



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR OUTPATIENTS

### 1. How do I get in touch with my Shepherd Physician?

Shepherd Center has a call center with professional staff that handles calls for its physicians. The hours are Monday – Friday, 9am to 3pm except on holidays. To contact us, call (404) 352-2020 and ask for the “Call Center.” You will be transferred and a ‘live’ person will respond.

*\*Special Note – We are not an emergency ward, so if you have an emergency situation, please call 911 or go to your nearest local emergency ward.*

### 2. May I bring my urine specimen to Shepherd?

In the event a Shepherd Center physician orders a urine specimen, you need to schedule an appointment by calling (404) 352-2020 and ask for a nurse visit. Tell the scheduler you need to make arrangements to come in and provide a specimen. In the past we accepted specimens collected at home. However, too many urine specimens were contaminated and were unacceptable to run a test. Therefore we now must oversee the urine collection process to ensure the specimen is collected under sterile conditions. If you are using a foley/sp, the foley/sp must be changed and a fresh specimen collected.

### 3. What should I do to be prepared for my clinic visit?

We want to make your visit as informative and efficient as possible. We need your help to make that happen. Please bring the following items with you in case we need them:

- a. Your insurance card
- b. Your medication list
- c. Your Pharmacy phone number
- d. Your Home Health number
- e. If you need to transfer from a wheelchair to a stretcher during your visit, please put your sling under you.

f. Please bring an extra change of clothes in case you need them.

### 4. How do I get my prescriptions refilled?

The easiest way to have your prescriptions refilled is during your 6-month office visit. In the event your prescriptions need refilling prior to your office visit, call Shepherd Center at (404) 352-2020 and ask for the “Call Center.” You will be transferred, and a ‘live’ person will respond. Be prepared to give the name and telephone number of the pharmacy and the name and dosage of the medication you want refilled. Our physicians will refill prescriptions with certain conditions. They include the following:

- a. The physician ordered the medication originally
- b. You have been seen at Shepherd Center by the physician within 6 months
- c. You are seen by the physician every 3 months if you are on a high risk medication
- d. Any prescriptions requiring a written hard copy prescription vs. a phone call to a pharmacy must make an appointment.

Please do not let your medications run out. Be prepared and call in at least seven days in advance.

### 5. How do I find out about my lab results?

If you have your lab drawn at Shepherd Center, we automatically call you if you have any abnormal results or any action needs to be taken because of the results. Due to the volume of calls we are required to make, we do not call you if your results are “normal.” If you want to call about your results, wait 3 days for cultures and 1 day for blood work and call (404) 352-2020 and ask for the “Call Center.”

## **6. Do I have to have a primary care physician?**

We recommend that all people have a primary care physician (PCP). It provides you with a physician who can address any medical need and oversee your medical care. However, you are not required to have a primary care physician unless your insurance plans require you to have a PCP. Patients with a Medicaid GBHC card are on one of these plans that require a primary care physician. When a PCP is required, Shepherd Center must get a referral from the PCP before any Shepherd staff can see you. This includes all lab and x-rays.

## **7. Can I come to Shepherd Center for emergencies?**

Shepherd Center is not designed for emergencies. We offer Outpatient services that require clinic appointments. In the event you have an emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency ward. We also recommend that you have a primary care physician, so you can contact them for emergency situations.

## **8. How can I get my foley or suprapubic (sp) tube changed?**

We do not recommend clinic appointments for routine foley and sp changes. We encourage every patient with an indwelling foley/sp to have a family member or significant other trained to insert the catheter. If this is not possible, then we will write an order for home health to change the foley/sp at the home. The frequency of routine foley/sp changes is very different among patients. Some patients may tolerate foley/sp changes every 2 to 3 months and others require a monthly change. Every patient with a foley/sp should keep an extra catheter at the home in case it becomes plugged and must be changed. If you must come to the clinic for a foley/sp change, please bring your supplies with you including your catheter. To schedule an appointment, call (404) 352-2020.

## **9. What do I need to do if I need a new wheelchair, wheelchair repairs or wheelchair cushion?**

You must get a referral from your physician prior to scheduling an appointment with the Seating clinic. The referral must state "PT and OT evaluation for Seating and Mobility." The referral must be less than 30 days old. In some instances, insurance companies require that your PCP be the referring physician in all instances. People using GBHC Medicaid must have their Medicaid PCP write the referral. The PCP may fax the referral to (404) 350-7356. Medicaid always requires a prior approval.

## **10. Why do I have to wait so long for a physician appointment?**

Shepherd Center apologizes that our physicians are not always available to you. Professional commitments and responsibilities prevent our physicians from handling a larger caseload in Outpatient. For that reason, Shepherd Center has mid-level providers available for your health care needs. Our mid-level providers are experienced credentialed providers who practice under the standard protocols. Please become familiar with:

- Laura Schmeier, NP- Multispecialty Clinic
- Sandra Williams, NP - Multispecialty Clinic
- Tracy Walker, NP - Multiple Sclerosis Clinic
- Colby Doepel, NP - Multiple Sclerosis Clinic
- Kim Miechiels, PA - Multiple Sclerosis Clinic

## **11. Where can I go to discuss my hospital bill?**

Shepherd Center Outpatient Services has a Financial Counselor on staff. She can be reached at (404) 367-1380. Please feel free to call her and discuss your concerns.

## **12. How can I get a copy of my medical records?**

If you have access to the Internet, the easiest way to get a copy of your medical records is to go to the Shepherd Center website. Go to the Homepage. Press "Quick Link." Scroll down to Medical Records and press "Go." You will have instructions available and be able to print a Medical Release form to use in order for us to have permission to send records to you. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call (404) 350-7493.

## **13. How do I get my Letters/Forms of Disability (LOD) filled out?**

Shepherd Center processes LODs for patients with MS and patients who are not followed by the Pain Clinic. Fax your forms to (404) 350-3080. Attention: Emily Cade (for MS patients) or Brenna Blocker (for all others).