

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc Handbook

Client's Rights and Responsibilities

At Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc., you are both protected by certain rights and also have certain responsibilities which support the services you receive.

You have the right:

- To understand the availability of services you need, what services you will be using and H.O.M.E. expectations and rules for using those services.
- To understand documents you are asked to sign.
- To be heard in court and have representation in court.
- To medical care, education, and permanency.
- To be treated with courtesy, dignity and kindness without regard to race, sex, religion, age or disability.
- To receive quality services, given by a qualified staff member in a professional and timely manner.
- To expect that employees working on behalf of H.O.M.E. will comply with all laws which protect you and your baby from abuse.
- To have your rights to confidentiality and privacy respected and upheld within the limits of the law.
- To know that your record may be reviewed for quality and compliance and that people from other monitoring agencies also may review your record.
- To participate in setting up and reviewing your services/goal plan.
- To understand the rules and conditions related to H.O.M.E. discontinuing services.
- To refuse services, unless law or court order has limited your rights, and to be informed of what will happen if you refuse services.
- To file a grievance and to be given a copy of the H.O.M.E. consumer grievance procedure.

Client Responsibilities

1. Follow all house rules
2. Attend all parenting and life skill classes
3. Take care of your baby
4. Attend school with passing grades
5. Show respect to all staff, volunteers and other residents
6. Participate in individual and group counseling
7. Attend all medical appointments for you and your child and be compliant with medications.
8. To be honest in giving information that is requested by H.O.M.E. in order to be provided services.
9. To comply with H.O.M.E. rules, policies, and requests.
10. To work towards all service plan goals and any other request that has been agreed upon.
11. To respect the privacy and confidentiality of others receiving services.
12. To behave in a manner that does not threaten or endanger another person and to understand that such activity could cause H.O.M.E. to discontinue services.
13. To take care of your child/children

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc. Rights and Responsibilities

- Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc. has the right to serve you according to the staff and programs offered and available. A waiting list will become available when people needing services exceed program capacity. H.O.M.E. may provide you with information about other agencies that offer similar services if our program capacity is full. H.O.M.E. has the right to deny services, whether short or long term, to anyone who threatens the health or well being of others or who does not meet her obligations to H.O.M.E.
- Hands of Mercy Everywhere has the right to deny admission based on level of care need for mother and/or baby.
- H.O.M.E. offers high quality services and will schedule appointments and activities that are helpful to you. We will strive to make our services as accessible and convenient as possible.
- H.O.M.E. is responsible for protecting your privacy/confidentiality except when required by law if abuse or neglect is suspected.
- H.O.M.E. is responsible for obtaining your ideas and help in developing and carrying out your service/treatment plan.
- H.O.M.E. is responsible for hiring qualified staff.
- H.O.M.E. is responsible for providing services in safe and clean buildings.
- All H.O.M.E. staff is required by law to report suspicion of child abuse.

If Hands of Mercy Everywhere staff considers someone receiving services as an immediate danger to herself or others, the staff member must:

- Consult with mental health professionals and, in some incidences, call 911 for crisis intervention;
- Determine if involuntary hospitalization is needed;
- If possible, notify her family that the resident may be a danger to herself;
- Notify the appropriate law enforcement personnel, unless in the judgment of the staff member and their supervisor, the situation has been resolved without such notification;
- Disclose information needed to resolve the dangerous situation;
- Contact case manager, and CBC after hours line
- Document the situation as an incident and submit within 12-24 hours.

- Contact DCF 188-96-ABUSE

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc Civil Rights

The agency and its contracted providers of client services will provide to all persons with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, and those persons with limited proficiency in the English language, appropriate assistance that is necessary to afford such persons equal opportunity to access and benefit from the services and programs administered by the agency.

Auxiliary aids for clients with sensory impairment may include:

- Amplified telephones and other assistive listening devices and systems;
- TDD/TTY – Text telephone used like a typewriter that can be used by people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired;
- Florida Relay Service (FRS) – A service which enables a hearing person to communicate with a person who is hearing or speech impaired through a specially trained operator called a communication assistant;
- Braille, Large Print, Audio-Tapes and Computer Disks; and
- Qualified American Sign Language interpreters, note takers, and readers.

Assistance for persons with limited proficiency in English may include:

- Hiring bilingual staff
- Hiring staff interpreters or setting up apps on cell phone
- Using volunteer staff interpreters
- Arranging volunteer community interpreters
- Contracting with outside interpreter services
- Telephone interpreter services such as the AT&T Language Line

All qualified clients and/or potential clients are entitled to equal opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services of the agency. This includes reasonable accommodations to ensure that programs and services of the agency are equally accessible to and equally effective for otherwise qualified persons who have hearing, vision or mobility impairments or who are limited in their ability to speak, write, read or otherwise understand English.

Consumers who believe that they have been discriminated against may file a written complaint of discrimination within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act with:

Assistant Staff Director for Civil Rights
DCF Office of Inspector General
Office of Civil Rights
1317 Winewood Boulevard
Building 5, 2nd Floor
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700
(850) 487-1901; TDD (850) 922-9230

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Attention: Office of Civil Rights
Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3870
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909
(404) 563-7881; TDD (404) 331-2867

Confidentiality and Release/Request of Information

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc. follows laws and regulations regarding privacy and protection of information.

“Informed Consent” means that you or your legal guardian will know exactly what you are agreeing to do.

“Confidential Information” includes drug, alcohol, and/or mental health information about you.

All information regarding past, present and future clients and/or their relatives is considered to be confidential and is covered by these procedures.

Need to Know Basis

1. Information is shared among staff, agencies, and parents/foster parents only on a need-to-know basis. Under no circumstances will a staff member share information about past, present and future clients outside his/her responsibilities and duties as a staff member working on a specific case. If approached by an individual seeking information outside these parameters, the staff member will decline to offer information and direct the individual to the appropriate agency staff.

2. Staff will practice extreme diligence in sharing information only in staff secure areas. Staff will not discuss clients in common areas of the facility where members of the public may hear such information.

3. Volunteers who work with H.O.M.E. are also subject to the need-to-know rule. Staff members who oversee the work of volunteers will share minimal information with volunteers about specific clients, sharing information only to the extent that it impacts the scope of the volunteer’s work with the client. For example, a volunteer who tutors a child may be told that the child is experiencing difficulty in school performance, but the same volunteer is not to be told personal information about

the client, his family, the status of the case, or the problems that brought the family under the supervision of H.O.M.E.

4. All agency staff, providers, volunteers and caregivers will receive appropriate training on confidentiality and ethical standards.

Access to Records

1. At no time is information regarding clients and/or relatives and/or other relations to be released to any person without prior written consent of the client, or in the event of a minor child, his/her parent or legal guardian, or under subpoena of the judicial system.

2. At no time are there to be public appearances by children involving publicity or fundraising without written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. All appearances are strictly voluntary.

3. Photographs will not be taken of children without written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. (Exceptions are the required photographs for identification purposes).

4. All client records will be handled in a manner which will protect the nature of the information contained within them.

5. All automated records meet standards for security to ensure all users see only the information appropriate for their needs.

6. All records regarding clients are considered the property of the agency.

If H.O.M.E. needs confidential information from another agency or provider, a H.O.M.E. staff member will:

- review what information is needed and why, with you and/or your legal guardian.
- Ask you or your legal guardian to sign the "Consent or Authorization to Release Confidential Information" indicating that you agree to have the necessary information released.

H.O.M.E. cannot get your confidential information without the “Consent or Authorization to Release Confidential Information” which includes:

- Name of the source being requested for information;
- The information that is being requested;
- Listing H.O.M.E. as the agency requesting the information;
- The date the request form is valid; and
- The date of signature

If you are unable to give your “informed consent” or if the lack of information requested might result in harm to you, then a ‘Consent or Authorization to Release Confidential Information’ form shall be authorized by two H.O.M.E. supervisory staff.

Notice of H.O.M.E. Privacy Practices

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.

This information may be about services or health care given to you or payment for that care. It may be about your past, present, or future medical condition or services. H.O.M.E. is required by law to give you this “Notice of Privacy Practices” explaining our legal duties about your medical information in the way that H.O.M.E. describes in this Notice. If H.O.M.E. changes this Notice, we will post a new notice in our waiting areas and have copies for you at your request. Contact your caseworker if you have questions or need any of the forms listed in this information.

H.O.M.E. may use and share your medical information in a few situations.

1. Treatment: To give or coordinate your health care and related services by talking with other health care givers.
2. Payment: To obtain payment from your insurers, collection agencies, and consumer reporting agencies either for services that you received or before you receive certain services in order to know whether the insurance plan will pay for a service.
3. Business Operations:
 - Evaluate the skills and performances of caregivers taking care
 - Training programs and orientation for care givers.
 - Cooperating with licensing authorities and government agencies.
 - Reviewing the quality of your care.
 - Managing the care of people who have similar problems.
 - Planning for H.O.M.E. future operations.
 - Resolving grievances.

- Reviewing H.O.M.E. activities and using information in the event of H.O.M.E. system changes.
- Working with this notice and other laws.

4. Persons involved in your care: H.O.M.E. may share your medical information with a relative, close personal friend or a person you identify if that person is involved in your care and the information is about your care. If the consumer is a minor, H.O.M.E. may share medical information about the minor with a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the minor except in some situations.

5. Required by Law: To report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families.

6. National Priority Uses and Sharing: When permitted by law, H.O.M.E. may use or share your medical information without your permission for various activities that are recognized as “national priorities” such as:

- Threat to health or safety – If H.O.M.E. believes it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to health or safety.
- Public health activities – For public health activities.
- Abuse, neglect or domestic violence – If H.O.M.E. believes that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- Health oversight activities – A review by a health oversight agency
- Court proceedings – A review by a court or an officer of the court (such as an attorney) if a judge orders us to do so.
- Law enforcement – A review by a law enforcement official for specific law enforcement purposes.
- Coroners and others – A review by a coroner, medical examiner, funeral director or to an organ donor or transplant agencies.
- Worker’s compensation – To comply with worker’s compensation laws.
- Research organizations – To research organizations after they satisfy conditions about protecting the privacy or medical information.
- Certain government functions – For certain government functions, including but not limited to military and veterans’ activities, national security and intelligence activities, and correctional institutions in some situations.

7. Authorization: Other than the uses and sharing listed above, H.O.M.E. will not use or share your medical information without your or a parent or guardian’s signed permission on a correct form. You may later cancel your permission form

by writing us a letter canceling your permission. Certain programs may have more legally required restrictions on disclosure of your medical information.

Other Services Provided by Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc.

- An appropriate evaluation of your needs
- A service plan which meets your needs
- Counseling
- A list of government benefits you may be eligible to receive
- Trained staff to meet your needs
- Visits with your friends, parents or legal caregivers
- A reunification plan to help you return to your family if safe to do so
- A home environment
- The opportunity to attend the school which is best for you
- Assistance in participating in school activities and career planning

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc. will work with you in order to provide normalcy to your life.