TOLUCA LAKE DIRECT PATIENT CARE

PATIENT COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective Date: October 1, 2026

Purpose

The Practice strives to provide clear and reliable communication with current and prospective patients. This policy explains the communication methods available through the Practice and the appropriate use of each communication channel.

Emergencies

The Practice does not provide emergency medical services.

Do not use the website, email, text messages, voicemail, patient portal, telehealth platform, or any other Practice communication channel to report a medical emergency or urgent condition.

If you believe you are experiencing a medical emergency, call **911** immediately or go to the nearest emergency department.

Website Contact Forms

General website contact forms are intended for non-clinical inquiries such as:

- **Membership information**
- **Appointment requests**
- **Billing questions**
- **Administrative matters**
- **General practice information**

Do not submit medical questions, symptoms, diagnoses, treatment information, prescription requests, medical records, insurance information, or other sensitive health information through general website contact forms.

Submission of a website inquiry does not establish a physician-patient relationship.

Email Communications

Email may be used for certain administrative communications at the discretion of the Practice.

Email is not a secure method of communication and may not be encrypted. Although the Practice uses reasonable safeguards, the confidentiality of information transmitted by email cannot be guaranteed.

Patients should not send:

- **Medical emergencies**
- **Urgent medical concerns**
- **Highly sensitive medical information**
- **Time-sensitive treatment requests**

The Practice may determine that certain matters require communication through a more secure method.

Text Messages

The Practice may use text messaging for administrative communications such as:

- **Appointment reminders**
- **Scheduling notices**
- **Billing notifications**
- **General practice updates**

Text messaging is not intended for medical emergencies, urgent medical issues, or the transmission of substantial medical information.

Text messages may not be encrypted and may be accessible to mobile carriers, device manufacturers, or others with access to a recipient's device.

Message and data rates may apply.

Patients may opt out of text communications by following instructions provided in the text message or by contacting the Practice.

Patient Portal Communications

When available, the patient portal is the preferred method for secure routine communication with established patients regarding appropriate clinical or administrative matters.

The Practice may require certain communications, records requests, forms, prescription requests, or other matters to be submitted through the patient portal.

Portal communications are reviewed during normal business operations and are not continuously monitored.

Telephone Communications

Telephone communications may be used for clinical and administrative matters as appropriate.

Voicemail messages should include only the information reasonably necessary for the Practice to identify and return the call.

Voicemail messages are not continuously monitored and should never be used to report a medical emergency.

Telehealth Communications

Telehealth services are available only to eligible patients who have completed required enrollment, consent, and clinical screening procedures.

Telehealth communications are subject to applicable privacy, security, and medical practice requirements.

The Practice reserves the right to determine whether a condition or concern is appropriate for telehealth evaluation or requires an in-person assessment or referral for emergency care.

Response Times

The Practice attempts to respond to communications as promptly as reasonably possible during normal business operations.

The Practice does not guarantee responses within any specific timeframe.

Patients should not assume that a message has been received, reviewed, or acted upon until receiving confirmation from the Practice.

Time-sensitive medical concerns should not be submitted through website forms, email, text messaging, voicemail, or other communications that may not be immediately reviewed.

Appropriate Use

Users agree not to use Practice communication channels to:

- Send unlawful, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or harassing content
- **Transmit malicious software or harmful code**
- **Impersonate another individual**
- **Submit fraudulent information**
- **Interfere with Practice operations**

The Practice reserves the right to restrict, suspend, or terminate access to communication channels that are misused.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Communications that become part of a patient's medical record may be maintained in accordance with applicable law and the Practice's Notice of Privacy Practices.

Website communications, email communications, and other electronic communications may not provide the same protections as communications conducted through secure clinical platforms.

Patients should exercise caution when transmitting information electronically.

Changes to This Policy

The Practice may update this Patient Communication Policy from time to time. The current version will be posted on the website and will include the effective date shown above.

Contact Information

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