

# ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT

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Electronic means of communication such as emails and texting are fast and efficient but if not protected by encryption, can lead to breaches in personally identifiable information (PII) and protected health information (PHI). **Encyption** is an electronic process that scrambles our messages so hackers on the internet can't read/steal the information. For example, I may send you an email that reads, "your thyroid study result was abnormal-we will talk about this at your next appointment", but after encryption, a hacker might see, #\*#^#KNDuhxoiwoij320847fose-which is useless information.

While it may take a little effort to learn how to use encrypted formats, it is essential given the frequency of PHI and PII stolen on the Internet. In this office I use **ProtonMail**, which is a very secure email service that allows **end to end encryption** (the emails you send me are encrypted and so are my replies to you).

In order to have end to end encryption, you must sign up at **www.protonmail.com** for a **free** email account. Then, use your ProtonMail account to send me emails-and they will be automatically encrypted. All of my replies to you will also be encrypted. Pretty simple really.

If you choose not to sign up for your own ProtonMail account, the emails you send to me **will not be encrypted**. I will be able to read them but so might an internet hacker. The emails I send to you **will be encrypted** and for you (and only you) to be able to read them you will need to enter a **password** (that I will give you). So the information I send to you is secure, but **not** the information you send to me. Not an optimal situation.

Regardless of the method chosen, always practice "**minimal disclosure**" when including PII or PHI in an electronic communication. Minimal disclosure means revealing only the information that is absolutely necessary and no more.

You can also use **google voice at 216-309-1550** to leave me a voicemail. This is best reserved for conveying brief, one way info such as confirming an appointment or requesting refills-things that do not require back and forth communication. My replies to you will be in the form of a text message-which is much less secure than an encrypted email.

Finally, for issues that cannot be handled electronically, you may call **Susan at 216-292-0610** during normal business hours.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the electronic communication agreement-including the risks to my PHI and PII should I not choose to use the encryption format described above.

Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_