# Notice of Privacy Practices for Counseling Services

Oceanic Counseling Group LLC · P.O. Box 16091, Myrtle Beach, SC 29587 · (843) 894-0000 · oceaniccounseling.com

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

Oceanic Counseling Group is an outpatient counseling practice. We do not provide medical care or prescribe medication. In this notice, "medical information" means your counseling information: your intake paperwork, assessments, diagnosis, treatment plan, progress notes, and billing records.

Effective date: November 9, 2026. This notice replaces all earlier versions.

Get a copy of this notice anytime at oceaniccounseling.com/notice-of-privacy-practices. It is also available in large print and other accessible formats on request; call (843) 894-0000.

## 1. Who follows this notice

This notice describes the privacy practices of Oceanic Counseling Group LLC ("Oceanic," "we," "us"), a group counseling practice with offices across South Carolina and a telehealth team. It applies to every licensed counselor, social worker, marriage and family therapist and psychologist; every associate-licensed clinician working under supervision; every intern; and every staff member who works with Oceanic, at every office and through telehealth. Our clinicians share one secure electronic record, so your counseling record may be available to other Oceanic clinicians and staff who need it to provide, coordinate, supervise or bill for your counseling.

## 2. Our duties

We are required by law to:

- Maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information ("PHI"), which includes everything in your counseling record.
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices, and follow the notice currently in effect.
- Notify you promptly, in writing, if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your PHI.
- Use or disclose only the minimum necessary information, except for treatment and other situations where the law does not require it.

What you share in counseling also receives additional protection under South Carolina law and under the ethics codes our clinicians follow (including the codes of the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the American Psychological Association). Where South Carolina law or those codes protect your information more strictly than HIPAA, we follow the stricter rule.

## 3. How we may use and disclose your information without your written authorization

**Treatment.** We use and share your information to provide and coordinate your counseling. For example, your counselor may consult with a clinical supervisor or another Oceanic clinician, or share information with a clinician covering while your counselor is away. Associate-licensed clinicians (LPC-A, LMSW) review cases with their clinical supervisors as South Carolina licensing law requires. HIPAA also allows us to coordinate with your other providers, such as your primary care doctor or psychiatrist; in keeping with counseling ethics, we ask for your permission before sharing with providers outside Oceanic, except in an emergency.

**Payment.** We use and share information to bill and receive payment from you, your health plan, or another payer, such as confirming coverage, obtaining prior authorization, and submitting claims that include dates of service, diagnosis and service codes.

**Health care operations.** We use information to run our practice and improve the quality of counseling, for example quality review, clinician training and supervision, licensing and credentialing, audits, legal and compliance services, and business planning.

**Business associates.** We contract with companies that perform services for us, such as our electronic health record and client portal, telehealth platform, appointment-reminder and texting service, secure email, secure fax, online forms, billing support and IT services. Each signs a business associate agreement requiring it to protect your information as HIPAA requires and to use it only as our contract allows.

**Appointment reminders and service information.** We may contact you by phone, text message, email or mail to remind you of appointments, ask you to complete paperwork, or tell you about our services. You can tell us how you prefer to be contacted, or ask us not to send reminders.

**Required by law.** We disclose information when federal, state or local law requires it, limited to what the law requires.

**Abuse, neglect and exploitation.** South Carolina law requires our clinicians to report known or suspected abuse or neglect of a child, and abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, to the appropriate state agency or law enforcement.

**Serious threat to health or safety.** If, in counseling, you communicate a serious threat of physical violence against a reasonably identifiable person, or if we believe in good faith that disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your safety or someone else's, we may disclose information to people able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the potential victim, family members, or law enforcement.

**Public health and health oversight.** We may disclose information to public-health authorities as the law allows, and to agencies that oversee health care, such as licensing boards, Medicaid and Medicare, and auditors, for audits, investigations and inspections.

**Legal proceedings.** We may disclose information in response to a court order. In response to a subpoena or other legal request that is not a court order, we will disclose information only if you authorize it, if reasonable efforts have been made to notify you so you can object, or if a qualified protective order has been obtained, and only as South Carolina's privilege law allows.

**Law enforcement.** We may disclose limited information to law enforcement when the law requires it, to report a crime on our premises, or in an emergency.

*The following situations are uncommon for a counseling practice, but federal law requires us to tell you that they are permitted:*

**Coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors.** We may disclose information to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person or determine a cause of death, and to funeral directors as needed to carry out their duties.

**Organ and tissue donation.** If you are an organ, eye or tissue donor, we may disclose information to organizations that handle donation and transplantation, as the law allows.

**Military and veterans.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may disclose information to military command authorities when required to ensure the proper execution of a military mission, as federal law allows.

**Other government functions.** We may disclose information for national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, or to a correctional institution or law-enforcement official having custody of you, as the law allows.

**Workers' compensation.** We may disclose information as South Carolina's workers' compensation laws require.

**Research.** We do not conduct research using client information. We would not use your information for research without your written authorization or an approval process the law requires.

**Fundraising.** We do not use client information for fundraising.

## 4. Uses and disclosures you may object to

**People involved in your care.** With your agreement, or if you do not object when given the chance, we may share information with a family member, friend, or other person you identify who is involved in your care or in paying for it. In an emergency, or if you are unable to agree, we may share information we believe is in your best interest and will tell you afterward when possible.

**Disaster relief.** Unless you object, we may share information with a public or private disaster-relief organization, such as the American Red Cross, so your family or others involved in your care can be told where you are and how you are doing.

## 5. Uses and disclosures that require your written authorization

- **Psychotherapy notes.** If your counselor keeps psychotherapy notes (private notes about what was discussed in sessions, kept separately from your counseling record), we will not use or disclose them without your written authorization, except for your counselor's own use in treating you, supervised training, defending ourselves in a legal action you bring, a HHS compliance investigation, a serious threat to health or safety, or as otherwise required by law.
- **Marketing.** We will not use or disclose your information for marketing without your written authorization.
- **Sale of information.** We will never sell your information.
- **Everything else.** Any use or disclosure not described in this notice requires your written authorization, for example sending records to an attorney, employer, school or court at your request. You may revoke an authorization in writing at any time, except to the extent we have already acted on it.

## 6. Special situations

**Minors.** For clients under 18, a parent or legal guardian is generally the personal representative and may exercise the rights in this notice. South Carolina law allows minors who are at least 16 to consent to many health services themselves; when a minor has consented to their own care, the minor generally controls the related information as the law allows. We may also decline to share information with a parent or guardian when the law permits and sharing could endanger the minor. Where parents are divorced or separated, we follow the custody order, so please give us a copy.

**Couples, family and group sessions.** When more than one person takes part in sessions, information shared in the session may be heard by everyone present. Before couples or family therapy begins, your clinician will explain how information shared privately by one participant will be handled. Group members agree to keep what is said in group confidential, but we cannot guarantee that other group members will do so.

**Personal representatives and deceased clients.** We will treat a person with legal authority to make health-care decisions for you as your personal representative. After a client's death, we protect their information as the law requires and may share it with their personal representative or with family members involved in their care, unless the client told us otherwise.

**Substance use disorder records from other programs.** We do not operate a federally assisted substance use disorder program. If we receive records from such a program that are protected by 42 CFR Part 2, we will not use or disclose them in any civil, criminal, administrative or legislative proceeding against you unless you give specific written consent or a court issues an order after notice and an opportunity to be heard, as federal law requires.

**Telehealth and electronic communication.** Our telehealth platform, client portal, email, texting and fax services are HIPAA-compliant and covered by business associate agreements. Ordinary text messages and email can still be seen by others who have access to your device or account. If you ask us to communicate with you by a method that is not secure, we will honor the request after explaining the risks.

## 7. Your rights

**Get a copy of your record.** You can ask to see or get a paper or electronic copy of your record and other information we have about you (other than psychotherapy notes). We will respond within 30 days and may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee. If your clinician believes access to certain information would be reasonably likely to endanger your life or physical safety or someone else's, we may deny that part of the request; you can ask for that decision to be reviewed by another licensed clinician. To request records, use our records-request form or call us.

**Ask us to correct your record.** You can ask us to amend information you believe is incorrect or incomplete. We may say no, but we will tell you why in writing within 60 days, and you can file a statement of disagreement that we will include with your record.

**Request confidential communications.** You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, only on your cell phone) or at a different address. We will agree to all reasonable requests and will not ask why.

**Ask us to limit what we use or share.** You can ask us not to use or share certain information for treatment, payment or operations. We are not required to agree and may say no if it would affect your care.

**Self-pay restriction.** If you pay for a service in full out of pocket, you can ask us not to share information about that service with your health plan. We will say yes unless a law requires us to share it.

**Get a list of disclosures.** You can ask for a list of the times we shared your information in the six years before your request, who we shared it with and why, other than for treatment, payment, operations, disclosures you authorized, and certain others. We will provide one list a year free and may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for additional lists in the same year.

**Get a copy of this notice.** You can get a copy of this notice at any time from oceaniccounseling.com/notice-of-privacy-practices, where you can read it or download it as a PDF. You can also ask us for a paper copy at any time, even if you agreed to receive it electronically, and it is posted at each office.

**Choose someone to act for you.** If you have given someone medical power of attorney, or someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your information. We will confirm the person's authority before we act.

## 8. Complaints

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can complain to us by contacting our Privacy and Compliance Officer, Kimberly Stuart (below). You can also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, 200 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, by calling 1-800-368-1019 (TDD 1-800-537-7697), or online at hhs.gov/ocr/complaints. You may also contact the South Carolina licensing board for your clinician's profession. **We will not retaliate against you in any way for filing a complaint.**

## 9. Privacy and Compliance Officer

Kimberly Stuart, Practice Director
Privacy and Compliance Officer, Oceanic Counseling Group LLC
P.O. Box 16091, Myrtle Beach, SC 29587
Phone (843) 894-0000 · Fax (843) 589-9054
Email admin@oceaniccounseling.com

## 10. Changes to this notice

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available on request, at each office, and on our website, with its effective date.

## Language assistance · Asistencia lingüística · 语言协助

**English**
ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, free language assistance services are available to you. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services to provide information in accessible formats are also available free of charge. Call (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) or speak to your provider.

**Español (Spanish)**
ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. También están disponibles de forma gratuita ayuda y servicios auxiliares apropiados para proporcionar información en formatos accesibles. Llame al (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) o hable con su proveedor.

**简体中文 (Chinese, Simplified)**
注意：如果您说中文，我们可以为您提供免费的语言协助服务。我们还免费提供适当的辅助工具和服务，以无障碍格式提供信息。请致电 (843) 894-0000（TTY：711）或咨询您的服务提供者。

**繁體中文 (Chinese, Traditional)**
注意：如果您說中文，我們可以為您提供免費的語言協助服務。我們還免費提供適當的輔助工具和服務，以無障礙格式提供資訊。請致電 (843) 894-0000（TTY：711）或諮詢您的服務提供者。

**Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)**
CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, chúng tôi cung cấp miễn phí các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ. Các hỗ trợ và dịch vụ phụ trợ phù hợp để cung cấp thông tin theo các định dạng dễ tiếp cận cũng được cung cấp miễn phí. Vui lòng gọi số (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) hoặc trao đổi với người cung cấp dịch vụ của bạn.

**한국어 (Korean)**
주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다. 이용 가능한 형식으로 정보를 제공하는 적절한 보조 도구 및 서비스도 무료로 제공됩니다. (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711)번으로 전화하시거나 서비스 제공자에게 문의하십시오.

**Français (French)**
ATTENTION : Si vous parlez français, des services d'assistance linguistique gratuits sont à votre disposition. Des aides et services auxiliaires appropriés pour fournir des informations dans des formats accessibles sont également disponibles gratuitement. Appelez le (843) 894-0000 (ATS : 711) ou parlez à votre prestataire.

**Tagalog**
PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, may makukuha kang mga libreng serbisyo ng tulong sa wika. May makukuha ka ring mga naaangkop na karagdagang tulong at serbisyo nang libre upang makatanggap ng impormasyon sa mga naa-access na format. Tumawag sa (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) o makipag-usap sa iyong provider.

**Русский (Russian)**
ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите по-русски, вам доступны бесплатные услуги языковой поддержки. Соответствующие вспомогательные средства и услуги для предоставления информации в доступных форматах также предоставляются бесплатно. Позвоните по номеру (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) или обратитесь к своему поставщику услуг.

**Deutsch (German)**
ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlose Sprachdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Geeignete Hilfsmittel und Dienstleistungen zur Bereitstellung von Informationen in barrierefreien Formaten stehen ebenfalls kostenlos zur Verfügung. Rufen Sie (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) an oder sprechen Sie mit Ihrem Anbieter.

**ગુજરાતી (Gujarati)**
ધ્યાન આપો: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો મફત ભાષાકીય સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. સુલભ ફોર્મેટમાં માહિતી પૂરી પાડવા માટે યોગ્ય સહાયક સાધનો અને સેવાઓ પણ વિના મૂલ્યે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) પર કૉલ કરો અથવા તમારા પ્રદાતા સાથે વાત કરો.

**العربية (Arabic)**
تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية متاحة لك مجانًا. كما تتوفر مجانًا وسائل المساعدة والخدمات المناسبة لتقديم المعلومات بتنسيقات يسهل الوصول إليها. اتصل على الرقم 0000-894 (843) (الهاتف النصي: 711) أو تحدث إلى مقدم الخدمة.

**Português (Portuguese)**
ATENÇÃO: Se você fala português, serviços gratuitos de assistência linguística estão disponíveis para você. Auxílios e serviços auxiliares adequados para fornecer informações em formatos acessíveis também estão disponíveis gratuitamente. Ligue para (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) ou fale com seu provedor.

**日本語 (Japanese)**
注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援サービスをご利用いただけます。アクセシブルな形式で情報を提供するための適切な補助支援およびサービスも無料でご利用いただけます。(843) 894-0000（TTY：711）までお電話いただくか、担当の提供者にご相談ください。

**Українська (Ukrainian)**
УВАГА: Якщо ви розмовляєте українською мовою, вам доступні безкоштовні послуги мовної підтримки. Відповідні допоміжні засоби та послуги для надання інформації в доступних форматах також надаються безкоштовно. Зателефонуйте за номером (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) або зверніться до свого постачальника послуг.

**हिंदी (Hindi)**
ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं, तो आपके लिए निःशुल्क भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। सुलभ प्रारूपों में जानकारी प्रदान करने के लिए उपयुक्त सहायक साधन और सेवाएं भी निःशुल्क उपलब्ध हैं। (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें या अपने प्रदाता से बात करें।

**ភាសាខ្មែរ (Khmer)**
សូមយកចិត្តទុកដាក់៖ ប្រសិនបើអ្នកនិយាយភាសាខ្មែរ សេវាជំនួយផ្នែកភាសាដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ គឺមានសម្រាប់អ្នក។ ជំនួយ និងសេវាកម្មបន្ថែមដែលសមស្រប ដើម្បីផ្តល់ព័ត៌មានជាទម្រង់ដែលងាយស្រួលប្រើ ក៏មានផ្តល់ជូនដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃផងដែរ។ សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ (843) 894-0000 (TTY: 711) ឬនិយាយជាមួយអ្នកផ្តល់សេវារបស់អ្នក។