Communication Agreement

Effective communication is the cornerstone of quality healthcare. This Healthcare Communication Agreement is established to ensure clear, respectful, and efficient communication between healthcare providers, patients, and their families. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this agreement, we aim to foster a collaborative environment that promotes understanding, trust, and optimal health outcomes.

Email Communication

Carencia utilizes email communication with our patients to improve the experience, convenience, and efficiency of your care. Email communication with Carencia is not to be used for emergency or urgent medical concerns. If you are experiencing a medical emergency contact 911 or visit your nearest emergency department.

Appropriate uses of email communication include:

- Scheduling Appointments (including rebooking and cancellation)
- Providing directions (to practice location and other facilities)
- Providing practice policies and protocols (e.g. privacy policy, referrals, etc)
- Providing general education and health promotion electronic documents, resources, and links
- Clinic newsletters and alerts/updates
- Medication refill requests

Email communication with Carencia will not be used for the following:

- To diagnose, engage in a clinical discussion, or to make significant changes to a treatment plan that is most appropriate through a visit
- To address an emergency or crisis situation (this should be a phone call, visit, or 911 should be dialed)
- For therapy or to discuss clinical health information that should be a billable service and documented within the Electronic Health Record

Email Communication Practices:

- Emails will only be checked during clinic office hours
- Emails will be triaged and answered according to internal clinic prioritization
- While we strive to return all emails within 24 hours, we cannot guarantee this turnaround time
- It is the responsibility of the patient to follow up on all email communications
- Any forms submitted through the website will be directed to Careteam@carencia.com and may be reviewed and responded to by any of the clinic's staff
- Communication is only granted with the email address we have on file. You must inform Carencia of any changes to your email address at assistance@carencia.com.
- It is not recommended to include any attachments unless requested by your health care provider
- Do not send payment/credit card information via email. This requires a phone call or submission of card information to a HIPAA and financial compliant form

Phone Communication

Carencia is not an emergency care provider. Call 911 for all emergencies or 988 for mental health crises.

- Phones are only answered during clinic office hours
- Please provide your full name and reason for call on voicemails left
- While we strive to return voicemails on the same day, but cannot guarantee this turnaround time
- Carencia will leave limited information on your voicemail

Other Communication

- Carencia does not communicate by way of text messages or respond to instant messaging services
- Carencia will use the messaging application (patient portal) offered by the current Electronic Healthcare Record service, when appropriate
- When using communication through the patient portal, the same response times listed above apply. This service should not be used for emergencies, and 911 should be called.
- Providers and staff members of Carencia should never be contacted to their personal phones or email addresses outside of Carencia
- Carencia providers and staff will not communicate with patients via social media and no response will be provided to a patient if contacted via this modality. Violation of this may lead to termination of the patient-provider relationship
- Any behavior including, but not limited to: threats, offensive or verbally abusive behavior, physicially offensive behavior, or other inappropriate conduct or boundary violations, as determined by Carencia staff or provider, will immediately lead to termination and transition of care outside of Carencia.

Risks of Using Electronic Communication

Carencia cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of electronic communications. Please consider the following risks of using electronic communication.

- Despite reasonable efforts to protect the privacy and security of electronic communication, it is not possible to completely secure the information
- Employers & online services may have a legal right to inspect & keep electronic communications that pass through their system
- Electronic communications can introduce malware into a computer system and potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings
- Electronic communications can be forwarded, intercepted, circulated, stored, or even changed without the knowledge or permission of the Carencia staff or the patient
- Even after the sender and recipient have deleted copies of electronic communications, back-up copies may exist on a computer system
- Electronic communications may be disclosed in accordance with a duty to report or a court order
- Electronic communication can be misdirected, resulting in increased risk of being received by unintended and unknown recipients
- Electronic communication can be easier to falsify than handwritten or signed hard copies. It is not feasible to verify the true identity of the sender, or to ensure that only the recipient can read the message once it has been sent