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Policies and Procedures

Introduction

- I practice *Western medicine*, including older modalities, such as the use of foods, plant medicines, and movement, for health.
- As a family doctor, I see *patients of all ages* through the lifespan, not just a particular age group.
- Family medicine is *holistic*: I attend to the entire person, not one organ system, and I do not treat the body and mind as separate entities.
- I am *patient-centered*: I evaluate and treat individuals, not lab tests.
- I am a *cheapskate*: I avoid tests and treatments that are not medically necessary for optimal health and well-being.
- My goal is to be your *personal physician*, who knows you well.

Contacting Dr. Leigh

- *If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 and/or proceed to the emergency room.*
- If you are an established patient with an urgent message, please call my cell phone, or send a text message to it, 541-285-1668. If I am with a patient or driving a car, I can't answer, and you'll need to leave a message.
- If you have a non-urgent message, please leave a voicemail at 866-581-5559. Voicemails are transcribed and sent to my email, which is checked periodically.
- I am also available directly by email at leigh@drleigh.org.
- If you have trouble getting through, please try again.

About email

- Our email is as secure as possible, but it may not be perfect.
- Please, never email from your workplace or any public computer, unless you accept the risk that your message may be intercepted.
- Please do not email sensitive information, such as sexual, substance-abuse, or mental health issues.
- If you are concerned that I did not receive an email you sent me, please call my cell phone.
- I recommend that you save all our emails for future reference.

When Dr. Leigh is out of town

- If I have to leave town for a meeting, vacation, or family emergency, you can still call/text my cell phone and email/skype me. We can conduct telephone and email visits under these circumstances.
- I can arrange to have a friendly in-town doctor available to see you in person, if medically necessary.
- Urgent and emergent issues should still be taken to the Urgent Care Center (if you need stitches, x-rays, etc.) and Emergency Department (if you might need hospitalization), as usual.

How to schedule an appointment

- Online scheduling: You will need to create a login and password that you can use whenever you schedule an appointment. If you forget your login, let me know, and I will look it up and email it to you.
- Phone scheduling: Call and if necessary leave a message briefly describing the purpose of the visit and when you'd like to be seen. Leave your phone number and let me know when to call you back.
- Short visits (25-30 min) - for simple or single problems, rechecks, and follow-ups of simple issues.
- Long visits (50-60 min) - for multiple problems, complicated issues, procedures, visits after a hospitalization, comprehensive physical exams, and development of individualized care plans.
- Note: **Fees for services are not based on the time required** for a visit, but on complexity of the issues and extra investigations required (e.g. records review, specialist consultation, labs, etc.).

Your first appointment: Please schedule a one-hour appointment, and bring:

- A picture ID and your insurance card, if you use insurance.
- Completed Registration and Medical History forms (or arrive 20-30 minutes early to fill these out).
- Your medications, remedies, and supplements - even the empty ones.

If you use a language other than spoken English, or have communication assistance needs, please let me know in advance, so we can arrange interpretive services, if necessary.

Are you a chronic pain patient? *Note: Dr Leigh is no longer forming new relationships with new patients primarily for chronic pain management, in accordance with the scope of practice of a family physician.*

- Please review the Pain Management Rules in print or online.
- Please arrive 15 minutes early for each "pain visit," to fill out a symptom evaluation form.
- Please bring any new medications or supplements, and any new records of visits with other providers, such as hospital discharge, Emergency Room report, dentist visit, psychiatrist visit, etc.

If you miss an appointment

- Late: If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, without calling my cell phone and making other arrangements, your appointment will be cancelled, and you will need to reschedule.
- Cancelling: If you need to cancel an appointment, please do so 24 hours or more before your appointment time, so someone else can use that time.
- Currently, I do not charge for late or missed appointments, because patients have been very courteous about this. This policy could change, if a problem develops.
- Occasionally, I might have to cancel your appointment and reschedule with you, if I have to attend an emergency.

Urgent care

If you have an urgent problem needing attention right away, please call my cell phone.

I will help you *figure out whether to go to the Urgent Care center* (for example, if you are likely to need an x-ray, a splint or cast, an EKG, or other service unavailable in my office).

Emergencies

- **If you have a medical emergency, please call 911 and/or go directly to the emergency room.**
- Please call me when you arrive at the hospital, so I can fill in the details for the emergency room staff, about your health and medications.
- Please ask the emergency staff to send me a report of your visit. Ask to sign a release form.

Hospital Care

- I do not do hospital work at this time, although I am qualified to do so. If you need to be admitted to the hospital, it would be through the Emergency Department, or by a specialist.
- Please call and let me know what your room number is, so I can contact the staff caring for you.
- In the hospital, you will be cared for by the hospitalist team and any specialists that are required. I will be happy to fax your current records to them immediately (your medical conditions, medications, allergies, and any important recent data, such as recent labs or imaging reports).
- After you get out of the hospital, please make a long appointment, so we can review your condition and make a plan to optimize your at-home care.
- Please ask the staff to send me a "Discharge Summary" of your visit. Ask to sign a release form.

New babies/ new moms

- Newborns are cared for in the hospital by the pediatric staff on call. After discharge, they'll send me a summary. Ask to sign a release form. I can pay a social visit while you're in the hospital, if desired.
- Homebirth and birth-center moms/babies are cared for by their midwives for the first 6 weeks. I'm always available to help with any medical issues, including home visits to help with nursing.
- **If anyone, for any reason, tells you to stop nursing or "pump and dump," call me immediately.**
- I would like to see you and your baby in the office or at home at 1-2 weeks of age (sooner and as often as needed, if concerns about nursing), 6 weeks, and 2 months of age.
- I do not have vaccines in my office at this time, but will refer you to the Public Health Department for shots as needed. I'm happy to discuss this issue in depth with you at any time.

If you need forms filled out

Filling out forms takes time! For insurance pre-authorizations, including for prescriptions and medical equipment; disability, housing, and daycare evaluations; commercial drivers licenses; letters to the court; sports physicals, and other forms, your medical record must be reviewed, and medical decisions often must be made. I do not charge extra for this service itself, but you must allow a week or more for completion.

New medications and prescription refills

- When you first start a new long-term medication, you will get no refills, or only a few, and will need a follow-up appointment to review your progress, including a recheck of any physical exam +/- labs.
- For existing, long-term prescriptions, please ask for refills during your office visit. I will give you enough refills to last until the suggested date of your next appointment.
- If you're running out of refills, and haven't been seen for 6-12 months, please make an appointment with me. Medical review, at regular intervals, is important for your health, even if you feel well.

Scheduled drugs

- Many painkillers, stimulants, and sedatives are "scheduled drugs," meaning their use must follow special rules written by the Drug Enforcement Administration. Any doctor or patient who breaks these rules could be criminally prosecuted. These drugs are considered to have serious abuse potential. I prescribe them only rarely, when medically necessary, and under strict guidelines.
- Here are some examples of scheduled drugs: Vicodin, oxycodone, Percocet, codeine cough syrup, Valium, Xanax, Ambien, Ritalin, Adderall, Fioricet, Soma. Lyrica is also a scheduled drug.
- If you medically require a scheduled drug for longer than 30 days, we will review and enter into a Narcotics Contract, and I will also review a Material Risk Informed Consent form with you. These are legal documents we both sign, in accordance with state and federal law.
- You may be required to have, and pay for, random urine testing and a consultation with a pain specialist to help guide medication dosing. This is in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Please see my "Pain Management Rules" for more details.

The Oregon Medical Marijuana Program (OMMP)

- Medical marijuana may lawfully be used as an herbal medication by patients who are registered with the OMMP. I support the safe use of effective herbal medications that allow patients to reduce or eliminate their use of more harmful pharmaceutical treatments for long-term conditions.
- The OMMP is intended for individuals with chronic, intractable illness that has been poorly responsive to standard treatments. Your medical records must document that this is the case.
- In general, you need to be *an established patient with a primary medical doctor* and demonstrate at least *three years of chronic disabling illness with multiple attempts at medical treatment* of your condition. Please see <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/ommp> for complete information.
- **I do not "prescribe" this medication** (nor does any doctor in Oregon), and **I do not sign new OMMP applications as an attending physician**. I advise that you register with a specialty clinic to enter the OMMP. They can help you figure out whether you meet the state criteria for medical marijuana. Ask me for contact information for local OMMP-affiliated clinics.

Drug samples

- I do not accept gifts from drug corporations, including "free" drug samples.
- If you have trouble paying for medication, ask me how to obtain an Oregon Prescription Drug Program discount card; how to sign up for patient-assistance programs; and how to obtain inexpensive generic medications from "big-box" stores, including inhalers and birth control.

Fees

- Payment for your visit, or insurance co-pay, is due at the end of the visit. Ask for a receipt!
- Estimated fees are listed on my website under "Services". If you need a paper copy, let me know.
- These fees approximate the usual and customary fees for Eugene-Springfield doctors, and are based on government and insurance reimbursement policies. Naturally, they can change when conditions change, in the world of healthcare law.
- Fees include your office visit **as well as the time you do not see** that a doctor spends working for you: reviewing the medical literature to optimize your care plan, reviewing your old records,

doublechecking your medication list, contacting specialists and pharmacists, filling out and mailing forms, etc. You are not charged for each of those services separately!

- Other local clinics (such as federally-funded "free" clinics), who receive state and federal subsidies and have higher volumes (shorter appointments), may have lower prices.
- You can pay for your care using check or cash. Payment in full at the time of service is discounted 30%, because it saves me that much in administrative fees (and hassle) if I am not billing insurance.
- See Dr. Leigh's "All About Insurance" handout, to find out more about co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles, public vs. private, etc.

Miscommunication? Missed communication?

- As an independent doctor with office hours, housecalls, and social visits to hospitals, rehabs, and nursing homes, I get very busy at times, and your voicemail or email might "slip through the cracks." It's not personal! Please call or text my cell phone (again) at any time of the day or night.
- If, after consideration, you disagree with my advice, and would like to discuss it further, please contact me - especially by email, which allows both of us to discuss the issue at length, and to have a paper record of our conversation. I enjoy discussing health and medical issues, and will not take offense when you actively steer your health care.
- If you need treatment or a type of evaluation I'm unable to provide, I'll let you know. Often I can direct you to an orthodox or alternative specialist who may be more helpful in these cases.
- If you decide to stop taking a medication I've prescribed, please let me know. You are not asking permission - just letting me know. I care about your health and well-being, and would like to know if a treatment is or isn't working for you. We can work together to find a realistic solution for you.
- If you feel that my approach - including fees, billing, referrals, etc. - is unfair to you, I will be happy to discuss it with you. As an independent doctor, I have the luxury of flexibility, and can work together with you, within my scope of practice as a family doctor, to solve the problem.

Termination of our patient-physician relationship

- By law, **a physician may terminate a relationship with a patient at any time**, by giving 30 days notice. During those 30 days, the physician is responsible only for emergency care.
- I will terminate our relationship if you "no-show" appointments repeatedly, break Pain Management rules, refuse to pay for your care, disregard the practice's stated policies, or otherwise behave unlawfully, disrespectfully, or dishonestly.
- **You may terminate our relationship at any time, for any reason, without notice.** It would be a courtesy to let me know the reason, but this is not required! You would still be responsible for any previously outstanding bills.

Your records

When you transfer care to another doctor, ask to sign a release and give them my fax number (866-581-5559), so I can fax them your records. If you would like a personal copy of your records:

- I can email them to you, as pdf files. (Be aware that checking email in a public or shared location [work, public library, etc.] is unwise, as your privacy may not be assured.)
- I can fax them to your home. (Be aware that faxing to a public location [work, copy shop, etc.] is unwise, as your records may contain private information you don't want getting into the wrong hands.)
- I can mail you a paper copy. If your records are extensive, I may be obliged to charge for this service. Oregon law (ORS 192.521) allows charges of no more than \$30 for the first 10 pages; no more than 50 cents per page for pages 11-50, and no more than 25 cents per additional page; plus a \$5 charge if expedited first-class within 7 business days of the request date; plus all postage costs; plus actual cost of the time required to prepare any explanation or summary of the protected health information. **You can not be denied your records** due to inability to pay any part of these charges!
- The law allows 30 days to send records from a doctor to any recipient.
- If you want to change something in your record that you believe is incorrect, please contact me.
- For a guide to your legal rights regarding your medical records, please see <http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/privacy/stateguides/or/or.pdf> or http://www.oregon.gov/OMB/TOI_Medical_Records.shtml .