

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

KAREN L. HORST, MD

5601 OLDE WADSWORTH BLVD., STE. 200

ARVADA CO 80002

T: 720.379.4386

F: 720.379.6316

Electronic (online) communications include e-mail, messaging via this practice's "portal" and text messaging to exchange information between computers, tablets and smartphones. These can be useful ways for patients and healthcare providers to communicate, in addition to more usual visits and phone calls.

ADVANTAGES OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

- Messaging is a simple, convenient and popular way of connecting; many people use it regularly.
- Messages can be sent and received without needing both parties online at the same time.
- Messages can be saved, copied and forwarded; they keep a record of what was said.
- This practice has a password-protected "portal" messaging system to help keep information private.
- Some questions and issues can be handled by online messaging without a phone call or a visit.

DISADVANTAGES OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:

- Electronic devices and connections can fail. Messages can be lost or sent to the wrong person.
- Messages can contain typing mistakes.
- If the other party is away or their device is turned off, messages might not be seen promptly.
- It is possible for a dishonest person to send a false message or impersonate a patient or doctor.
- If both parties are not online at the same time, there is no opportunity to clarify misunderstandings.
- Saved copies of messages sent in error cannot be erased or retracted.
- E-mail can contain viruses that can damage systems or steal information.
- Some medical questions and issues cannot be handled through electronic communication.

THIS PRACTICE'S ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY:

No emergencies: E-mail, messaging and texting are not to be used for emergencies. We do not monitor our inbox constantly. You can send a message any time, but we may not read it until the next business day. We try to deal with messages within one work day, but circumstances could cause us to fall behind. Use the telephone if you need a response right away. Of course, in a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

Accepted Uses of E-mail and Portal Messaging:

1. **General Messages** like making or changing appointments, billing issues or other questions.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

2. **Medical questions:** Our provider gives her professional e-mail and portal address to you for medical questions. Although she may sometimes reply after hours, you should not expect her to monitor her email continuously. Again, if you have a problem that needs attention right away, use the telephone. For after business hours urgent questions or problems, call Dr. Horst's emergency line: 303-507-9589.
3. **Prescription renewals:** You can request refills of medicines the same way as leaving a phone message. If we have a question for you, we may respond by e-mail, portal message, or by phone.

Part of the Record: E-mail messages are considered part of your medical record. Our policies for record privacy and appropriate uses of medical information apply to messages we send to each other.

Security: You need to protect the e-mail address you give us to make sure that our communications remain private. This is the only way we can trust that messages from your e-mail are really from you, and that messages we send are not going to someone else. If we are not sure about a message, we will try to contact you in some other way.

Availability: If you ask us to use e-mail to communicate with you, we will assume that you check your inbox at reasonable intervals. We do not guarantee that we will respond to your messages and we understand that you cannot guarantee that you will respond to ours. In cases of uncertainty, we will try other ways of communicating.

Sensitive Medical Information: We cannot always know what information you consider especially private. We take care with all medical records, but we know that some facts are more sensitive than others. Because e-mail cannot be guaranteed 100% secure, please do not put extremely sensitive matters in messages without considering this.

Voluntary: Using e-mail is voluntary for both of us. If we feel that you are using e-mail inappropriately (or we think that your address has been hacked by an imposter), we may block your messages. If you decide you do not want to receive e-mail from us any longer, just let us know.

Changes of Address: If your e-mail address changes, you need to let us know.

Non-Essential Uses: We will only use your e-mail address for important communications related to our practice. We will not give your e-mail address to anyone who is not part of our practice. Please do not send non-essential messages to us because they slow down our ability to respond to the important ones.

Mistakes Happen: If you believe that you have received or sent a message by mistake, or sent one that contains errors, please let us know. You should delete messages that are not intended for you.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

Other Risks: In addition to those above, electronic communication can have other risks and disadvantages that might cause inconvenience or harm. Everyone using e-mail needs to use good judgment about these valuable technologies and must remember that there are alternatives that would be better for some situations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read this form. I understand that electronic (online) communication has risks, including possible risks not mentioned above. I agree to abide by the policies described above. I agree to use reasonable judgment with regard to any messages I send or receive. I do not have any unanswered questions about what this agreement requires.

Signature below indicates that you have read and agree with the above. Thank you.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: ___/___/___