

Consent for Online Patient-Doctor Communication

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1. RISK OF ONLINE CONTACT:

Dr. Jacqueline Jones (hereafter known as the provider) offers the patient and or patient's guardian (hereafter known as patient/guardian) the opportunity to communicate with the provider electronically. This type of contact has a number of risks that the patient/guardian should consider before using this mode of communication. The use of advanced online security features reduces, but may not eliminate, all of these risks. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Messages can be circulated, forwarded, and stored in numerous paper and electronic files.
- b. Messages can be immediately broadcast worldwide and be received by many intended and unintended recipients.
- c. Messages can be misaddressed
- d. Electronic documents are easier to falsify than handwritten and/or signed documents
- e. Backup copies of messages may exist even after the sender or the recipient has deleted his or her copy.
- f. Employers and online services have a right to archive and inspect material transmitted through their systems.
- g. Electronic messages may be intercepted, altered, forwarded or used without authorization or detection.
- h. Online communication can be used to introduce viruses into computer systems.
- i. Messages can be used as evidence in legal proceedings.

2. CONDITIONS FOR USE OF ONLINE CONTACT:

The provider will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of information sent and received electronically. However, because of the risks outlined above, the provider cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of online communication, and will not be liable for improper disclosure of confidential information that is not caused by the provider's intentional misconduct. Thus, the patient/guardian must consent to the use of the Internet or other electronic means for the transmission of medical information. Consent to the use of electronic communication includes agreement with the following conditions:

- a. All messages to or from the patient/guardian may be printed out and made a part of the patient's medical record. Because they are a part of the record, other individuals authorized to access the record (such as staff and billing personnel) will have access to these messages.
- b. The provider may forward these messages internally within the practice to the staff and agents as necessary for diagnosis, treatment, reimbursement and other handling. The provider will not, however, forward messages to independent third parties without the patient's/guardian's prior written consent, except as authorized and required by law.
- c. Although the provider will endeavor to read and respond promptly to messages from the patient/guardian, the provider cannot guarantee that any particular e-mail will be read and responded to within any particular period of time. Thus, the patient/guardian shall not use the Internet or texting for medical emergencies or other time-sensitive matters in place

- of more immediate methods of contact (i.e. telephone)
- d. If the patient's/guardian's message requires or invites a response from the provider, and the patient/guardian has not received a response within a reasonable time period, it is the patient's/guardian's responsibility to follow up to determine whether the intended recipient received the message and whether the recipient will respond.
 - e. The patient/guardian should use careful judgment before using electronic systems to communicate regarding sensitive medical information, such as that involving sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS/HIV, mental health, developmental disability or substance abuse.
 - f. The patient/guardian is responsible for informing the provider of any types of information the patient/guardian does not want to be transmitted electronically, in addition to those mentioned in 2e above.
 - g. The patient/guardian is responsible for protecting his or her password or other means of access to the Internet and any secure messaging service. The provider is not responsible for breaches of confidentiality caused by the patient or any third party.
 - h. The provider shall not engage in online communication that is otherwise deemed unlawful.
 - i. It is the patient's/guardian's responsibility to follow up and/or schedule an appointment as necessary.

3. INSTRUCTIONS:

To communicate electronically, the patient/guardian shall:

- a. Inform the provider of any changes in his or her Internet or telecommunications access that would affect communication
- b. Include the patient's (and guardian's) full name in any messages
- c. Follow any and all instructions generated by the messaging system, including requested

information to facilitate message delivery

- d. Review the message to ensure that all relevant information is included before sending it to the provider
- e. Take precautions to preserve the confidentiality of online messages, such as preventing the use of his or her computer by unauthorized persons.
- f. Withdraw this consent by written communication with the provider.

4. PATIENT/GUARDIAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT:

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I understand the risks and benefits associated with electronic communication with this health care provider, and consent to the conditions outlined herein. In addition, I agree to the instructions outlined herein, as well as any other instructions that the provider may impose to communicate with patients/guardians electronically. Any questions that I may have had were answered.

Patient Name

Patient Date of Birth

Guardian name (if patient is under 18)

Relationship of guardian to patient

Patient signature (or guardian if under 18)

Date signed

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