

## Guidelines for Use of Email and Text Communication

For both HIPAA compliance and the protection of my patients, it is my practice to minimize the use of e-mail and text with patients and to encourage the use of secure messaging through the Patient Portal for all non-urgent matters. We do not initiate e-mail or text contact with patients on matters that would require the inclusion of Protected Health Information. Nonetheless, when a patient requests that they be able to initiate e-mail or text communications with me, I work to accommodate the request to the extent it would promote the patient's health and my provision of medical care. In that event, I will provide my e-mail address and cell phone number and the patient can initiate communication with me. I will then assume, unless otherwise instructed, that e-mail and/or text communication is acceptable to the patient.

It is important that you review and follow the guidelines for e-mail and text communications listed below. Please be aware that these guidelines may require modification as the need arises.

1. Please limit e-mail and text content to the following topics:
  - a. Non-treatment related healthcare issues (i.e. requests for general health information).
  - b. Non-urgent medical questions and matters.
2. Please place the general topic in the subject line of your e-mail so that it can be rapidly identified.
3. Communication with me utilizing e-mail and text is done with the knowledge that I do not encrypt e-mails or text messages, that e-mail and text are not secure modes of communication, and that your information is exposed in a public domain and could be accessed. While we will treat your communication with the same care as we do your medical records and phone calls, please do not include sensitive information in your e-mail or text. Specifically, do not include your social security number, financially sensitive information, or health information that you are not willing to expose. Your communication may be viewed by me, a covering physician, and, as necessary, medical assistants and other staff.
4. Please keep e-mails and text messages brief and concise, and clearly identify yourself by name in the body.
5. Please be aware that while I will attempt to reply to e-mails and text messages as quickly as possible, my replies may take more than 1 business day. **Please do not include time sensitive requests, including urgent or acute matters, or new conditions. Please use the telephone for all urgent requests, and for all emergency conditions, dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.**
6. We will not be able to respond to medical emergencies via e-mail or text messaging.
7. Please understand that there will be times when I will not respond by e-mail or text but will call you directly. Please also understand that we do not include attachments containing Protected Health Information in any e-mail communications.

### Email and Text Informed Consent

I have carefully reviewed the preceding guidelines and hereby authorize **Caroline K. Stratz, M.D.** to communicate with me via e-mail and text messaging regarding non-treatment related healthcare issues, and non-urgent medical questions and matters.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_