



# NETWORK OF CARE

## FAQs for Helpline Center Network of Care Partner Agencies

This document is intended to support Helpline Center Network of Care (HCNC) partner agencies in understanding the HCNC system. The following provides information and guidance for often-asked questions about the network, Release of Information (ROI) consent, collecting data, and information sharing.

## FAQs for HCNC Participation

### Where is HCNC geographically available?

- The HCNC system is available to all Sioux Empire, Brookings, and Watertown communities and surrounding counties served by these communities.
- A list of partner agencies in each community is available upon email request to [hcnc@helplinecenter.org](mailto:hcnc@helplinecenter.org).

### Is there a cost to join HCNC?

- There is no cost for a client to be registered into the HCNC system.
- In the Sioux Empire community, there may be a cost for agencies to join HCNC.
- In the Brookings and Watertown communities, there is no cost for agencies to join HCNC at this time.
- The HCNC system is currently being funded by a Bush Foundation grant in the Brookings and Watertown communities until August 31, 2024. Continued conversations to discuss a sustainability plan to cover costs beyond that date is dependent on each community's partner agencies and supports.
- For a full pricing list on community costs, please email [hcnc@helplinecenter.org](mailto:hcnc@helplinecenter.org).

### Who can be registered in the HCNC system?

- In order for a client to complete an intake and be registered into the HCNC system, they must be 18 years or older, or, in the case of a minor, have a signed ROI by a parent or guardian.
- Information related to minors under the age of 18 may be entered under the household section of a parent or guardian who is in the system. This type of information may be collected when services or program eligibility request information on children or other household members.



## NETWORK OF CARE

- Additional household members may be entered under the household section of a client receiving services. The client ROI gives permission to share household information.

### **Is HCNC HIPAA Compliant?**

- HCNC is HIPAA-enabled with auditing capabilities of all user activity. All Users accessing the HCNC system must read and adhere to the Helpline Center Network of Care Policies and Procedures.
- All Users are trained in HIPAA standards to protect client privacy. Client's information is kept confidential except where law requires mandatory reporting.

### FAQs for Consent Agreement and Data Privacy

#### **What type of information does HCNC collect and why?**

- Data collected includes, but is not limited to, identifying information such as name, date of birth, and contact information, as well as demographic information, needs and service information, and other information necessary to connect clients and their households with the appropriate programs and services.
- The information collected helps agencies better understand client's needs, what programs they may qualify for, and identify what services or programs clients may already be connected to.

#### **What type of information is shared?**

- Information that may be shared includes identifying information such as name, date of birth, contact information, demographic information, past services provided to clients by HCNC partner organizations, health insurance information, disabling conditions, household information, and information about finances, employment and housing needs.

#### **Is a client able to receive services if they do not sign the consent form?**

- Clients are able to receive services without a consent form. When services are provided to the client, their data can still be entered into the system but will only be visible to the providing agency and not other partner agencies in the network.
- Clients who decline to sign the consent form will be searchable and viewable only by the providing agency, but the client will not be able to benefit from electronic referrals to other partner agencies in HCNC.



## NETWORK OF CARE

### **Who can see and share information in HCNC?**

- By signing the consent form, clients authorize your organization and each organization that participates in the HCNC system, to use, store, and share their information.
- All tabs in a client record are viewable by the whole network except for:
  - Case Notes
  - Program Services
  - Additional assessments/applications customized to agency needs/wants
- Partner agencies who have access to a client's record are professionals and held at a standard to protect client's information and only access their data if they are involved in a client's/family's care.

### **Why is registering a client in the HCNC system beneficial?**

- Once a client is registered in the system, a client record is created and gives you an opportunity to record and track the services your organization is providing to a client/their family.
- Easily collects basic client information and demographics to support data reporting and grant funding opportunities.
- By a client signing the consent agreement, your staff can use information collected at other partner agencies including their common intake, their service history, and the outcomes of those services, which cuts down on duplicate data entry and allows the client to be assisted quicker.
- A client signing the consent form makes it possible for agencies to provide electronic referrals with partner agencies on the client's behalf to connect them with additional needed services/programs.

### **Are there any situations when I should avoid requesting consent from a client?**

- Unable to understand the language in which the information is provided.
- Incoherent or unable to understand what they are signing due to illness, mental condition, or being under the influence of medication, drugs, or alcohol.



## NETWORK OF CARE

### FAQs for Social Determinates of Health (SDOH)/Social Needs Assessment

*\*SDOH/Social Needs is an optional assessment for partner agencies to utilize if they choose*

**Below are examples of ways to respond to client's question about the purpose behind the social needs assessment and what the information is used for:**

The social needs assessment is a screening tool that is being offered to help connect clients to services in your community that may improve their social wellness and health. Many of these services are low cost or free of charge. By clients answering these questions, partner agencies may be able to provide clients with connections to services or programs that may help them. Client's information will be kept confidential except where law requires mandatory reporting. Clients should answer the questions in their own way. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Let clients know you offer to screen everyone currently enrolled in HCNC.
- Let clients know that HCNC offers periodic rescreening because clients' circumstances may change in a span of weeks to months.
- Let clients know the assessment only takes 5 - 10 minutes.
- Remind clients that the goal is to identify resources that could be helpful to them and that their information is still valuable even if they do not have any pressing needs at the time.

*For questions or for clarification about HCNC or consent authorization, please email*

[hcnc@helplinecenter.org](mailto:hcnc@helplinecenter.org)