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DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND SUGGESTION POLICY 03/09

Coastal Family Medicine of Maine PLLC (CFMM) works diligently to ensure your experience with us meets all of your expectations and is of the highest quality. As a medical practice and business, we also recognize that there are many ways to organize and run a business venture. CFMM also recognizes that our patients and their suggestions can be a valuable resource in identifying areas in which we might improve or refine our practice. We encourage suggestions in any form, be it through discussions with our staff or through written correspondence. With regard to the latter, suggestions or complaints can be sent to us via the Contact Us page of our web site www.CoastalFamilyMedicineofMaine.com, or through our mailing address listed above. CFMM also has suggestion cards which are located in the reception area and examination rooms at our medical office. The suggestion cards can be mailed to us or dropped off in a suggestion box located in the reception area. You may remain anonymous in any written correspondence. We will make every effort to respond to patients complaints/suggestions within 30 days of their receipt if such complaint/suggestion is not made anonymously. If you would be more comfortable speaking with our staff face to face, we would invite you to contact us to arrange a time to meet at our offices to discuss your concerns. We take your opinions and suggestions very seriously, and we would be happy to arrange a meeting to accommodate your schedule.

Billing and Contractual Disputes:

Should a patient have a dispute over a billing or contractual matter with CFMM our first goal is to attempt to resolve the issue through constructive discussions between the parties. Patients are asked to contact our office to arrange an opportunity to meet with the CFMM staff at an amenable time. It is also recognized that some parties may not feel comfortable in face-to-face communication, in which case correspondence in writing is always acceptable. CFMM will respond to all written communication within 30 days of receipt.

Should the dispute fail to be resolved through direct communication between CFMM and the individual(s) involved, CFMM reserves the right to settle such disputes

Coastal Family Medicine of Maine, PLLC

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Page 1 of 3

through arbitration or mediation. Patients who agree to receive care with CFMM will agree to settle disputes by jointly paying for one of the following:

- a. Binding arbitration as required by the Maine Uniform Arbitration Act, with the parties agreeing to accept as final the arbitrator's decision.
- b. Non-binding arbitration, with the parties free to not accept the arbitrator's decision and to seek satisfaction through other means, including a lawsuit.
- c. Mediation, with the parties agreeing to enter into good faith negotiations through a neutral mediator in order to attempt to resolve their differences.

Patients may indicate their preferred method at the time they sign and initial the CFMM New Patient Notice of Policies and Procedures.

Complaints against the medical provider:

Complaints regarding the medical provider or the quality of your medical care are serious matters and must be addressed quickly and with due diligence. We would ask that any complaints in this area first be brought to the attention of the provider, either in written or face-to-face correspondence. As we indicated above, Coastal Family Medicine of Maine, PLLC would make every effort to either arrange a meeting to discuss your concerns or reply promptly to your written complaint. It would be our hope that through immediate and constructive dialogue the parties involved could work out their differences and come to a satisfactory resolution of the complaint or dispute. It is Coastal Family Medicine of Maine's goal to attempt to make every effort at its disposal to rectify the situation before it needs to be taken to a higher, more formal level of adjudication. CFMM would also reassure any patient that no retaliation will be taken against any individuals who lodge a complaint.

However, if a patient feels that the actions of the medical provider or the care which they have received warrants a formal complaint, this process is initiated through completion of the complaint process through the State of Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine. This process can be initiated via completion of the required forms available online at http://www.docboard.org/me/discipline/dw_fcplain.htm, or through phone or written correspondence with the State of Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine:

State of Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine
137 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Phone 207-287-3601
Complaints (within Maine) 1-888-365-9964

For Online Complaints:

http://www.docboard.org/me/online_services/dw_complaint_email.htm

HIPAA Non-Privacy Complaint Process:

With the passage of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) patients have guaranteed rights for protection of their private health information. Patients registering for treatment with Coastal Family Medicine of Maine PLLC, as with any medical provider or facility, are required to be made aware of one's rights through the provision of the Notice of Privacy Practices. If you feel that your private and protected health information was distributed or utilized unlawfully you may file a complaint with United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. Information about how to file a complaint is located at:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/index.html>

The following web link provides a complete HIPAA complaint package+which allows the complainant to prepare the necessary information regarding the complaint, and directs the individual to the appropriate regional office of the United States Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/hipcomplaintpackage.pdf>

Written complaints sent via U.S. Postal Service may be addressed to :
Secretary of the United States Health and Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
JFK Building, Room 1875
Boston, MA 02203
Phone 617-565-1340 or
Phone (TDD) 617-565-1343