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Dear Patient,

There are far-reaching laws affecting the handling of patients' medical information. In general, they formalize much of what we have always done here at Wildwood to protect your right to privacy. However, they do affect some common situations, restricting our ability to take shortcuts, even with your permission, even as a courtesy to longstanding friends and patients.

It is important that you read through the policy's legal jargon in its entirety. Printed copies of the practice's privacy policy are available in each office in a form that is easily added to your "Patient Guide" notebook. The formal policy outlined there is official and governing.

On the other side of this page is an unofficial, informal listing of a few of the practicalities required by this government mandated policy. Items included in the list are the handling of school/camp/daycare/sports forms, formal definition of the age of patient confidentiality, and authorizing release of private information- who and how?

If you have any questions about the government's policy or any of the practicalities that it has generated, please feel free to ask any of us. We will be happy to guide you to the person best able to answer them.

The Doctors and Staff of Wildwood Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, LLC

## A Few Practicalities Mandated by Government Policy

*In practical terms, if you need forms filled out, please come into the office to pick them up (or to sign a release to have forms or information forwarded to someone else).*

### **Handling School/Camp/Daycare/Sports Forms**

Connecticut Blue School Form, School Sports Participation Form, Pre-School Health Forms, and Authorization for Administration of Medicines (for prescription medicines), and other formats that contain the same or similar information for the same or similar purposes may be given directly, or mailed, to the parent, legal guardian, or patient. With the exception of the Connecticut Blue School Form, which may be released directly to a public or parochial school without specific parent or patient authorization, these forms will not be otherwise released to anyone without an original written authorization signed by the parent, legal guardian, or patient.

Authorization for Administration of Medicines Forms for non-prescription medicines and/or Immunization Records may be released to anyone with verbal authorization of the patient, parent, or legal guardian.

***Adolescents and their parents should be aware of the following, as well:***

### **Age of Confidentiality**

We strongly encourage patients of any age to share information and concerns with parents and legal guardians. However, in our practice patients are given confidentiality as of their 13th birthday. By bringing their minor children to Wildwood Pediatrics and utilizing our services, parents/guardians are specifically consenting and assenting to this practice, therefore the minor child's Individually Identifiable Health Information (IIHI) is protected from their 13th birthday on. Exceptions to this include cases of suspected child abuse, any child or adolescent who expressed an intent to harm themselves or another person, etc.

### **Authorizing Release of Private Information**

- For minor patients who have not yet reached their 13th birthday:
  - For release of information requiring authorization, the *parent or legal guardian* must supply the authorization.
- For minor patients who have reached their 13th birthday, but not yet reached their 18th birthday:
  - For release of information concerning health services that s/he may lawfully obtain without parental consent, and/or where a parent/legal guardian has entered into an agreement enabling the health care professional to provide confidential care to a minor, the (minor) *patient* must supply the authorization.
  - For release of other information requiring authorization, the *parent or legal guardian* must supply the authorization.
- For patients who have reached their 18th birthday (or older):
  - For release of information requiring authorization, the *patient* must supply the authorization.

Note that a written authorization, when needed, must be an original document. Except in the case of need for emergency medical treatment, faxed authorizations are not sufficient and will not be accepted.