

**BELOIT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
COUNSELING CARE CENTER  
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

We in the Counseling Care Center place a high value on the confidentiality of the information our patients share with us. We understand that this information is often highly sensitive and may be misused by others. This policy has been prepared to clarify our legal and ethical responsibilities regarding this important issue. It has been prepared in reference to federal law 42 CFR, Part 2 S.51.30, and Ch. 51 of the Wisconsin Statutes as well as HSS Regulation 61.23 of state law.

If for some reason, there is a need to share information in your records with someone not employed here (for example, your physician, family members, or another agency); you will first be consulted. You will then be asked to sign a form authorizing a transfer of the information. Only if you provide a written, informed consent will information about your history and treatment be shared with others. If oral communication is to occur between staff and another person, this will occur with similar consent. You can revoke your permission at any time.

**EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY:**

There are several important instances where confidential information may be released to others, even without your consent. These include the following:

First, if you have been referred to this agency by a Court (Court Order), you can assume that the Court is to receive some kind of report or evaluation. You should discuss with us exactly what kind of information would be included in the report *before* you disclose any kind of confidential material. In such instances, you have a right to tell us only what you want us to know, and may be entitled to have your attorney present during your interviews here.

Second, if you are involved in a litigation of any kind criminal or civil, (including a pending divorce), and inform the Court of the services you received from us making your mental health an issue before the court, the Court may subpoena the records. Your attorney and opposing attorneys may present arguments before the Court, before such a subpoena is issued. You may wish to consult your attorney regarding such matters before you disclose that you have received treatment.

Third, if you threaten to harm either yourself or someone else and our staff believes your threat is serious, they are obligated under Wisconsin law to take actions necessary to protect you and/or others from serious harm. This may include our staff having to divulge confidential information to police or others in order to assure your and other's safety. Such confidential information would be divulged only under unusual circumstances where someone's life or physical safety appeared to be in significant imminent danger.

Fourth, if we have reason to suspect that you may be abusing or neglecting a child or elderly person, we are obligated by law to report this to an appropriate state or county social service agency. This law is designed to protect children from harm, and our obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect is clear. Social Service agencies may then investigate the case but you should know that simply reporting to a Social Service agency does not necessarily mean you will be charged.