapeutic exception to access. In such cases, Bridge Health will provide an authorized representative access to the records in accordance with law, professional ethics, and accreditation requirements.
 - B. Provide Individuals an opportunity to request correction of inaccurate data in their records in accordance with the law and professional standards.
 - C. Bridge Health will not tolerate violations of this policy. Violation of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and criminal or professional sanctions.
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Approved
Heather Roesner, CEO

