

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

Hawkins & Ball is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health care information. If you have questions about any part of this notice or if you want more information about the privacy practices at Hawkins & Ball please contact:

Steve Ball
903-366-3263
P.O. Box 971
Commerce, Texas 75429

Effective Dates of This Notice: April 14, 2003-2026

I. How Hawkins & Ball May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

1. Treatment. Your private health information (PHI) may be reviewed directly by any member of the workforce of Hawkins & Ball, but only to the extent that such review is necessary in order to carry out clinically appropriate assessment or intervention with you, either individually or in a group. The workforce includes all clinical and clerical employees of Hawkins & Ball. All persons who have access to your health information in Hawkins & Ball will be trained in its appropriate use, especially with respect to your rights to privacy and confidentiality. Clinicians will, for example, review and add to your private health information stored in secured charts (in paper or electronic form) in order to plan and carry out appropriate assessments and interventions. Similarly, clerical members of the workforce will store your chart and occasionally will be required to view and make additions to it, based on contact with you by phone or in person.
2. Payment. Your PHI may be reviewed directly by any member of the workforce (as defined above) of Hawkins & Ball, but only to the extent that such review is necessary in order to ensure that we receive payment for the services we provide you. Clerical members of the workforce will, for instance, occasionally review your chart to determine if your account is current, and in order to secure payment from you for services we provide you (or, perhaps, from relevant third party payors).
3. Regular Health Care Operations. Your health information may be reviewed directly by any member of the workforce (as defined above) of Hawkins & Ball, but only to the extent that such review is necessary in order to ensure that we are able to conduct our regular health care operations in regard to the services we provide you. All members of the workforce may at times handle and review portions of your PHI in your chart in order to ensure that we carry out our normal operating procedures involved in assessment, intervention, and orderly record keeping. A designated member of the clerical members of the workforce will, for instance, remove files from a secure area for relevant review by the clinicians working with your case or their supervisors.
4. Information Provided to You. You may, for example, request a copy of a report or medical record to be delivered directly to you.
5. Directory. We may list your name, where you have received services in our facility, and your general medical or psychological condition. This directory will be for internal purposes only and will not be distributed. Members of the workforce of Hawkins & Ball may review it as necessary in order to conduct their respective activities within our offices.
6. Notification and Communication with Family. Within the restrictions of state and federal law, we may disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care about your location, your general condition, or in the event of your death. If you are able and available to agree or object, we will give you the opportunity to object prior to making this notification. If you are unable or unavailable to agree or object, our licensed health professionals will use their best judgment in communication with your family and others. At Hawkins & Ball such disclosure is extremely rare, since existing privacy, privilege, and confidentiality laws governing the practice of psychology generally do not permit us to release your health information except to persons authorized by you in writing to receive it. No one has ever died while at the offices of Hawkins & Ball, and, since we are an outpatient facility and do not treat imminently life-threatening conditions, referring them instead to other, more appropriate facilities, we do not anticipate such a circumstance. Of course, if such a thing should happen, we will behave according to the privacy practices above.

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7. Required by Law. As required by law, we may use and disclose your PHI. If, for instance, you are in a state of mind such that you present an immediate danger to yourself or others, we are required by law to notify appropriate authorities of the danger.
8. Public Health. As required by law, we may disclose your PHI to public health authorities for purposes related to: preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability; reporting child abuse or neglect; reporting domestic violence; reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medication; and reporting disease or infection exposure.
9. Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose your PHI to health agencies during the course of audits, investigations, inspections, licensure, or other proceedings.
10. Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. We may disclose your PHI in the course of any administrative or judicial proceeding. Existing privacy, privilege, and confidentiality laws governing the practice of psychology often restrict the extent to which disclosure is possible. Generally, disclosure in legal situations is more likely under criminal law than civil law.
11. Law Enforcement. We may disclose your PHI to a law enforcement official for purposes such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order or subpoena, and other law enforcement purposes. Existing privacy, privilege, and confidentiality laws governing the practice of psychology often restrict the extent to which disclosure is possible, but a court order issued by a judge or magistrate with appropriate jurisdiction can usually override such restrictions.
12. Deceased Person Information. We may disclose your PHI to coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors. This form of disclosure is rare at Hawkins & Ball, i.e., it has never happened.
13. Organ Donation. We may disclose your PHI to organizations involved in procuring, banking, or transplanting organs and tissues. This form of disclosure is rare at Hawkins & Ball, i.e., it has never happened.
14. Research. We may disclose your PHI to researchers conducting research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board. When possible, we will inform you if such a disclosure is imminent, giving you the opportunity to opt out of such participation.
15. Public Safety. We may disclose your PHI to appropriate persons in order to prevent or lessen a serious imminent threat to the health or safety of a particular person or the general public.
16. Specialized Government Functions. We may disclose your PHI for military, national security, and prisoner purposes, as required by Texas and federal law.
17. Worker's Compensation. We may disclose your PHI as necessary to comply with worker's compensation laws.
18. Marketing. We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or to give you information about other treatments or health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.
19. Fund-raising. We may contact you to participate in fund-raising activities for Hawkins & Ball, or, more typically, for a deserving charity.
20. Change of Ownership. In the event that Hawkins & Ball is sold or merged with another organization, your PHI/record/chart will become the property of the new owner or organization, unless other provisions are made in federal or state law.

II. When Hawkins & Ball May Not Use or Disclose Your Health Information

Except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices, Hawkins & Ball will not use or disclose your PHI without your written authorization. If you do authorize Hawkins & Ball to disclose your PHI for another purpose, you may revoke your authorization in writing at any time.

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III. Your Health Information Rights

1. You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your PHI. Hawkins & Ball is not required to agree to the restriction that you have requested. You may, for example, request that information pertaining to abuse of a child or an elderly person not be reported to the appropriate authorities, but we would choose to report anyway, since failing to do so would place us in violation of the law. You could also ask us to remove information pertaining to substance use from an assessment report that you have asked us to forward to another professional. In that case, we would discuss the request with you, and we would decide to honor your request or not, depending on how necessary that information is in providing an adequate or complete report or the extent to which the receiving professional has a need to know the information.
2. You have the right to receive your health care information through a reasonable alternative means or at an alternative location. You must request such alternatives in writing, and we will discuss the costs with you in advance. In most instances involving faxing or mailing your PHI, the minimum fee to you will be \$15.00, but for large volumes of material, or for unusual or otherwise costly procedures, the fee will be somewhat larger. We will discuss these costs with you in advance.
3. You have the right to inspect and copy your PHI. In order to do this, you should contact Hawkins & Ball by phone or in writing and make an appointment to copy your documents. We will copy the documents for you for \$0.25 per 8.5"x11" page, and up to \$1.00 per page for other documents, plus a \$10.00 service charge.
4. You have the right to request that Hawkins & Ball amend your PHI that is incorrect or incomplete. Hawkins & Ball is not required to change your PHI, and we will provide you with information about Hawkins & Ball's denial and how you can disagree with the denial. Most of the time we are eager to correct errors and complete information in your PHI file. We would deny such changes only if we believed that the original PHI was correct or complete.
5. You have a right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your PHI made by Hawkins & Ball, except that Hawkins & Ball does not have to account for the disclosures described in parts 1 (treatment), 2 (payment), 3 (health care operations), 4 (information provided to you), 5 (directory listings), and 16 (certain government functions) of Section I of this Notice of Privacy Practices. When accounting for disclosures to you, we will mail you a certified letter through the United States Postal Service to the last address you have given us.
6. You have a right to a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices.

If you would like to have a more detailed explanation of these rights or if you would like to exercise one or more of these rights, contact

Steven E. Ball
903-366-3263
P.O. Box 971
Commerce, Texas 75429

IV. Changes to This Notice of Privacy Practices

Hawkins & Ball reserves the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time in the future. Until such amendment is made, Hawkins & Ball is required by law to comply with this notice.

In order to inform you of changes in the Notice of Privacy Practices, we will initially contact you by telephone, but if we are not successful, we will mail you a first class letter through the United States Postal Service to the last address you have given us.

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V. Complaints

Complaints about this Notices of Privacy Practices or how Hawkins & Ball handles your PHI should be directed to:

Steven E. Ball
903-366-3263
1134 Main Street
P.O. Box 971
Commerce, Texas 75429

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this office handles a complaint, you may submit a formal complaint to:

Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg.
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201