



# CLEAR HARBOR COUNSELING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION STATEMENT

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Clear Harbor Counseling uses electronic means of communication to make it easier to talk to your therapist regarding appointment scheduling, appointment cancelling, and billing or insurance questions. Electronic means of communication should never be used for crisis situations or to discuss therapy topics that should be addressed in session. Your therapist will not be accessing their messages in the evenings or on weekends. Crisis situations should always be directed to the local crisis lines or the local emergency room. CHC also uses electronic communication for virtual visits or telehealth. Any co-payments that are required apply to telehealth visits as well.

CHC takes measures to ensure our communication is secure and private. There are inherent weaknesses in all forms of electronic communication which can place information at risk for outside persons to access. By engaging in services with CHC you are acknowledging the risks in using electronic communication and will not hold CHC liable for breaches of information related to systems outside of the control of CHC.

## **Spruce Health**

This is an app that you can download for free from your app store. Your therapist will send you a link to use so you can set up an account. This account is also free. This app allows you to send text (SMS) messages to your therapist in a secure and HIPAA-compliant way. The content of your messages with your therapist are stored by Spruce and not on the actual phones themselves. Messages sent using this app are encrypted and more secure than typical text messages. Sending text messages to the therapist's phone will not be encrypted and therefore should only be sent through the app.

Spruce Health is also used for telehealth visits. Telehealth visits refer to therapy sessions that take place over video. Spruce Health is a HIPAA-compliant app that is approved for use in the delivery of telehealth. The laws that protect privacy and the confidentiality of medical information also apply to telehealth. Videos of therapy are not recorded in the app or anywhere else. Documentation of the session is done in the medical record.



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## **Zoom**

CHC uses the video service Zoom for telehealth in addition to the above named Spruce Health. CHC uses the encrypted version of the application designed for healthcare visits. CHC has a business agreement with Zoom that ensures that our visits are covered by their security processes.

## **Gmail**

CHC uses GSuite (a section of Gmail) for outgoing email communication. CHC has signed a Business Associate Agreement with Google which protects the contents of our emails from being accessed by Google for other purposes. This does not guarantee that an outside entity cannot hack into emails. The emails themselves are not encrypted. Clients should be cautious about what information they send via email as CHC cannot guarantee its security.

## **Therapy Notes**

Therapy Notes is the name of the Electronic Medical Record that CHC uses. There is a portal for clients that you may choose to use. The portal has a number of functions including the ability for secure transmission of documents (if your therapist wants to send you something), clients can sign documents electronically and probably most importantly it allows clients to schedule their own appointments and see when their therapist is available. Use of this portal is also optional. If you wish to use the portal, your therapist can send you a link to get signed up. There is no charge for this service.