

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES CONCERNING THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is committed to providing personal and psychological counseling. Counseling is offered to persons affected by sexual abuse by clergy or other personnel and in other circumstances where the Archdiocese offers to provide counseling. The counseling services are provided regardless of any pending legal actions against the Archdiocese. This assistance is a pastoral outreach and is not an expression of guilt or liability on the part of anyone.

The Victims Assistance Ministry Office of the Archdiocese oversees the arrangements and payments for treatment and assists in the healing process through pastoral outreach, arranging for psychological counseling and developing other strategies that meet particular needs.

The following statements of policy are guidelines only. Each case is addressed on an individual basis.

Therapist Qualification Procedures. The Archdiocese maintains a list of qualified therapists experienced in treating individuals and families affected by sexual misconduct and will provide a referral upon request. Individuals may also select a qualified therapist. To be qualified for payment by the Archdiocese, a therapist must provide the Victims Assistance Ministry Office a copy of a currently valid California license to practice, evidence of customary current malpractice coverage, and details of professional experience in treating victims of sexual abuse. The Victims Assistance Ministry Office will coordinate with the victim/survivor or family in selecting a therapist from the Archdiocese's list or in qualifying a therapist identified by the victim/survivor or his/her family.

Initial Evaluation. An assessment of one to three sessions, generally done to allow the therapist to address immediate concerns and to work with the Victims Assistance Ministry Office in developing an appropriate plan of treatment.

Therapy Plan and Reports. If the initial evaluation results in a recommendation for longer-term therapy, the therapist and the Victims Assistance Ministry Office will develop a treatment plan for up to 26 sessions. The therapist is required to provide the Victims Assistance Ministry Office with a clinical treatment report at the completion of any treatment plan of fewer than 10 sessions or after each 10 sessions, as applicable. If more than 26 sessions are being considered, the report after the second 10 sessions must be received in sufficient time for a decision to be made concerning payment for sessions beyond the 26 sessions. An evaluation of future treatment is made after every 10 sessions if the sessions extend beyond 26 sessions. A written clinical treatment report does not assure that future sessions will be covered by the Archdiocese, but the report is required before the sessions can be authorized. If a request for additional therapy is denied, the patient may request that clinical information be received and reviewed by the Clinical Advisory Panel for the Victims Assistance Ministry Office to determine whether further treatment should be approved. **In order to comply with HIPPA requirements, please DO NOT FAX or email any reports to our office.**

Psychotropic Medication. If the treating therapist concludes that the treatment plan requires psychotropic medication, the therapist must consult with the Victims Assistance Ministry Office and a coordinated referral must be made for an independent psychotropic medication evaluation by a qualified psychiatrist.

Residential Treatment. Residential treatment at a psychiatric facility or substance abuse recovery center is funded and authorized by the Archdiocese on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Victims Assistance Ministry office and the patient's treating therapist(s) and physician(s).

Health Insurance. The Victims Assistance Ministry Office will coordinate with victims/survivors and therapists to access health insurance payments and programs that may be available to them. As appropriate, the Archdiocese will assist a victim/survivor by paying or reimbursing health insurance premiums.

Fees and Payments. The Archdiocese will pay normal and customary fees for weekly one-hour sessions with psychologists, marriage and family therapists or licensed clinical social workers, and, as noted above, for psychiatric evaluation and psychotropic medication in certain cases. The Archdiocese does not pay for missed or cancelled appointments, telephone consultations, or for the preparation of normal and customary clinical treatment reports including the required progress reports. The Archdiocese pays for psychiatric confinement for short-term evaluation on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Victims Assistance Ministry office in coordination with or as a supplement to health insurance coverage. All therapists are required to cooperate with the Archdiocese to provide information required by the insurance companies that insure the entities in the Archdiocese. The obligation of the Archdiocese to pay fees or other amounts is discontinued on the effective date of any settlement or other resolution of litigation between a victim and the Archdiocese.

Billing. All invoices for treatment and other approved costs should be submitted to the Victims Assistance Ministry Office by the treating therapist(s) or physician(s). When medication or other non-treatment costs have been previously approved, the victim/survivor or his/her family or representative may be reimbursed directly. The invoices must include the name of the patient and treatment details, the therapist's license number and Social Security or Federal tax identification number and other customary billing information. All statements should be forwarded to:

Victims Assistance Ministry Office/3rd Floor
Attention: Dr. Heather Banis, Coordinator
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
3424 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90010-2202

Review and Modification of Policy. The Archdiocese will review this Statement of Policy and Guidelines on a regular basis and the Archdiocese may modify or terminate the guidelines and payments; but in the event of any changes, the Archdiocese will continue to pay for any treatment, medication or other assistance already in process and previously approved.

Inquiries. Inquiries and questions from treating professionals concerning this Statement of Policy and Guidelines may be referred to the Victims Assistance Ministry Office, as follows:

Dr. Heather T. Banis, Coordinator
Victims Assistance Ministry Office

HBanis@la-archdiocese.org
(213) 637-7650