



4850 Mark Center Dr. • Alexandria, VA 22311 • 703.746.3400 • [alexandriava.gov/CSB](http://alexandriava.gov/CSB)

# CONFIDENTIALITY & YOUR HEALTH RECORD

## HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU IS PROTECTED

Your records are kept strictly confidential. This includes written information, oral communications and electronic information stored in the computer system. All records are kept secure. Only the CSB staff involved in your treatment can see your records without your written permission. Your records or information about you are released to others only with your written permission, unless it is under one of the following circumstances:

- **Emergencies:** We may give information about you in order to prevent death or injury to yourself or others, or to prevent major property damage.
- **Employees:** We may share information about you with other CSB employees or trained volunteers who need to know in order to provide services to you or follow up on services you received.
- **Payment:** We may provide insurance companies or other third parties with the information necessary to collect payment for services.
- **Legal requirements:** We may disclose information from your records if the court orders us to do so, or to the extent required to comply with other state or federal laws. We may also disclose information to our own legal counsel when representing us in a case. If treatment is ordered in a legal proceeding, we may give information to individuals in the justice system that have a need for the information in order to monitor treatment progress.
- **Protection:** If we believe you present a threat to the life or safety of a specific person, we may communicate only the information necessary to relieve the threat.
- **HIV risk:** If you are diagnosed by the CSB with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or hepatitis, we are required to report this information to the Health Department.
- **Abuse or neglect:** We may disclose information about you in order to report suspected abuse or neglect.
- **Crime:** If you are involved in a crime on CSB premises or against CSB staff or you threaten to commit a crime, the information will be reported to the authorities.
- **Human rights:** We may disclose any information that is necessary for the Local Human Rights Committee to conduct investigations of human rights violations.
- **Research:** We may reveal information about you for the purpose of research or calculating statistics. This information will not reveal your name or identity.
- **Administration:** We may disclose information for the purposes of licensing, accreditation, management, fiscal audits and program evaluations.

## ACCESSING AND AUTHORIZING DISCLOSURE OF THE RECORDS OF MINORS

**Minor Receiving Services Without the Knowledge of a Parent or Guardian:** In most cases, if a minor seeks services at the CSB without the knowledge of a parent or guardian, he/she will be asked to include a parent or guardian in the treatment. The minor has the right not to include anyone, in which case the CSB may not contact the parent or guardian or share any information with them. If the minor agrees to treatment for which they are lawfully authorized to consent, the parent is allowed access to the minor's mental health record unless it is determined that disclosure is reasonably likely to cause harm to the child or other person. The parent is not allowed access to the minor's substance use record. The minor may consent to disclosure of either record.

The parent alone may not authorize disclosure of substance abuse or mental health records when the minor consented to treatment.

**Minor Receiving Services With the Knowledge of a Parent or Guardian:** If a minor receives mental health services with the knowledge and consent of a parent, the parent and the minor both have the right to access the record and either the parent or minor may authorize disclosure. If a minor receives substance use services with the knowledge and consent of a parent, the parent does not have the right to access or authorize disclosure of records without the minor's authorization.

## OBTAINING A COPY OF YOUR RECORDS

Clients can access their medical records via the client portal by speaking with their case manager to get registered. Any protected health information that is not available in the portal can be requested by completing a release of information. Please contact the Health Information Management Department at 703.746.3555 or speak with your case manager. Your records are kept for six years after your last date of service. Minors' records are kept until age 24 and for at least six years from the last date of service. Records will be provided for you unless a physician or psychologist determines that seeing the records may be harmful to you. In this case, only the potentially damaging information will be withheld. You have the right to appeal this decision by seeking a second opinion from an outside provider, at your cost for copies of your records to be sent to the provider. Minors have the right to access their outpatient mental health or substance use records no matter who consented to treatment. Individuals requesting to review their records will be asked to read the record with a provider who will be able to answer any questions. There is a nominal fee for a copy of your records. Upon written request, the fee may be waived or reduced due to financial hardship. There is no charge for forwarding records directly to another service provider (see Right to Inspect and Copy).

## CORRECTING INFORMATION IN YOUR RECORD

You may request corrections of information in your record, but the original information will not be removed. If staff do not agree with the change you requested, you may write your own statement explaining your position. Your statement will be included with the record and upon your request, given to those who received copies of the record.

## GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY

Everyone who participates in group services such as support groups, group counseling or the Wellness Center, must agree to mutual confidentiality. This means that nobody may discuss any information about another or let it be known that another person is receiving services.

## CONFIDENTIALITY VIOLATIONS

If you believe your confidentiality rights have been violated, please tell your service coordinator or contact the Human Rights Advocate at 703.746.3400. For more information, consult the brochure entitled Rights and Responsibilities.