

# PATIENT PORTAL POLICY & PROCEDURE

Columbus Public Health offers its patients, as a courtesy and as an optional service, the use of a secure web-page portal. To use the Practice's Portal, you must contact the clinic you are being seen at to enroll in the Portal system. You must agree to the Practice's Portal Policy and Procedures by signing the Informed Consent and User Agreement. The clinic staff will enter your e-mail address into the Portal software and you will receive an email invitation to complete the enrollment process.

## Important Information About the Patient Portal

- Use is limited to **non-emergency** communications and requests. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- You should allow up to three (3) business days to receive a response from your provider or CPH staff. However, it is possible for this time to be longer if we are getting a large volume of requests.
- The Portal **does not** provide internet-based care (diagnostic, triage or other medical services). A diagnosis can be made and treatment given only after the patient sees the provider at the office.

## Patient Portal Features

- **Access to Health Information:** You may view a clinical summary of your most recent office visit, as well as some lab and test results. You will be able to request an electronic copy of your health information.
- **Appointment Requests:** You may request an appointment for a clinic. This is a request only. Office staff will contact you via the Portal's messaging system or by phone with an actual scheduled appointment day and time if it can be made.
- **Educational Resources:** You may view educational resources on various topics listed in the Portal's library.
- **Medication Requests:** You may request a refill of prescriptions. Requests will not be accepted for new prescriptions or refills for conditions for which you are not being treated by your provider at that clinic.
- **Messages:** You may send messages to your provider or office staff, and you may view and respond to messages they send to you. These messages may address medication questions, requests for test results, routine follow-up questions about your condition, billing matters, etc. Communications about sensitive subject matters, such as mental health, HIV, etc., are not permitted through the Patient Portal.
- **Added Features:** Updating demographic information, or changes/additions to your health records, medication lists, updating pharmacy etc. However, no changes will be made in the permanent record until it is reviewed by our clinic.

## Using the Portal System Well

- Confirm that your name and other personal information in a message is correct.
- Please keep messages brief and to the point.
- Review the message before sending it to make sure it is clear and that all the needed information is included.
- The system will send you an email to notify you when a message has been sent to you in the Patient Portal.
- Your provider or office staff may ask you to schedule an appointment at the office instead of responding to your communication or request.
- You are responsible to update your contact information with the office as soon as it changes, including your email address where you get messages outside of the Portal system.
- Although your provider or office staff will use reasonable efforts to respond within three business days of receiving your request, you are responsible to monitor whether you have received a response to your communication. If you have not received a response, you should call the office.
- If you lock yourself out of your account, wait 45 minutes and try again or you can request to reset password.

### Privacy

- All messages sent to you will be secure.
- Electronic messages from you to your provider and any office staff should be sent through the Portal. Messages outside of the Portal system are not secure. Your provider and the office staff will normally send electronic communications only through the Portal's system, except as noted otherwise in these policies and procedures.
- Any of the clinic staff may read your messages or reply to you so that you can get a response more quickly.

### Privacy Protection of your Health Information

All communications about your personal health information carry some level of risk. While many steps are taken to reduce the chance of risks happening, there are risks which are important for you to understand. Please consider these risks each time you plan to communicate with us using the Portal system. You should communicate in a way that reduces the chances of these risks happening. Some helpful things to keep in mind include:

- Do not store, send or access messages on your employer-provided computer or hand-held device. Personal information is normally accessible by your employer.
- Use a screen saver or close your messages so that others nearby cannot read them.
- Keep your username and password safe and private.
- If you think someone has learned your password, you should promptly change it using the portal.

The clinic, its providers and staff are not responsible to you for security violations resulting from your failure to follow security measures when you access the Portal, including those described above, or for network breaches beyond its reasonable control.

### Access, Use of Online Communications and Conditions of Participation

- The Portal is offered by the clinic, as a courtesy and as an optional service. Use of the Portal is limited to current patients only and is subject to all terms and conditions of the Practice's Patient Portal Policies and Procedures.
- All communications via the Portal will be included in the clinical record kept by the clinic you were seen in.
- Online communication does not replace any of the other ways in which you can communicate with your provider. It is an added option. You are encouraged to contact the office via telephone, mail, or in person if you need further assistance.
- In addition to online communication, you may be asked to contact us by phone or in person at any time.
- The clinic does not guarantee that the Portal system will be accessible 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. The Portal system may be unavailable, without prior notice to you, due to routine maintenance or due to circumstances beyond our control. The clinic may suspend or end the operation of the Portal without advance notice to you. The clinic, its providers and staff have no liability or responsibility to any patient or other person authorized by the patient who is unable to access the Portal system for any reason.
- The clinic may choose to end participation of any patient or other individual at any time, without prior notice and without cause.
- By logging onto the Portal, you agree to all terms and conditions of the Practice's Portal Policies and Procedures, and any amended or superseded Policies and Procedures adopted by the clinic. The clinic may change its Patient Portal Policies and Procedures at any time without prior notice. The clinic will make reasonable efforts to post this information on the Portal. The clinic is the owner of all of its records and data, whether in electronic, paper or other form. Your access to this information will follow federal and state law.
- If you received access to health care information which is not yours, you must immediately stop viewing such information and immediately notify the clinic by sending a secure message through the Portal or by phone.