

## Patient Portal Terms of Use Policy and Procedures & Patient Agreement to Abide by Terms of Use

The Family Physicians offer secure viewing and communication through our Patient Portal as a service to patients who wish to view parts of their records and communicate with our staff. Secure messaging can be a valuable communications tool, but has certain risks. By signing the Agreement to Abide by the Terms of Use, you accept the risks and agree to follow Terms of Use, as described below.

### I. Terms of Use – General Policies and Procedures

**DO NOT** use the Patient Portal to communicate (i) an emergency, (ii) an urgent issue or (iii) sensitive information (e.g. HIV, mental health, work-excuses, etc.)

#### Proper Subject Matter:

- Use the Patient Portal for non-urgent medical questions, lab results, appointment reminders or requests, routine follow-up questions, etc.
- Use the Patient Portal to update your demographic information.
- Be sure that all information that you enter is true, accurate, complete, and updated whenever there is a change.
- Be concise when typing a message.
- Direct medication refill requests to your pharmacy.

#### The Patient Portal has the Following Functions:

- Send and receive e-mail and secure messaging for non-urgent needs.
- View lab, vitals, and radiology results that have been sent to you.
- View and print "continuity of care document."
- View and submit updates to your health information.
- View selected health information (allergies, medications, current problems, past medical history). *\*Note - You can submit changes/additions to your health records, medication lists, etc., but this will not change your permanent record without our review of the information.*
- Request a referral.
- Request an appointment.
- Update your demographic information (i.e. address, phone numbers).
- Send medical records to another provider
- Send patient reminders for routine health maintenance procedures

#### Communications May Become a Part of Medical Record:

- Communication via the Patient Portal may be included in your permanent medical record.

#### Privacy:

- All messages sent to you in the Patient Portal will be encrypted: see section on "Patient Portal Guidelines and Security" for explanation.
- E-mails from you to any staff member should be through the Patient Portal or they are not secure.
- All e-mail address lists will be kept confidential and such lists will not be shared with other parties, unless necessary to carry out Patient Portal operations (e.g. perform system upgrades to the Portal) or required by law.
- A variety of healthcare and administrative personnel (such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, certified medical assistants, clerks, etc) will be involved in reading, processing and replying to your messages and information submitted through the Patient Portal. *(Similar to how phone communication is handled)*. Staff members other than your physician will be involved in receiving your messages and routing them to your doctor, a nurse, or the front desk, as necessary.

- There is no need to notify us that you have read a message, unless you have a question or need further information.
- Read our HIPAA handout for information on how private health information, is handled in or organization. The policy can be viewed on our website or available in paper form at our practicing office.
- If you have concerns, please ask to speak with your nurse, the practice administrator, or the privacy officer.
- Additional contacts are available and may be reached during business hours by calling 620-365-3115.

#### **Response Time:**

- After signing your agreement to abide by the Patient Portal Terms of Use, a “welcome message” will be e-mailed to you. This will provide a link to the Portal login screen. [If you have not received an e-mail from us within three (3) working days, please call the office and notify the receptionist.] *\*Note - we will not respond directly to your e-mail. All communication occurs through the Patient Portal instead.*
- Reasonable efforts will be made to respond to e-mail inquiries within one (1) business day, but no later than three (3) business days, after receipt. Response time may be longer if the Patient Portal service is interrupted for maintenance, upgrades, or emergency repairs related to events beyond our control. In this respect, you agree not to hold The Family Physicians, its physician practices, its physicians, providers or any of its staff, in any way liable or responsible to you for any such modification, suspension, or disruption of the Patient Portal.
- The Patient Portal is checked during our hours of operation, which are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. You are encouraged to use the Patient Portal at any time; however, messages submitted after-hours are held for us until we return the next business day.
- If e-mail is not accessible for any reason, we will attempt to have an automatic response inform you of this as soon as possible.

#### **Changes to these Policies and Procedures:**

- Policies and Procedures and Terms of Use may be modified from time to time.
- If material modifications to the Policies and Procedures are made, information will be posted in the Patient Portal notifying you that a material change has been made.
- If you then continue to use the Patient Portal, you will be deemed to have agreed to follow the modified Policies and Procedures.
- If you do not agree with the modified Policies and Procedures, then you must notify us that you no longer wish to use the Patient Portal.

#### **Medical Advice and Information Disclaimer:**

The Patient Portal may from time to time include information posted by The Family Physicians in the form of news, opinions, or general educational materials that should not be construed as specific medical advice or instruction from The Family Physicians. Nothing in the Patient Portal is intended to be used for medical diagnosis or treatment. The information posted by The Family Physicians on the Patient Portal should not be considered complete, nor should it be relied on to suggest a course of treatment for a particular individual. You should always seek the advice of your physician with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition and you should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you may have read on the Patient Portal. When The Family Physicians posts information provided by a third party, our practice will make reasonable efforts to include a notice that such information is authored by a third party and not by The Family Physicians. Regarding such third-party information, The Family Physicians does not warrant, either expressly or by implication, the factual accuracy of the information posted, nor does it adopt any statement as its own, or warrant any information offered by the author of said information. Although The Family Physicians believes all statements made to be reliable and accurate based upon representations made by the authors themselves, we cannot guarantee that such statements are reliable and accurate and The Family Physicians accepts no fault or liability for any error or omission with respect to such statements.

## **II. Terms of Use - Patient Portal Guidelines and Security**

#### **How Secure Patient Portal Works:**

The Patient Portal is a webpage that uses encryption and other security measures designed to keep unauthorized persons from reading communications, information, or attachments. Secure messages and information are designed to be read only by someone who knows the right password or pass-phrase to log in to the Patient Portal site.

**How to Participate in our Patient Portal:**

Once your Agreement to Abide by the Terms of Use is signed, we will send you an e-mail notification that tells you how to register for the first time. This notification will give you the URL (Internet address) of the website where you can log in. By clicking on the URL you will activate your Internet browser, which will open the website. You will then be able to log in using the user name and password provided. Next you will be able to look in your "message box" and see any new or old messages, or view other parts of your electronic record. Because the connection channel between your computer and the website uses "secure sockets layer" (SSL) technology, you can read or view information on your computer, but it is still encrypted in transmission between the website and your computer.

**Availability of the Patient Portal:**

Access to this secure Patient Portal is an optional service, and may be suspended or terminated at any time and for any reason. If service is suspended or terminated, we will notify you as promptly as we reasonably can.

**How to Use Patient Portal:**

1. Request access from The Family Physicians at registration. (To register, you must be at least eighteen (18) years old).
2. Review the Patient Portal Terms of Use and sign the Agreement to Abide by the Patient Portal Terms of Use.
3. Bring in or mail the completed form (it will become part of your medical record).
4. After this is completed, you can expect to see a welcome e-mail. On this e-mail you will click on the URL link (web page) and use the assigned login and password.
5. Once logged into the Portal, you should go to "My Account" on the top right of the page. Here you can change your user name and password to something only you will know. *This is essential to make sure your information remains secure and private!* After the above is complete you should be able to use the site.

**Protecting Your Private Health Information and Risks:**

This method of communication and viewing information through the Patient Portal is designed to prevent unauthorized parties from being able to access or read messages while they are in transmission by using 256 bit encryption. Other security measures protect information maintained within the Patient Portal site. The website for the Patient Portal has a trusted site certificate, which is viewable from your browser's task bar. (You can learn more about trusted sites by going to <http://windows.microsoft.com> and searching: "When to trust a website.")

Keeping messages secure depends on two (2) additional factors: a) the secure message must reach the correct e-mail address, and b) only the authorized individual must be able to get access to it. Only you can make sure these two (2) factors are present. We need you to make sure that we have your correct e-mail address and are informed if it ever changes. You also need to keep track of who has access to your Patient Portal account, so that only you or someone you have authorized can see messages received or other information in your Patient Portal. You should protect your Patient Portal log-in information from anyone whom you do not want to access your Patient Portal account and notify us immediately of any unauthorized use of your log-in information or if you believe that your log-in is no longer confidential.

We will not answer questions or send protected health information by regular e-mail. All health related e-mail communication will be done through the secure and encrypted Patient Portal site.

Even with these security measures, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality, security or integrity of Patient Portal information. To the fullest extent allowed by law, you agree not to hold The Family Physicians, its physician practices, its physicians, providers or any of its staff liable for network infractions beyond its control.

**If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact  
The Family Physicians at 620-365-3115.**