

Caritas Family Medicine
Elissa Speech MD

Practice Policies

“Open Access”- acute appointment scheduling: Approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of daily appointments are reserved for patients with acute symptoms that need to be seen right away. These appointments are generally the first appointments of the day and are made available on the online scheduling program every evening for the following morning. If all acute visits are filled, Dr. Speech should be notified by e-mail or telephone immediately. In most cases, a face-to-face evaluation will be made available within 24-48 hours.

Copay Policy: In order to facilitate patient visits, all patients are asked to present their copay payment to Dr. Speech directly at the beginning of each patient visit. **Caritas Family Medicine accepts cash, check, or credit card payment (on-line or in-office). Checks should be made out to “Caritas Family Medicine”, and written prior to the start of the office visit.** Patients using the online credit card payment should do so **prior** to the office visit and present a printed receipt of the transaction. Inability to provide the copay at the time of service will incur a \$10 service charge. A co-pay receipt will be presented on request on the day of service **ONLY**. If receipts are requested at a later date, they will be provided at a charge of 1\$ per receipt.

Insurance: Dr. Speech currently accepts Excellus, Preferred Care, and Aetna insurance policies, as well as cash payments. She is not taking Medicaid, Medicare, or Workman’s Compensation at this time.

Form Completion Policy: All paper forms, (school physicals, etc) should be submitted for completion at the time of service. Any form submitted at a time other than the office visit should be given **THREE BUSINESS DAYS** for completion. Forms that are demanded with less than three business days to process will incur a \$10 expedited form completion fee.

Antibiotics: Dr. Speech does not prescribe antibiotic medications over the telephone. With improved access to acute patient visits, an appropriate physical examination will precede antibiotic prescriptions.

No Shows/ Cancellations: Three unexplained no-shows in the span of one year will result in dismissal from the practice. Appointments that are cancelled with less than 24 hours notice will incur a \$25 service charge.

Narcotics and controlled substances: Patients requiring narcotics and/or controlled substance medications for longer than a one month period for acute medical issues will be required to sign a contract stating they will receive their controlled substance prescriptions only from Dr. Speech and from a single pharmacy agreed upon by the patient and Dr. Speech. Any patient that becomes a registered patient while already using

controlled substances will be asked to submit a urine sample for a chemical dependency drug screening. If results of the screening are positive, this will not result in punitive action, but will guide Dr. Speach in arranging appropriate medical management of substance abuse problems. Controlled substances for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and similar conditions are generally prescribed only after appropriate psychological and/or psychiatric evaluation.

Emergency cell phone access: Dr. Speach can be reached by her cell phone number by registered patients only in the event of an urgent issue or an emergency. All non-urgent issues should be addressed via the regular office phone number where a message may be left. Dr. Speach continually checks these phone messages during regular clinic hours and during off hours and weekends as well.

Gynecologic Care: Dr. Speach provides natural family planning services. She does not provide routine gynecologic care, therefore female patients will need to select their own ob/gyn physician.

Vaccinations: Caritas Family Medicine is currently providing most of the typical childhood and adult vaccinations. Dr. Speach can also refer patients to the Monroe County Health Department for routine vaccinations. Parents that choose not to vaccinate their children are asked to sign a waiver form that recognizes the risks of not vaccinating children.

Inpatient Hospital Coverage: In the event of an adult patient's admission to Highland Hospital, Dr. Speach will coordinate care with Highland's Hospitalist staff physicians. She will cover any newborn admissions to Highland Hospital if she is to be the child's primary care physician. For other pediatric admissions, Dr. Speach suggests Strong ER.

Caritas Family Medicine Email policy

E-mail is fast, convenient, and efficient. E-mail works well for many non-urgent questions, requests or messages you may have for your doctor. The most important thing you should know is that the confidentiality of e-mail exchanges cannot be guaranteed. While the security of e-mail is comparable to other types of communication (such as phone calls), there are some special issues with e-mail:

- If your e-mail address is through your employer, your employer may own all e-mails sent to that address.
- If your e-mail address is a family address, other family members may see your messages.
- If you use an internet service provider, there is a small risk that messages may be intercepted by others ("hackers").

You should also know that e-mail you send to your doctor may be read by others in the practice. For the present time, Dr. Speach has no office staff but may hire employees in the future who may have access to e-mail.

What types of communication are appropriate for standard e-mail?

- Prescription refill requests
- Appointment scheduling concerns or questions
- Non-urgent medical advice or follow-up (including some types of test results)
- Billing/insurance questions

The following subjects are **never** appropriate for **Standard** e-mail:

- Any urgent medical problem or emergency
- Mental health issues
- Drug and alcohol problems
- HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases

Caritas Family Medicine does not control the security of incoming email messages from patients. Patients e-mail personal health information at their own risk. Secure e-mail “onebox” accounts are available to patients free of charge.

Please keep in mind that although e-mail can be a very effective tool, it is not a substitute for a physical exam or face to face counseling by your doctor.

Prior to your New Patient Visit with Dr. Speach please download, print and sign the “Signature Page” document from the Caritas Family Medicine Website: www.caritasfamilymed.com. You will be asked to submit this page at your New Patient Visit. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Speach by E-mail (elissaspeach@onebox.com) if you have any questions regarding the content of this document.

Please review the following “Notice of Privacy Practice for Protected Health Information:

Notice of Privacy Practice for Protected Health Information

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please read this carefully.

With your consent, the practice is permitted by federal privacy laws to make uses and disclosures of your health information for purposes of treatment, payment and health-care operations. Protected health information is the information we create and obtain in providing our services to you. Such information may include documenting your

symptoms, examination, test results, diagnoses, treatment, and applying for future care or treatment. It also includes billing documents for these services.

Your Health Information Rights

The health record we maintain and billing records are the physical property of the practice. The information in it, however, belongs to you. You have a right to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your health information by delivering the request in writing to the office. We are not required to grant the request but we will comply with any request granted.
- Request that you be allowed to inspect and copy your health record and billing record -- you may exercise this right by delivering the request in writing to the office.
- Appeal a denial of access to your protected health information except in certain circumstances.
- Request that your healthcare record be amended to correct incomplete or incorrect information by delivering a written request to the office.
- File any statement of disagreement if your amendment is denied, and require that the request for amendment and any denial be attached in all full disclosures of your protected health information.
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as required to be maintained by law by delivering a written request to the office. An accounting will not include internal uses of information for treatment, payment or operations, disclosures made to you or made at your request, or disclosures made to family members or friends in the course of providing care.
- Request that communication of your health information be made by alternative means or at an alternative location by delivering the request in writing to the office.
- Revoke authorizations that you made previously to use or disclose information except to the extent information or action has already been taken by delivering a written revocation to the office.

If you wish to exercise any of the above rights, please contact Dr. Elisa Speech, in person or in writing, during normal hours. He will provide you with assistance on the steps to take to exercise these rights.

Responsibilities of Caritas Family Medicine

The practice is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information as required by law.
- Provide you with a notice of our duties and privacy practices as to the information we collect and maintain about you.
- Abide by the terms of this notice.
- Accommodate your reasonable requests regarding methods to communicate health information with you.

Caritas Family Medicine reserves the right to amend, change, or eliminate provisions in its privacy practices and access practices and to enact new provisions regarding the protected health information maintained here. If the information practices change, this notice will be amended. You are entitled to receive a revised copy of this notice by calling and requesting a copy of our "Notice" or by visiting the office and picking up a copy.

To Request Information or File a Complaint

If you have questions, would like additional information, or want to report a problem regarding the handling of your information, you may contact Dr. Elissa Speech. Additionally if you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a written complaint at the office by delivering the written complaint to Dr. Elissa Speech. You may also file a complaint by mailing it or e-mailing it to the Secretary of Health and Human Services whose street address and e-mail address is 200 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20201 and HHS.mail@HHS.gov. We cannot, and will not, require you to waive the right to file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a condition of receiving treatment from the practice. We cannot, and will not, retaliate against you for filing a complaint with the Secretary.

Other Disclosures and Uses Notification --

Unless you object, we may use or disclose your protected health information to notify, or assist in notifying, a family member, personal representative, or other person responsible for your care, about your location, and about your general condition, or your death.

Communication with family --

Using our best judgment and professionalism, we may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend, or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or in payment for such care if you do not object or in an emergency.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) --

We may disclose to the FDA your protected health information relating to adverse events with respect to products and product defects, or post-marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs or replacements.

Workers Compensation --

If you are seeking compensation through Workers Compensation, we may disclose your protected health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to Workers Compensation.

Public Health --

As required by law, we may disclose your protected health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

Abuse and Neglect --

We may disclose your protected health information to public authorities as allowed by law to report abuse or neglect.

Correctional Institutions --

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution, or its agents, your protected health information necessary for your health and health and safety of other individuals.

Law Enforcement --

We may disclose your protected health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law, such as when required by a court order, during cases involving felony prosecutions, or to the extent an individual is in the custody of law enforcement.

Health Oversight --

Federal law allows us to release your protected health information to appropriate health oversight agencies over health oversight activities.

Judicial/Administrative Proceedings --

We may disclose your protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding as allowed or required by law, with your consent, or as directed by a proper court order.

Other Uses --

Other uses and disclosures besides those identified in this notice will be made only as otherwise authorized by law or with your written authorization and you may revoke the authorization as previously provided.

Research --

We may disclose information to researchers when institutional review board has reviewed a research proposal, approved the research and establish protocols to insure the privacy of your protected health information.