**Communication Policy**

Synergy Acupuncture and Wellness (SAW) utilizes email and text message communication with its patients and clients to improve the convenience and efficiency of your visits and care. Ensure that you read this policy thoroughly prior to signing the consent form.

### Uses of Email and Text Communication

Email and text communication will not be used to communicate individual medical information in any capacity. Email and text communication with SAW staff is restricted to the following uses:

**Administrative**

* Scheduling appointments (including rebooking and cancellation)
* Providing directions (to practice location and other facilities)
* Providing practice policies & protocols (e.g. privacy policy, referrals, etc.)

**Education and Health Promotion**

* Providing general educational and health promotion electronic documents, resources, and links
* Clinic newsletters and alerts/updates

**Email and text communication with SAW 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.**

### Risks of Using Electronic Communication

SAW cannot guarantee the security and confidentiality of electronic and text communications. Please consider the following risks of using email and text 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 acupuncturist 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

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### Email and text Communication Protocols & Practices

* Emails and texts will only be checked during clinic office hours
* Emails and texts will be triaged and answered according to internal clinic prioritization
* While we will strive to return all email and text queries within 24 hours, we cannot guarantee this turn-around time
* It is the responsibility of the patient to follow up on all email and text communications
* No medical information or advice will be given or disclosed via email or text
* Email and text communication with SAW must be limited to the aforementioned uses

**Instructions for Email Communication**

* Reasonably limit or avoid using an employer’s or other third party’s computer
* Inform SAW of any changes in your email address
* Include an appropriate and descriptive message subject line
* Include your full name in the body of the message
* Keep your email short and concise (250 words or less)– if you require assistance with a more complex matter, please call SAW or schedule an appointment through the website
* Do not include any attachments unless requested by your healthcare provider
* Refrain from using offensive language or using online communication for frivolous or commercial purposes

### Consent Statement (To Be Signed And Given to Acupuncturist)

*"I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand Synergy Acupuncture and Wellness (SAW) Email and Text Communication Policy & Consent Form. I am aware of the conditions of use, risks, limitations, and instructions for use of email communication services as explained by SAW. I fully acknowledge that sending information via electronic communication is not secure and I fully accept the risks and responsibility involved with this. I hereby waive any and all claimed against the acupuncturist and staff at SAW in connection with the disclosure of personal information via email.*

*I consent to the conditions and will follow the instructions outlined, as well as any other conditions that SAW may impose on communications with patients using email and text services. I acknowledge the permitted purposes of online and text communications and agree to use email and text communications only for those purposes.*

*I acknowledge that either the clinic staff or I may, at any time, withdraw the option of communicating electronically upon providing written notice. Any questions I had have been answered."*

*Patient Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Patient Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*