

622.10 Communications in professional confidence exceptions required consent to release of medical records after commencement of legal action application to court.

1. A practicing attorney, counselor, physician, surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, mental health professional, or the stenographer or confidential clerk of any such person, who obtains information by reason of the person's employment, or a member of the clergy shall not be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communication properly entrusted to the person in the person's professional capacity, and necessary and proper to enable the person to discharge the functions of the person's office according to the usual course of practice or discipline.

2. The prohibition does not apply to cases where the person in whose favor the prohibition is made waives the rights conferred; nor does the prohibition apply to physicians or surgeons, physician assistants, advanced registered nurse practitioners, mental health professionals, or to the stenographer or confidential clerk of any physicians or surgeons, physician assistants, advanced registered nurse practitioners, or mental health professionals, in a civil action in which the condition of the person in whose favor the prohibition is made is an element or factor of the claim or defense of the person or of any party claiming through or under the person. The evidence is admissible upon trial of the action only as it relates to the condition alleged.

3. *a.* In a civil action in which the condition of the plaintiff in whose favor the prohibition is made is an element or factor of the claim or defense of the adverse party or of any party claiming through or under the adverse party, the adverse party shall make a written request for records relating to the condition alleged upon the plaintiff's counsel for a legally sufficient patient's waiver under federal and state law. Upon receipt of a written request, the plaintiff shall execute the patient's waiver and release it to the adverse party making the request within sixty days of receipt of the written request. The patient's waiver may require a physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional to do all of the following:

(1) Provide a complete copy of the patient's records including, but not limited to, any reports or diagnostic imaging relating to the condition alleged.

(2) Consult with the attorney for the adverse party prior to providing testimony regarding the plaintiff's medical history and the condition alleged and opinions regarding health etiology and prognosis for the condition alleged subject to the limitations in paragraph "*c*".

b. If a plaintiff fails to sign a waiver within the prescribed time period, the court may order disclosure or compliance. The failure of a party to comply with the court's order may be grounds for dismissal of the action or any other relief authorized under the rules of civil procedure.

c. Any physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional who provides records, provides information during consultation, or otherwise responds in good faith to a request pursuant to paragraph "*a*" shall be immune with respect to all civil or criminal penalties, claims, or actions of any kind with respect to this section.

d. Any physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional who provides records or consults with the counsel for the adverse party shall be entitled to charge a reasonable fee for production of the records, diagnostic imaging, and consultation. Any party seeking consultation shall be responsible for payment of all charges. The fee for copies of any records shall be based upon actual cost of production.

e. Defendant's counsel shall provide a written notice to plaintiff's counsel in a manner consistent with the Iowa rules of civil procedure providing for notice of deposition at least ten days prior to any meeting with plaintiff's physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional. Plaintiff's counsel has the right to be present at all such meetings, or participate in telephonic

communication with the physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional and counsel for the defendant. Plaintiff's counsel may seek a protective order structuring all communication by making application to the court at any time.

f. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to actions or claims brought pursuant to chapter 85, 85A, or 85B.

4. If an adverse party desires the oral deposition, either discovery or evidentiary, of a physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional to which the prohibition would otherwise apply or the stenographer or confidential clerk of a physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional or desires to call a physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional to which the prohibition would otherwise apply or the stenographer or confidential clerk of a physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional as a witness at the trial of the action, the adverse party shall file an application with the court for permission to do so. The court upon hearing, which shall not be ex parte, shall grant permission unless the court finds that the evidence sought does not relate to the condition alleged and shall fix a reasonable fee to be paid to the physician or surgeon, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or mental health professional by the party taking the deposition or calling the witness.

5. For the purposes of this section, "*mental health professional*" means a psychologist licensed under chapter 154B, a registered nurse licensed under chapter 152, a social worker licensed under chapter 154C, a marital and family therapist licensed under chapter 154D, a mental health counselor licensed under chapter 154D, or an individual holding at least a master's degree in a related field as deemed appropriate by the board of behavioral science.

6. A qualified school guidance counselor, who has met the certification and accreditation standards of the department of education as provided in section 256.11, subsection 10, who obtains information by reason of the counselor's employment as a qualified school guidance counselor shall not be allowed, in giving testimony, to disclose any confidential communications properly entrusted to the counselor by a pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian in the counselor's capacity as a qualified school guidance counselor and necessary and proper to enable the counselor to perform the counselor's duties as a qualified school guidance counselor.

[C51, § 2393, 2394; R60, § 3985, 3986; C73, § 3643; C97, §4608; S13, § 4608; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, § **11263**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 622.10; 82 Acts, ch 1242, § 1]

88 Acts, ch 1134, § 107; 88 Acts, ch 1262, § 10; 91 Acts, ch 229, §11; 97 Acts, ch 197, § 8, 16; 2007 Acts, ch 10, §179

Footnotes

Wounds and burn injuries connected to criminal offenses;
§147.112 and 147.113A

Disclosures of mental health and psychological information,
see chapter 228