

BALANCE PRIMARY CARE, LLC
COMMUNICATION POLICY

1. **TELEPHONE CALLS:** Members should communicate with the Practice by office phone from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 8:30 am to 12:00 pm Friday. Routine calls (appointment requests, refill requests) to the office during these business hours will be returned the same day, barring an unforeseeable emergency. Calls after hours should be reserved for urgent issues that cannot wait until the next business day. After hours, calls will be routed to a Provider's personal cell phone or the patient will be given a separate cellphone number to call. }
At all times, Emergencies or potential Emergencies should be called to 911.
2. **PATIENT HUB:** The practice will be using AtlasMD software program to communicate with patients. The AtlasMD Patient Hub allows multiple ways to communicate with your provider. AtlasMD has taken many steps to ensure patient information is secure, however, it is not HIPAA compliant (AtlasMD security efforts can be provided upon request). Although we are careful to comply with patient confidentiality requirements and make every attempt to protect your privacy, communications by email, facsimile, video chat, cell phone, texting, and other electronic means, can never be absolutely guaranteed secure or confidential methods of communications. Member understands and agrees that by initiating or participating in the above means of communication, you expressly waive any guarantee of absolute confidentiality with respect to their use. _____
3. **ROUTINE COMMUNICATIONS** Members are encouraged to use the Patient Hub for routine questions and concerns. The Practice will aim to respond to inquiries as quickly as possible and every attempt will be made to respond to routine emails within two business days. The Hub should only be used for routine questions that do not require a same day answer. Please call Practice for urgent or sensitive questions. Some laboratory results will not be displayed on the Hub due to their sensitive nature.
4. **NON-PATIENT HUB EMAIL:** Email outside of the patient Hub is discouraged except when the Patient Hub is unavailable. Member acknowledges that non-Hub email is not a secure method of communicating and sensitive PHI should not be included in non-Hub email communication. Because email communication is to be reserved for non-urgent concerns, please be aware that emails will not be checked routinely after hours.
 - Member understands that non-Hub email is not a secure method of communication, and the patient should not transmit sensitive information such as social security numbers, financial information, or detailed discussion of medical problems via this format. _____ (Member Initials)
5. **TEXTING:** During normal business hours, Members with routine questions or concerns should use the Patient Hub (or regular email if the Patient Hub is unavailable) or call. Members should reserve texting for urgent - but not emergency - concerns after business hours. They are not encrypted or secure.
 - Member understands that texting is not a secure method of communication, and the patient should not transmit sensitive information or detailed discussion of medical diagnoses via this format. _____ (Member Initials)

6. AFTER HOURS ACCESS. Members shall have direct telephone access to the Practice seven (7) days per week. Members shall be given a phone number where Member may reach a provider directly for guidance regarding concerns that arise unexpectedly after office hours. This number will either be a provider's direct cellphone number or an office number that rolls over to the provider's cellphone after hours. Providers will make reasonable efforts to respond to calls and text messages within two (2) hours of receipt.

7. EMERGENCIES OR CONDITIONS THAT MAY NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: In the event of an emergency, or a situation that the Member could reasonably expect to develop into an emergency, Member shall call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency facility and follow the directions of emergency personnel. Member will not use the Patient Hub or texting for communications regarding emergency and/or urgent medical problems.

8. SPECIALIST CONSULTATION VIA TEXT/CALL: Provider may recommend that there might be an urgent need for a Member to be seen by a sub-specialist. Often, text messaging is by far the most timely and preferred way for doctors to communicate in real-time. The sub-specialists are busy seeing patients and are not in a position to check voicemails and answer calls. Additionally, it is sometimes necessary to share lab data or an EKG result with a sub-specialist for same day feedback. That data may include a Member's name, age, medical record or DOB on it. However, every attempt will be made to blacken or in other ways remove personal identifiers prior to transmitting this data, If a specialist deems that an expedited appointment would be in order and offers to have staff call the Member, that doctor generally ask for patient name, DOB and a phone number to share with their scheduling staff. *Unless the Member notifies Practice in writing otherwise, Member consents to Provider utilizing text messaging for care coordination with other healthcare providers.*

9. REFILLS OF ROUTINE MEDICATIONS: The Member should make every effort to request refills several business days in advance. The practice of waiting to request refills until medications are almost out puts Members in danger of not having insurance approvals go through in time for on-time refills. Insurance companies are requiring more and more prior approvals for medicines that were formerly covered. We will make every effort to address refills at regularly scheduled appointments.

10. AFTER HOURS PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS: Prescriptions for antibiotics after business hours will be for infections that can't wait to be treated until the next business day. Scheduled drugs such as benzodiazepines (Xanax, Ativan, etc.), stimulants and narcotics will not be prescribed after business hours. These medications require an extra level of security and by Georgia law cannot be called in to a pharmacy.

11. TECHNICAL DELAYS The Practice will not be liable for any loss, injury, or expense arising from a delay in responding to Member when that delay is caused by technical failure. Examples of technical failures include but are not limited to: (i) failures caused by an internet service provider, (ii) power outages, (iii) failure of electronic messaging software or email providers (iv) failure of the Practice's computers or computer network, or faulty telephone or cable transmission, or (iv) any interception of text or e-mail communications by a third party.

Print Patient Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

I Agree to Text Communication: (check one below)

- Yes
- No

Printed Name: _____ Relationship to Patient: _____

Signature of Patient (or legal guardian): _____

Date: _____