

# Family Counseling Associates, LLC

12 Essex Street | Andover, MA 01810  
360 Route 101, Suite 12B | Bedford, NH 03110  
152 Sylvan Street, Suite 12A | Danvers, MA 01923

## Medication Management Program

### OFFICE POLICIES FOR MEDICATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (3/2019)

Please familiarize yourself with our office policies. If you have any questions please call during normal office hours which are Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m. Office visits are by appointment only and vary according to each practitioner's schedule.

#### **CANCELLATION POLICY**

Because the appointment time has been reserved for you, you will be charged for cancellations with less than 24-hours notice. A fee of \$70.00 will be charged for a 20 minute established patient visit and a fee of \$95.00 for 40-45 minute established patient visit, for the Psychiatrist and Nurse Practitioners. A fee of \$100.00 will be charged for a 60-minute New Patient intake appointment. **These charges are not covered by your insurance and are due and payable prior to any further appointments.**

In the event you must cancel or reschedule an appointment, please leave a message on the medication management departments voicemail system at **978-482-0760** (please make note of this number). Our answering system will timestamp your call. You may also receive an automated call reminding you of your appointment and you may cancel your appointment using this automated system within 24 hours of your appointment. No fee will be charged if your call is received within the above time frame. Due to the large volume of calls; when calling to schedule or cancel an appointment your call may go to voicemail. Be assured all calls will be returned within 1-2 business days.

#### **OFFICE HOURS**

Please note that the medication management program can be reached during the week, Tues - Fri from 9:30AM - 4:30PM. The office is closed on Mondays. If you have any questions about your next appointment, checking the status of a prescription, or if you have a questions about your treatment please contact our administrative assistant Ginny Sheedy at 978-482-0760.

Urgent calls will be returned within 24-48 hours. If you are in crisis, or in case of an emergency outside of our normal business hours, please call Lahey Behavioral Health Crisis line at 978-620-1250, or dial 911, or have someone take you to your nearest emergency room. Please note that our prescribers maintain part time schedules at Family Counseling Associates, so that their availability for between session consults will be limited to significant medical concerns or medical side effects. If you are interested in discussing your treatment, or progress, or to report any non-medical issues, you will need to schedule an appointment

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### PRESCRIPTION POLICY

Our medical staff provides refills and renews prescriptions only during office appointments- except for urgent circumstances or medical necessity. Our providers do not approve refill requests from patients or pharmacies outside of an appointment. This practice reduces prescription errors, improves patient safety and encourages appropriate follow-up. It also improves compliance with new state laws governing controlled substances. Patients will receive enough medication or refills to last until their next recommended follow-up. Patients are asked to track their supply, and to ensure they have an appointment scheduled before they run out of medication or run out of existing refills.

Some patients find that they become aware of running low on medications only at the last minute. Please be proactive in your care, and track how much medication you have and how many refills remain on the prescription, and ensure you have an appointment to see your provider before you're out of medication.

### MEDICATION MANAGEMENT AND COUNSELING

It is our medical staff's position that in most cases medication management and counseling is the best treatment approach for most mental health conditions. In some limited cases, our prescribers may treat adult patients who are not seeing counselors at Family Counseling Associates. However, at any point, your prescriber may determine that counseling is a requisite condition of your continued treatment. It is our office policy that all minors age 17 and under, who receive medication management services with one of our providers, must also be actively engaged in counseling services at Family Counseling Associates. Discontinuation of counseling services, against the recommendations of the counselor or provider, could result in a minor being discharged from services. This policy is intended to assure that medical treatment is being done in the most responsible, evidence-based, and ethical manner possible.

**INSURANCE POLICY COPAYS, PAYMENTS, AND DEDUCTIBLE ARE TO BE PAID AT THE TIME OF YOUR APPOINTMENT, PER YOUR INSURANCE CONTRACT.**

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Client Name

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Signature of Client, Parent or Guardian

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Date:

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## Medication Management Program

### Policy for Benzodiazepine Prescription (3/2019)

**Evolving research and heightened scrutiny of quality of care—along with law enforcement concerns of misuse and diversion—have intensified the concern and monitoring long term (and even short term) benzodiazepine use. Because tranquilizers in the benzodiazepine class such as Xanax (alprazolam), Ativan (lorazepam) Klonopin (clonazepam) and others are controlled substances subject to definite standards of clinical and ethical care — as well as laws— we are providing this notice to make our office policy clear.**

The risks of Benzodiazepine use are well known, including—but not limited to — dependency, addiction, impaired alertness, and illegal misuse and diversion. They can be especially problematic when combined with legitimate medications, and/or ill-advised medicines/drugs. Furthermore, because they are widespread and easy to find in the community, they can be abused with the potential for overdose. For public health and law enforcement agencies, this approaches a public health hazard.

These tranquilizing medications, when used only as prescribed, are effective agents for the quick relief of acute anxiety. They are indicated (short term) in appropriate clinical situations, as long as there are no contraindications. Those would include—but not be limited to—past or current misuse of benzodiazepines and other dependency-producing substances such as alcohol, cannabis, narcotic pain meds, stimulants, barbiturates, and various street drugs. Also, any history of illegal activity (convicted or not) connected with use of such.

Therefore, benzodiazepines are only prescribed for acute use (assuming no contraindications) for up to 3 months. Chronic maintenance is rarely supported, even for those whose lives seem continually fraught with life's stress. For those who have been taking benzodiazepines long term, abruptly stopping could quickly lead to uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms. Therefore, a gradual taper schedule is called for in order to achieve physiological freedom from the tranquilizer. The time required can be individualized.

If more time, or closer monitoring, be required at any time, a formal detox program would be in order. The availability of our prescribers is limited by a tight, part time appointment schedule. As a result, any emergencies are directed to your nearest ER. If this proves too limiting and/or challenging, inpatient detox might be necessary.

For those who have been incorporating benzodiazepines into their very coping, the “loss” of such medication can seem daunting.

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We are always pleased to meet and discuss with you alternative therapies, be they pharmacology, counseling, CBT, biofeedback, meditation, prayer, exercise. and the like. For most patients in this practice, benzodiazepine use (problematic or not) is only a relatively minor aspect of their medication protocol. Their more important medications pertain to mood, anxiety, content, adjustment and

attention disorders. Getting off the “benzo” (and any other uncalled-for substance) will only enhance the treatment of all conditions and improve quality of life. It is our belief, that the benzo replaces the learning healthy coping strategies.

If you are interested in learning more, please consult with you medical provider. **Your signature below signifies your understand and agreement with Family Counseling Associates, LLC policy regarding the prescription of benzodiazepine medications.**

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Client Name

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Signature of Client, Parent or Guardian

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Date:

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### Policy for Prescribing Stimulants for ADHD (3/2019)

Stimulants (amphetamines and methylphenidates) are Schedule II controlled substances. They are prescribed in this practice in strict adherence to DEA rules and ethical/clinical standards of care as follows:

- Only for accurately diagnosed ADD/ADHD per DSM-5 criteria.
  - **For Children-** documentation of a current ADHD diagnosis is needed from a pediatrician, school, or past mental health provider. Otherwise, psychological testing may be required.
  - **For Adults-** Evidence and documentation of the ADHD related symptoms prior to age 18 is required. This could include school or doctor's records, or past psychological testing reports. If no documentation exists, psychological testing may be required.
- Prescriptions are written for a 30-day supply.
- No insurance "Mail-In 90 day supply" prescriptions.
- Amounts and doses are to be taken as directed on prescription.
- No refills can be called into your pharmacy, an appointment is needed to refill a prescription.
- No mailing of prescriptions to patients.
- No prescriptions issued out of the 30 day cycle...lost meds not an excuse. (Lost, stolen, ruined in wash, need bigger dose, etc. will not change policy.)
- No pharmacy shopping or doctor shopping.

These medications are not indicated for increasing energy, mood, motivation, driving attention, or other occasions to concentrate or perform. In short, Stimulants are not pep pills, mood elevators, or performance enhancers. Our prescribers are always free to immediately halt (without question) prescribing stimulants if they suspects or finds any breach of schedule II adherence (or suspicion thereof) or any clinical contraindication to their use (misuse, abuse, multiple Rx's, suspicious excuses for deviation, etc.). **Your signature below signifies your understand and agreement with Family Counseling Associates of Andover's policy regarding the prescription of benzodiazepine medications.**

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Client Name

Date

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Signature of Client, Parent or Guardian