

JESSAMINE CHRISTIAN HEALTHCARE

"FAMILY MEDICINE WITH THE FOCUS ON CHRIST"

THOMAS F COBURN, MD

JOSHUA B HUFFMAN, MD

WILLIAM J JOHN, MD

Thursday, April 20, 2006

Dear Patients at Jessamine Christian Healthcare,

Grace to you and Greetings from the staff at Jessamine Christian Healthcare. We have appreciated being able to serve each of you and your families. Thank you for entrusting your medical care with Jessamine Christian Healthcare.

We want to make every visit to the clinic both effective and efficient in meeting your needs. We know you lead very busy lives, and one of our goals is to reduce the time it takes to get you checked in and checked out.

This letter reviews some of our policies and procedures, explaining some of the reasons we do things the way we do, not only for the benefit of our newer patients, but for our established patients as well. I have had some great input from several of you this past year regarding some of our policies and procedures and have taken them to heart.

Our goal is to do all that we can to make your experience with us a satisfying one. We always welcome any questions, suggestions, complaints or observations. These are current policies and procedures of which we want to make you aware. We will be reviewing these policies over the next year for possible revisions and additions. Please feel free to contact Larry Williams, our Business Director, anytime you have comments to give.

HOURS OF OPERATION AT J.C.H.

Our current hours of operation are listed below:

Monday	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday	8:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
Thursday	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Friday	8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Main Office:.....859-858-9355
Fax Number:..... 859-858-0416
After Hours Medical Exchange:..... 859-276-2594

UPDATING PATIENT INFORMATION:

We want to increase our avenues of communicating to our patients. We are planning to use e-mail as a way to send information such as activities and health news information, policy changes and general items of interest. We will be asking for our patient's email addresses at the front desk to compile a newsletter list for an electronic JCH Newsletter. If you would like to be included on our e-mail list for future news letters and other valuable information, please call in or mail us your e-mail address. You can also e-mail us at JCH@qx.net and we will add your e-mail address to our list.

Also, checkout our website at: www.jch.familydoctors.net

TELL A FRIEND, CO-WORKER, OR FAMILY MEMBER.

We find that most of our new patients come to the practice because a current patient told them about us. We are accepting new patients and we'd appreciate if you'd spread the word.

VOICE MAIL SYSTEM:

We have made some changes in our staffing schedule to improve your ability to talk to a "live" person when you call in or at least use our voicemail system to leave a message for a specific staff member. When you leave a message, we will do our very best to contact you as soon as possible. If our office is closed and you need to speak to a physician immediately, you will have the option of pressing the number "8" to be transferred to our answering exchange and they will page the physician on call. If our office is closed, and you would like to leave a message, press the number "1" and we will call you back during the next business day. If at any time, you have a medical emergency and you cannot get through to a "live" person quickly, please hang up and dial 911 for assistance.

If you call in and get a busy signal, please hang up, wait a few minutes and try again. You should be able to reach a live person or leave a message in the voicemail system. Our front desk staff checks messages several times a day. Please let us know if you are experiencing difficulty reaching us.

MAKING APPOINTMENTS:

Our front desk staff takes care of appointment scheduling. Our main telephone number is 859-858-9355. If all our lines are busy and you reach the voicemail system, please leave a message including your name, a phone number you can be reached at and your message. We will call you back as soon as possible.

If you are speaking with one of our nurses and it is determined that you need to be seen by one of our physicians, the nurse will transfer you to the front desk to schedule that appointment.

Unfortunately, we are not a "walk-in" clinic. We do not have the resources to operate as a "walk-in" clinic and a scheduled appointment is needed to be seen by one of our physicians or other clinical staff. If you have an emergency situation, please call our office and a nurse

will help you decide if you should come to the clinic or if an Urgent Treatment Center or Emergency Room visit is more beneficial for your need.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT:

Please come to your appointment 5 to 10 minutes early to get checked in. When you arrive at JCH for your appointment, please come to the check-in window and sign-in. **Always** have your **current insurance card** and **co-pay** ready at each visit to the clinic. Please inform the person checking you in of any changes in name, address, telephone number or insurance coverage. If a member of your family or a friend is going to be seen by one of our physicians as a new patient, they will need to arrive 30 minutes early for their appointment to fill out "New Patient Registration" material.

POLICIES FOR NO-SHOWS, CANCELATIONS & RESCHEDULING:

As many of you are aware, it can be difficult to get an appointment with the physicians the same day you call. We know this is very frustrating to you when you need to get in right away. This is why we track no shows and late cancellations, eventually charging a fee for missing an appointment without timely notification

An ongoing problem we have is many of our patients do cancel their appointments the day of or do not show at all. If we had at least 24-hour notification, we would be able to give those slots to other patients who call in each morning, hoping to get appointment that day. It hurts us in two ways. First, it reduces the opportunity for patients to get an appointment for the same day they call in. Secondly, it reduces the amount of income that comes into the clinic, hindering the ability to purchase new equipment, add new staff or add new services for better patient care. Everyone is affected when patients miss or cancel their appointments on the same day.

I hope that this brief explanation of these policies will help everyone see the need for them. The policies are stated below. For everyone's sake, we will be enforcing these policies.

No Shows: Failure to show up for an appointment, without notifying us at least 24 hours in advance will result in that patient receiving a "no-show" status on their record. Beginning October, 2005, Any patient accumulating **more than one** "no-show" on their record will be assessed a \$25.00 fee each, and a \$10.00 fee for each late cancellation or late reschedule. Any patient accumulating more than four "no-shows" will be in jeopardy of discharge from our practice. We know that things come up and occasionally; you just cannot get to your appointment on time. That is why we give you 1 time each year to miss before charging the Missed Appointment Fee. Only Patients who chronically no-show or cancel late will run into trouble.

Cancellations: We require at least 24-hour notification when canceling an appointment. Failure to call and cancel an appointment at least 24 hours in advance will result in the patient receiving a "no-show" status on their record. (Refer to "No Show" policy above)

Rescheduling Appointments: We require that patients call at least 24 hours in advance to reschedule an appointment. Failure to reschedule an appointment at least 24 hours in

advance will result in the patient receiving a “no-show” status on their record. (Refer to “No Show” policy above)

Please Arrive on Time: It is also very important to be prompt for your appointments. Most appointments are in 15-minute increments. Therefore arriving 15 minutes late for an appointment constitutes the patient missing their appointment. At that point, we will ask you to reschedule your appointment to another day or a different time that same day, if available. If the physician is still able to see you that day, we will do our very best to work you in as soon as possible. However, there could be a wait involved until an opening in the physician’s schedule becomes available.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS AND SAMPLES:

All prescription refills will be processed within 24 hours. This means that each refill request will be processed and called in by 12 noon the following day. Please do not contact our office unless, **after 24 hours** from your request, you find that your prescription is not filled yet. To process your refill request in a timely manner, please contact us at least one week before your refill is required to avoid running out of your medicine.

It is the patient’s responsibility to take care of having their **written prescriptions** filled by their pharmacist. When checking out from your doctor’s visit, please **do not** ask our staff to call in your **written prescription**.

Samples: The purpose of the **sample medications** we receive from pharmaceutical representatives is to give our patients an opportunity to test a new medication for effectiveness before getting a prescription filled for that medication. We also use them **occasionally** to treat patients who have a **short-term** illness to recover from. We often give samples to patients to help offset the cost of a prescription when they are experiencing a **temporary** financial hardship. We do not receive enough samples to give them for ongoing regular use. Please restrict request for samples for the purposes listed above.

When calling in to request sample medications, please allow at least 24 hours for physician approval and processing of the requested samples. Generally, **approved** sample medications will **not** be ready for pickup the same day they are requested.

REFERRALS, ORDERS FOR SPECIAL TESTS, BLOODWORK & TEST RESULTS:

All referrals and orders for special tests will be processed within one week unless those orders or tests are needed sooner per your physician. Because multiple steps are required in completing referrals, **at least one week** is needed to process them. If one of our physicians orders a referral for you, a nurse will contact you; either by phone or by mail, with the date and time of your appointment, along with the specialist or the special test that has been ordered. If a patient contacts us with a request for a referral, we will attempt to complete this referral within a 24-hour period, but reserve the right to our policy of **one week** for processing the request. To avoid contacting our office from the specialist’s office, please ensure you have your referral letter or Doctors’ orders with you. It is difficult and

time-consuming to process a referral request on the “spur of the moment,” not to mention a frustrating experience for both you and the specialist’s office. Again, please allow at least **one week** for all referral requests to be processed.

Blood work and/or other Test Results will be sent to the patient within two to three weeks upon the completion of the testing. All patients will be contacted, **by mail**, with their results unless there are significant abnormalities. We will attempt to contact patients by telephone with any significant abnormalities as soon as we are made aware of such results. Please contact us if you have not received your results, by mail, within two to three weeks.

NIGHT AND WEEKEND CALLS:

If you have a **medical emergency** and need a physician after regular office hours, dial 859-858-9355 and you will hear our automated greeting. During that greeting, you can press “8” to reach the Medical Exchange to have the on-call physician paged (*you can also dial 276-2594 to contact the Medical Exchange*). You will also have the opportunity to press “1” to leave a message for a non-emergent situation and have your call returned the next business day. Please restrict night and weekend calls for **emergencies only**. **Do not** call after hours for **prescription refills**.

It is important for our patients to realize that controlled substance prescriptions will **not** be handled at nights or on the weekends. A written prescription is needed for controlled substances and should not be called in over the telephone.

CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT:

At the beginning of 2003, the Board of Trustees for Jessamine Christian Healthcare determined that, because of the rising medical and legal complications associated with chronic pain management, that it would be in our patient’s best interest to require all of our established patients needing such treatment to be referred to a pain management specialist. The referral would be made for the purposes of our physicians receiving a recommended plan of treatment from a specialist to follow with our patients or for the specialist to take over the pain management portion of their medical treatment.

Our physicians **will not** be prescribing controlled substances for chronic pain management without specific recommendations from a pain management specialist.

Additionally, we are not taking on new patients needing treatment for chronic pain management at this time.

PAYMENT POLICIES:

All insurance co-pays are due at the check-in window as you sign in for your appointment with the exception of co-pays that are calculated by a percentage of the total charges of that days visit. In that case, the co-pay will be calculated and collected as you checkout from

your visit. It is the **patient's responsibility** to know what your co-pay is and have it ready at each visit.

ABOUT DEDUCTIBLES:

Just a reminder: Each January most patient deductible amounts start back at zero. This means that you may need to pay the full cost of your office visit the day you are seen, depending on the amount of the deductible you are meeting. This year, if you are meeting a deductible, we will be collecting that amount the day you are treated. Payment can be made at the checkout window just before you leave. As always, you can pay by cash, check or credit card. Please have your payment ready when you are checking out.

FILING YOUR MEDICAL CLAIMS:

As a courtesy to our customers, we will file the charges for your visit to your insurance company for you. After we have received payment from the insurance company, any unpaid amounts from the visit due to non-covered services, etc., will then become patient responsibility and due upon receipt of your statement from our office. When mailing in your payment please send check or credit card payment with your statement (No Cash Please). Just send your payment in the return envelope enclosed with your statement. You can also stop by our office anytime during business hours to make your payment.

For our self-pay patients, payment for your visit is due the day services are rendered. You may pay by cash, check or credit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express. We do offer discounts for office visits and lab work for payment made In-Full the day of service.

If you have any questions regarding your bill, please contact **Janet Blakeman**, our Billing Manager, and she will be happy to assist you.

A NOTE FROM JANET BLAKEMAN – BILLING MANAGER:

I have had several patients ask about “insurance” plans they have seen advertised. Although I am not an expert on insurance, I do have a word of caution for you. Be careful of plans that do not use the word insurance. They call themselves patient advocates or discount plans. They take your money and ask the health facility to take less money for your office visit. No claim is filed to them and they want no responsibility for anything except that phone call. We do not accept this kind of plan. I'd hate to see anyone scammed by a disreputable company. - Janet

REQUEST FOR MEDICAL RECORDS:

To request copies of your medical records either to be sent to another Healthcare facility or to be received by yourself or another person, requires a completed “Release of Medical Records Authorization” form signed by the patient. Every patient is entitled to **One Free Copy** of his or her records. The fee for additional requests for records, not ordered by a physician, is \$15.00 plus .25 per page. Medical records will be sent when payment has been received. We require at least a one-week turn around time to get copies of your medical

records ready to send or pick-up. HIPAA allows medical facilities up to 30 days to process and send medical records

PRIVACY UPDATES:

Because of privacy regulations that went into effect April 16, 2003, there are policies and procedures that we have adopted to comply with those regulations. Please be aware that we can only discuss a patient's medical information with the actual patient. Exceptions include disclosing protected health information with parents or legal guardians of their children under 18 years of age. Also Individuals who have been officially appointed as a representative of a patient to take care of their medical care, such as a 'Power of Attorney' etc., must present official documentation to that effect. We do have authorization forms that can be signed by a patient to allow designated individuals to have access to their protected health information. We are not able to discuss a patient's medical information with extended family members, friends, etc. without written or verbal authorization to do so. To review your privacy rights, please refer to the Privacy Rights Brochure. If you no longer have your copy, you can request additional ones from our front desk staff anytime.

Minors (under 18 years of age) **must** be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or an individual, who has been authorized, by the parent, **in writing**, when coming to the clinic. Arrangements must be made in advance to have a minor come unaccompanied by an adult to the clinic for treatment. Minors, who come alone for treatment by any of our clinical staff, without official authorization from a parent or legal guardian, **will not be seen**. I know some of these procedures can be inconvenient and frustrating. We will make every effort to minimize your inconvenience when these authorizations are necessary.

POLICIES REGARDING PATIENT ASSISTANCE FORMS:

There are patient assistant programs to aide you in correctly filling out the application forms and ensure that the process of applying is done correctly. The advantage of using these organizations is their ability to streamline the application process so that you can get your medications as soon as possible. There are fees associated with the process; however, the cost of processing the medications is nominal compared to the high cost of the medications. Please ask one of our nurses for more information regarding the application process for patient assistance.

Again, our goal in this correspondence is to inform our patients of our current policies and procedures are at Jessamine Christian Healthcare. As always, we will be reviewing these policies over this next year for possible revisions and additions. Please contact me any time with your thoughts and suggestions as we move ahead.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Williams
Business Director
Jessamine Christian Healthcare
200 Rice Street
Wilmore, KY 40356