

TWNPs Patient Confidentiality and HIPAA Compliance Policy

Policy Objective:

This policy outlines TWNPs' commitment to maintaining patient confidentiality and complying with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to protect the privacy and security of patient health information. All staff members are expected to understand and adhere to this policy to ensure that patient information is safeguarded.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers at The Wellness NPs. It covers any patient-related information, both electronic and physical, created, received, or maintained within our practice.

2. Responsibilities

- **Staff Accountability:** All staff members are responsible for maintaining patient confidentiality and following HIPAA guidelines.
- **Training:** Staff members will complete annual HIPAA training and refresher courses on patient confidentiality and data protection.
- **Reporting Breaches:** Any suspected or actual breach of confidentiality must be reported immediately to the Privacy Officer.

3. Definitions

- **Protected Health Information (PHI):** Any information about a patient's health status, medical history, treatment, or payment details that can be linked to a specific individual.
- **HIPAA Compliance:** Adherence to federal regulations that protect the privacy and security of PHI.

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4. Confidentiality Practices

- **Access Control:** Only authorized personnel may access PHI, and access should be limited to the minimum necessary to perform job functions.
- **Data Sharing:** PHI may only be shared with individuals or entities authorized under HIPAA, such as other healthcare providers involved in the patient's care, insurance providers for claims processing, or as required by law.
- **Workstation Security:** All workstations must be secured when not in use, including logging out of systems and ensuring that physical documents are stored securely.
- **Communication:** Patient information should never be discussed in public areas. When communicating with patients or other healthcare providers, ensure the conversation is private and away from unauthorized listeners.

5. HIPAA Compliance

- **Patient Rights:** Patients have the right to request access to their PHI, amend their records, and restrict certain uses or disclosures of their information.
- **Disclosures:** Disclosure of PHI without patient authorization is prohibited, except in specific situations as outlined by HIPAA (e.g., medical emergencies, law enforcement requirements).
- **Breach Notifications:** In the event of a data breach involving PHI, the Privacy Officer will notify affected individuals, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and, if necessary, the media, in compliance with HIPAA regulations

6. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment, as well as potential civil or criminal penalties. The practice is committed to protecting patient confidentiality and expects all staff members to uphold these standards.

7. Policy Acknowledgment

All staff members must read and acknowledge their understanding of this policy. Regular reviews and updates will be made to ensure compliance with any changes in HIPAA laws and regulations.

Staff Name: _____

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

Effective Date: 11/1/24

Reviewed by: Bermesola M Dyer, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

Next Review Date: 11/1/25