

Michael A. Freeman, M.D.

Psychiatry

A Consent Form and Patient Guide to Text Messaging, Email Communication, and Telemedicine (Telepsychiatry) with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.

Michael A. Freeman, M.D.
Psychiatry
1036 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
Kentfield, CA 94904
(415) 378-6678
Michael.Freeman@marincounty.net

Why use text messages and email to communicate?

Text messages and email have a number of advantages over other types of communication including convenience and efficiency. Text and email also work well for many of the questions, requests or messages you may have regarding prescription refill, appointment scheduling, and non-urgent medical questions.

This information and consent form will help answer some of your questions about this

service. If you still have questions after reading this form, please ask them directly.

If you would like to use text or email to communicate with Dr. Freeman, please read and sign this form to indicate that you understand and agree to the guidelines below.

What should I know about text and email communication?

The most important thing you should know is that it is not yet possible to guarantee the confidentiality of text and email exchanges. While the security of text and email is comparable to other types of communication (such as mobile phone calls), there are some special issues with text and email:

- If your text or email addresses are through your employer, your employer may own and review all texts and emails sent to and from that address. Therefore, never send personal texts or email from your employer's computer.
- If your text or email address is a family address, other family members may see your messages. Confidentiality cannot be assured.
- If you use an Internet service provider, there is a risk that messages may be intercepted by others (including "hackers").
- Messages stored by your Internet service provider, and text messages, may be subpoenaed and obtained by government officials acting under the authority of a court order.

You should also know that others involved with this medical practice might read texts and emails you send to your doctor. Like phone calls, emails may be screened by office staff before being routed to the appropriate person.

What types of communication are appropriate for text and email messages?

This practice does not use an encrypted and secure "HIPAA-compliant" email system. While the following types of requests or messages may be appropriate for secure text or email, this level of confidentiality is not available from this practice. Therefore this practice cannot assure your confidentiality if you use email or text messages for the following purposes:

- Prescription refill requests
- Appointment scheduling
- Non-urgent medical advice
- Non-urgent medical follow-up (including some types of test results)
- Non-urgent medical correspondence
- Billing/insurance questions

While many subjects are appropriate for text or email communication, it is ultimately you and your doctor's decision which information is appropriate for you.

What types of communication are not appropriate for email?

The following subjects are never appropriate for email:

- Any urgent medical problem or emergency
- Mental health issues of a confidential, crisis, or urgent nature

- Drug and alcohol problems
- HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Information pertaining to situations that endanger yourself or other people
- Work-related injuries and disability
- Email or text communication across state lines, as Dr. Freeman is licensed to practice medicine only in California.

Email is not a substitute for a physical exam or counseling by your doctor. Please do not hesitate to call the office immediately if you feel you need to see your doctor.

How do I communicate with my doctor via email?

You may communicate with Dr. Freeman via email at *Michael.Freeman@marincounty.net* or by text at 415-378-6678.

Include one or more of the following in the SUBJECT line of your email:

- Prescription refill
- Appointment
- Non-urgent medical advice
- Non-urgent medical follow-up
- Non-urgent medical correspondence
- Billing/insurance question

In the body of your email, please include your *full name, phone number, and email address*, along with your message.

What happens to an email message after it is received?

After your message is received it is printed out and a hard copy is stored in your medical record. The electronic copy is also saved.

You can expect a response within 48 hours telling you that your message has been received and acted upon. If you do not get such an email, you should assume your email was not received. You should then call the practice with your question or request. You should not expect to receive a response on weekends or holidays or any other time the office may be closed.

Will I be charged for physician time spent responding to text messages and emails?

Yes, all time spent responding to emails will be billed on a pro-rated basis, in increments of 0.1 hours (6 minutes).

What is Telemedicine and Telepsychiatry?

Telemedicine is the provision of a health care service, including examination, diagnosis, treatment, consultation, transfer of medical data, and education, using interactive audio, video, or data communications. “Interactive” means audio, video, or data communication by way of real time (synchronous) or near real time (asynchronous) two way transfer of medical information.

Telepsychiatry is the application of telemedicine within the scope of psychiatric practice.

Why is telepsychiatry used in psychiatric care?

This practice uses telepsychiatry on an as-needed basis to provide clinical follow-up care when patients are travelling or when they have temporarily relocated, typically for work assignments.

What communication channels are used for telepsychiatry?

This practice primarily uses long-distance telephone for providing telepsychiatry services. Upon request, services may be delivered by Skype as well.

Is telepsychiatry secure and confidential?

No, this practice does not have access to secure, “HIPAA-compliant” telephone and Skype or interactive video communication channels. Therefore the confidentiality of any clinical care provided with the help of telephone or Skype communication channels cannot be assured.

What types of communication are not appropriate for telepsychiatry?

You should not communicate confidential personal information in phone or Skype appointments with this practice.

Will I be charged for physician time allocated to telepsychiatric communication?

Yes, you will be charged for telepsychiatry services according to the same fee schedule that applies for office-based visits.

24/7-365 care has benefits and risks!

This practice facilitates your access to care by using modern communication technology. This produces many benefits for health care consumers, at the risk of losing confidentiality. Therefore you must be thoughtful and prudent when communicating with your doctor by email, text messages, or telepsychiatry.

AFTER READING THIS DISCLOSURE FORM, YOU MUST SIGN BELOW BEFORE USING EMAIL, TEXT MESSAGING, OR TELEPSYCHIATRY WITH THIS PRACTICE.

I have read this consent form and have received answers to all of my questions about using email, text messaging, and telepsychiatry to communicate with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.

I understand that any email, text messages and telepsychiatry communication that I use or send may be seen by people other than my doctor, that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed at this time, and that the Internet is not an error free network. I understand that the psychiatric practice of Dr. Michael A. Freeman does not employ encryption software or “HIPAA-compliant” technology.

I understand that it is never appropriate to send e-mail or text messages, or to use telepsychiatry communication channels from the workplace, from a computer owned by

an employer, for urgent or emergency situations, for sending confidential information relating to mental health, drug and alcohol, sexually transmitted disease, or similar subjects, or for sending messages across state lines.

I understand that time charges will accrue for physician time spent providing services by telepsychiatry, and by responding to text messages and emails; and that such charges will be billed on a pro-rated basis in increments of 0.1 hours (6 minutes).

I understand that text and email messages may get lost, delayed, or misdirected.

I agree to hold Michael A. Freeman, M.D. harmless and to release him from any and all liability resulting from failing to receive or respond to information contained in text or email messages, or through telepsychiatry communication channels.

I understand the terms outlined in this brochure, and I consent to these agreements and guidelines when using email and text messages and telepsychiatry in addition to other methods of communication with Michael A. Freeman, M.D.

I understand that either my doctor or I may choose to discontinue the use of email, text messaging, or telepsychiatric communication at any time.

In any text or email communication with Michael A. Freeman, M.D., always include: Subject, Date and time of transmission, Your Full Name, Phone Number, and your text or email address.

EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGES ARE NEVER APPROPRIATE FOR URGENT OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Name: _____

Date: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number :(____) ____ - _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____