

**Palos Behavioral Health Professionals
11800 S. 75th Ave, Third Floor
Palos Heights, IL 60463
Phone: 708-671-8440 FAX: 708-671-8446**

OUTPATIENT SERVICES AGREEMENT

Welcome to Palos Behavioral Health Professionals (PBHP). This document (the Agreement) contains important information about PBHP's professional services and business policies. It also contains summary information about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that provides privacy protections and new patient rights with regard to the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information (PHI) used for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. HIPAA requires that PBHP provide you with a Notice of Privacy Practices (the Notice) for use and disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment, and health care operations. The Notice—a separate document—explains HIPAA and its application to your personal health information in greater detail. The law requires that PBHP obtain your signature acknowledging that you have been provided with this. Although these documents are long and sometimes complex, **it is very important that you read them carefully**. Please discuss any questions you have about the procedures with your treatment provider immediately. When you sign the final page of this document, it will also represent an agreement between you and PBHP. You may revoke this Agreement in writing at any time. That revocations will be binding on PBHP unless action has been taken with reliance on it; if there are obligations imposed on PBHP by your health insurer in order to process or substantiate claims made under your policy; or if you have not satisfied any financial obligations you have incurred.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychotherapy is not easily described in general statements. It varies depending on the personalities of the therapist and patient, and the particular issues you bring forward. There are many different methods we may use to deal with the problems that you hope to address. Psychotherapy is not like a medical doctor visit. Instead, it calls for a very active effort on your part. In order for the therapy to be most successful, you will have to work on things you and your treatment provider talk about both during sessions and at home.

Psychotherapy can have benefits and risks. Since therapy often involves discussing unpleasant aspects of your life, you may experience uncomfortable feelings like sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, loneliness and helplessness. On the other hand, psychotherapy has also been shown to have benefits for people who go through it. Therapy often leads to better relationships, solutions to specific problems, and significant reductions in feelings of distress. There are, however, no guarantees of what you will experience.

Your first few sessions will involve an evaluation of your needs. By the end of the evaluation, your therapist will be able to offer you some first impressions of what your work will include and a treatment plan to follow if you decide to continue with therapy. You should evaluate this information along with your own opinions of whether you feel comfortable working with your provider. Therapy involves a large commitment of time, money and energy, so you should be very careful about the therapist you select. If you have questions about our procedures, you and your treatment provider should discuss them whenever they arise. If your doubts persist, your treatment provider will be happy to help you set up a meeting with another mental health professional for a second opinion.

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

We also provide psychiatric services in addition to the variety of psychological services available through PBHP. Our psychiatrists are independent contractors who work out of our offices. These professionals are available, upon the recommendation of your provider, for psychiatric evaluation for medication and follow-up medication management.

Our psychiatrists are here at PBHP to serve the needs of our current patients and rarely treat those who are not already being seen by another PBHP professional. Because our psychiatrists are outpatient treatment providers, they should not be utilized for emergency or crisis treatment purposes. Rather, you should consult with your psychotherapy provider about where to obtain these services if they are necessary. If you have been referred to one of your psychiatrists, you may make an appointment through the main office support staff.

It is important to note that if you have been prescribed a medication by one of our psychiatrists that requires monthly refills (such as Ritalin or Adderall), you will be responsible to schedule these medication management/refill appointments in advance. Please do not call the office when or after a prescription has run out because the doctor may require an office visit prior to the refill and may not be immediately available.

The psychiatrists provide services as a convenience to PBHP patients so that psychological and psychiatric services can be obtained at the same office. It is not mandatory (or in some cases possible) that PBHP therapy patients receive services from a PBHP psychiatrist. If you have questions or concerns about this issue, please discuss this with your provider.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

Fees are as follows:

Initial therapy session	\$200.00
Therapeutic hourly fee for individual therapy	\$170.00
Family therapy session	\$160.00
Group therapy session	\$75.00
Psychiatrist initial session (45-60 minutes)	\$290.00
Psychiatric medication check-up session	\$125.00

Other services for which there may be a fee imposed include report writing, telephone conversations lasting longer than 10 minutes, attendance at meetings with other professionals you have authorized, preparation of records or treatment summaries, and the time spent performing any other services you may request of your therapist. For these services, you will be charged our hourly rate prorated for the time the provider needed to perform the task required. If you become involved in legal proceedings that require your provider's participation, you will be expected to pay for the professional time even if the provider is called to testify by another party. Because of the difficulty of legal involvement, we charge \$200.00 per hour for preparation and attendance at any legal proceeding.

CONTACTING YOUR PROVIDER

PBHP providers are not always immediately available by telephone. Please leave a message with the office personnel or on the office voicemail. These messages are given to the providers at the earliest convenience. If you are difficult to reach, please inform the provider of some times when you will be available. Again, our providers will return your call at their earliest convenience.

As PBHP is an outpatient practice, emergency services are not always available. Therefore, in case of an emergency, please either contact 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Emergencies may include, but are not limited to, being harmful to self or others, family or personal crisis and medication reactions. Contacting your therapist or psychiatrist after the main office is closed may, in some circumstances, be necessary. Please talk with your treatment provider concerning the best method to do so. **Please know that although technology is wonderful, voicemails, cell phones, pagers, etc. can fail. Therefore, if you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for a return call, contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist/psychiatrist on call.**

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The law protects the privacy of all communications between a patient and a behavioral health treatment provider. In most situations, PBHP can only release information about your treatment to others if you sign a written authorization form that meets certain legal requirements imposed by HIPAA and/or Illinois law. However, in the following situations, no authorization is required:

- A PBHP treatment provider may occasionally find it helpful to consult other health and mental health professionals about a case. During a consultation, your treatment provider will make every effort to avoid revealing your identity. The other professionals are also legally bound to keep the information confidential. If you do not object, your provider will not tell you about these consultations unless he/she feels it is important to your work together. Your provider will note all consultations in your Clinical Record (referred to as “PHI” in the Notice of Palos Behavioral Health Professionals’ Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information).
- You should be aware that your PBHP treatment provider practices with other mental health professionals and that PBHP employs administrative staff. In most cases, your treatment provider will need to share protected information with these individuals for both clinician and administrative purposes, such as scheduling, billing, and quality assurance. All of the mental health professionals are bound by the same rules of confidentiality. All staff members have been given training about protecting your privacy and have agreed not to release any information outside of the practice without the permission of a professional staff member.
- Disclosures required by health insurers or to collect overdue fees are discussed elsewhere in this Agreement.
- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information concerning your diagnosis and treatment, such information is protected by the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act. PBHP cannot disclose any information without a court order. If you are involved in or are contemplating litigation, you should consult with your attorney to determine whether a court would be likely to order your treatment provider to disclose information.
- If a government agency is requesting the information for health oversight activities, PBHP may be required to provide it for them.
- If a patient files a complaint or lawsuit against a treatment provider, that treatment provider may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to provide defense.
- If you file a worker’s compensation claim, and your treatment provider is rendering treatment or services in accordance with the provisions of the Illinois Workers’ Compensation law, the treatment provider must, upon appropriate request, provide a copy of your record to your employer or his/her appropriate designee.

There are some situations in which a PBHP treatment provider is legally obligated to take action that the treatment provider believes is necessary to attempt to protect others from harm. To this end, the treatment provider may have to reveal some information about a patient’s treatment.

- If a PBHP treatment provider has reasonable cause to believe that a child under 18 years may be, in the providers’ professional capacity, an abused or neglected child, the law requires that the provider file a report with the local office of the Department of Children and Family Services. Once such a report is filed, the provider may be required to provide additional information.
- If a PBHP treatment provider has reason to believe that an adult over 60 years is living in a domestic situation and has been abused or neglected in the preceding 12 months, the law requires that the provider file a report with the agency designated to receive such reports by the Department of Aging. Once such a report is filed, the provider may be required to provide additional information.
- If you have made a specific threat of violence against another or if your PBHP treatment provider believes that you present and clear, imminent risk of serious physical harm to another, the provider may be required to disclose information in order to take protective actions. These actions may include notifying the potential victim, contacting the police, or seeking your hospitalization.
- If your PBHP treatment provider believes that you present a clear, imminent risk of serious physical or mental injury or death to yourself, the provider may be required to disclose information in order to take protective actions. These

actions may include seeking your hospitalization or contacting family members or others who can assist in protecting you.

- Currently, a new law in Illinois requires all healthcare providers to report persons deemed unstable to the Firearms Owner Identification program (FOID) so that possible use of firearms in situations like school shootings can be prevented.

While this written summary of exceptions to confidentiality should prove helpful in informing you about potential problems, it is important that you and your treatment provider discuss any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future. The laws governing confidentiality can be quite complex, and PBHP treatment providers are not attorneys. In situations where specific advice is required, formal legal advice may be needed.

PROFESSIONAL RECORDS

The laws and standards of the behavioral health profession require that your treatment provider keep Protected Health Information about you in your Clinical Record. You may examine and/or receive a copy of your Clinical Record, if you request it in writing. Because these are professional records, they can be misinterpreted and/or upsetting to untrained readers. For this reason, PBHP recommends that you initially review them in your treatment provider's presence, or have them forwarded to another mental health professional so you can discuss the contents. **Obtaining these records will cost \$25.00 for the time required to prepare such records.**

PATIENT RIGHTS

HIPAA provides you with several new or expanded rights with regard to your Clinical Record and disclosures of PHI. These rights include requesting that your treatment provider amend your record; requesting restrictions on what information from your Clinical Record is disclosed to others; requesting an account of most disclosures of PHI that you have neither consented to nor authorized; determining the location to which protected information disclosures are sent; having any complaints you make about PBHP policies and procedures recorded in your records; **and the right to a paper copy of this Agreement, the PBHP privacy policies and procedures, and signature pages.** Your treatment provider is happy to discuss any of these rights with you.

RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY REGARDING MINORS

Patients under 12 years of age and their parents should be aware that the law allows parents to examine their child's treatment records.

Parents of children at least 12 but under 18 years of age cannot examine their child's records unless the child consents to this and unless the treatment provider finds that there are no compelling reasons for denying the access.

Parents are entitled to information concerning their child's current physical and mental condition, diagnosis, treatment needs, services provided, and services needed. **Since parental involvement is often crucial to successful treatment, in most cases, PBHP requires a Collateral Agreement between minors and parents that allows parents access to certain treatment information, including attendance at scheduled sessions, treatment goals and treatment progress.** Any other communication will require the child's Authorization, unless the treatment provider feels that the child is in danger or is a danger to someone else; in this case, the treatment provider will notify the parents of the concern. Before giving parents any information, the treatment provider will discuss the matter with the child, if possible, and work to handle any objections the child may have.

BILLING AND PAYMENTS

You will be expected to pay for each session at the time it is held unless agreed otherwise or unless you have insurance coverage, which requires another arrangement. Payment schedules for other professional services will be agreed to when they are requested. In circumstances of usual financial hardship, we may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or payment installment

plan. If you are unable to pay for services, we will assist you in finding mental health providers that will work with your financial needs.

If a payment has not been made to your account for more than 60 days and arrangements have not been agreed upon, we have the option of assessing a \$25 late fee. If you do not attend to the account, we may use legal means to secure payment. This may involve hiring a collection agency or going through small claims court. If such legal action is necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information released regarding a patient's treatment is his/her name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT

In order for us to set realistic treatment goals and priorities, it is important to evaluate what resources you have available to pay for your treatment. If you have a health insurance policy, it will usually provide some coverage for mental health treatment. We will fill out forms and provide you with whatever assistance we can in helping you receive the benefits to which you are entitled. **However, you (not your insurance company) are responsible for full payment of our fees. It is very important that you find out exactly what mental health services your insurance policy covers.**

You should carefully read the section in your insurance coverage booklet that describes mental health services. If you have questions about your coverage, call your plan administrator. We will of course provide you with whatever information we can based upon our experience, and we will be happy to help you in understanding the information you receive from your insurance company. If it is necessary to clear confusion, we are willing to call the company on your behalf.

Due to the rising costs of health care, insurance benefits have become increasingly more complex. It is sometimes difficult to determine exactly how much mental health coverage is available. "Managed Health Care" plans such as HMOs and PPOs often require authorization before they provide reimbursement for mental health services. These plans are often limited to short-term treatment approaches designed to work through specific problems that interfere with a person's usual level of functioning. It may be necessary to seek approval for more therapy after a certain number of sessions. While much can be accomplished in short-term therapy, some patients feel that they need more services after insurance benefits end.

You should also be aware that your contract with your health insurance company requires that you authorize PBHP to provide it with information relevant to the services that have been provided to you. If you are seeing reimbursement for services under your health insurance policy, you will be required to sign an authorization form that allows PBHP to provide such information. Your PBHP treatment provider is required to provide a clinical diagnosis. Sometimes PBHP is required to provide additional clinical information such as treatment plans or summaries, or copies of your entire Clinical Record. In such situations, PBHP will make every effort to release only the minimum information about you that is necessary for the purpose requested. This information will become part of the insurance company's files and will probably be stored in a computer. Though all insurance companies claim to keep such information confidential, PBHP has no control over what they will do with it once it is in their hands. In some cases, they may share the information with a national medical information databank. On your request, you can be provided with a copy of any information submitted.

Your treatment provider can inform you about the information the PBHP business office has obtained about your insurance coverage. At that time, you and your treatment provider can discuss what you can expect to accomplish with the benefits that are available and what will happen if they run out before you feel ready to terminate treatment. It is important to remember that you always have the right to pay for services from PBHP yourself to avoid the problems described above.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The provider's primary concern is the privacy of the patient. In general, the provider does not accept patients or former patients as *personal* friends or contacts on social media websites, as it could compromise confidentiality. If there are any questions, the patient should discuss them with the provider.