



SPECIAL
TREATMENT
AND
RESEARCH

STAR Health Center CONSENT TO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

STAR Health Center (SHC) offers its patients the opportunity to communicate via email or text message. Although we use the most advanced software to ensure that transmitted messages are encrypted and secure, transmitting information by email or text messaging has a number of risks to be considered. This form provides information about these risks, how we will use this information and guidelines for you on communicating via email or text.

WHAT WE DO TO PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY IN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- Emails and text messages are sent only from cell phones, smart phones, other mobile devices, or computers which are issued by the SHC and have HIPAA compliant encryption software installed.
- Our computers and mobile devices used to send emails and text messages are all password protected.
- Staff must double check that the email or cell phone number of each client is recorded correctly by repeating the number back to the client.
- Staff must delete emails/text messages after communication is completed and necessary information is recorded.
- Text messages sent from SHC devices will be automatically deleted after 14 days (on our device and yours).
- Staff with SHC-issued mobile devices must ensure that these devices are secure at all times, including after work and at home in accordance with SUNY-DMC's Mobile Device Policy.
- Every SHC employee must sign the Workforce Confidentiality of Protected Health Information Attestation and, if issued a mobile device, must sign agreement to comply with the Mobile Use Policy.
- Upon termination of employment with the SHC, staff must return his/her DMC-issued device and the content is erased by a qualified technician.
- If a SHC-issued device is lost or stolen the device is remotely erased to ensure information is not accessed.

RISKS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

- Senders can misaddress an email or text message which can be received by unintended recipients.
- Email and text messages can be circulated, forwarded or stored in electronic files.
- Backup copies of emails or texts may exist even after the sender or recipient has deleted his/her copy.
- Email can be used to introduce viruses into computer systems.
- The sender may assume that a message was sent when it was not.
- There is a possibility of misinterpretation of the message due to nonverbal feedback.
- Backup copies may exist even after sender and/or recipient has deleted their copies.
- Email and text messages can be lost in transmission.

POTENTIAL COSTS OF TEXT MESSAGING

- Many mobile phone users pay for each message they receive.
- Message & data rates may apply to your communications with SHC.

HOW WE WILL USE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

- In general, we will initiate electronic communication with you only about non-sensitive issues such as appointment reminders; scheduling, canceling and rescheduling appointments; routine forms; and benefit information. However, we have put protections in place in the event we need to contact you with emergent information or when we need to respond to your question that includes sensitive information, SHC will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of emails and text messages sent and received; however, because of the risks outlined above, we cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of email or text messaging communication and will not be liable for improper disclosure that is not caused by our intentional misconduct.
- There might be other individuals such as administrative staff who have access to these materials.
- We will not disclose your email to researchers or others unless allowed by Federal or State law.
- Please refer to our Notice of Privacy Practices for information as to the permitted uses of your health information and your rights regarding privacy matters. Our notice of Privacy Practices can be located at <http://www.downstate.edu/policy/patient.html>

PATIENT GUIDELINES FOR EMAIL COMMUNICATION

- If communicating via email, include the general topic of the message in the "Subject" line of your email. For example, "Prescriptions," "Advice," "Appointment," or "Billing Question."
- Include your name and phone number in the body of the communication.
- Review your message to make sure that it is clear and concise and that all relevant information is included before sending.
- The email or text communication should not be time-sensitive. While we try to respond to messages daily, it may take up to 3 working days for us to respond to your message. If your message requires a response from us and you have not heard back from us in 3 working days, call the phone number for the staff person you are trying to reach or 718-270-3745. **Urgent messages or needs should be relayed to us using regular telephone communication.** It is your responsibility to follow up to determine whether the intended recipient received the email or text message and when a response might be expected.
- You are responsible for protecting your own device, your password, or other means of access. We are not liable for breaches of confidentiality caused by a client or other third party.
- Take precautions to protect the confidentiality of your messages such as password protecting your phone or computer.
- Inform us of changes in your email, cell phone, address or landline phone number.
- **You must withdraw consent to discontinue electronic communications.**

PATIENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I understand the risks as outlined above and consent to the conditions outlined above. I further waive any and all claims that may arise against STAR Health Center (SHC) or University Hospital of Brooklyn (UHB), its employees, contractors, interns, and practicum students resulting from the use or misuse of text messaging.

I may want to communicate with SHC by text or email. I understand that SHC has taken all possible precautions to protect my confidentiality, but cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of email and text communications. I release and hold harmless SHC, UHB, its physicians and staff from any and all expenses, claims, liabilities damages and losses that may result from email or text communication between me and

SHC/UHB including technical failures beyond the control of SHC/UHB such as system crashes power outages and network overloads.

I understand that I may also communicate with SHC by telephone or during a scheduled appointment and that email or texting is not a substitute for care that may be provided during an office visit. Appointments should be made to discuss any new issues or any sensitive medical information.

I understand that either I or SHC may stop using email or texting as means of communication.

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by advising SHC in writing by mail or in person at either of the following addresses:

Mailing Address:

STAR Health Center
SUNY Downstate Medical Center
450 Clarkson Avenue, MSC 1240
Brooklyn, NY 11203

Physical Address:

STAR Health Center
University Hospital of Brooklyn
470 Clarkson Avenue – Suite J
Brooklyn, NY 11203

My revocation of consent will not affect my ability to obtain future health care, nor will it cause the loss of any benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

I understand that failure to comply with the guidelines delineated in this form may result in SHC’s termination of the email or texting relationship.

I have read this form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to comply with the information outlined in this communication to and from STAR Health Center and University Hospital of Brooklyn.

_____ :

I agree to communication from STAR Health Center as follows:

Text Cell phone number: _____

Email Email address: _____

Patient Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____