

**THIS IS ONLY A SAMPLE!!! PLEASE WRITE YOUR OWN BASED ON THE
SPECIFIC NEEDS/SITUATIONS OF YOUR PRACTICE**

**COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PCP AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
SPECIALIST**

POLICY:

 PRACTICE SITE shall ensure that patients will receive continuity and coordination of medical care with behavioral health care.

PURPOSE:

 PRACTICE SITE shall ensure the continuity and coordination of care for all patients through the exchange of information in an effective, timely and confidential manner, including patient-approved communications between primary care physicians and behavioral health practitioners and providers. The ordering practitioner shall review all communications relating to the diagnosis, treatment and referral of behavioral health disorders commonly seen in primary care, the use of psychopharmacological medication, and the timely access for appropriate treatment and follow-up for individuals with coexisting medical and behavioral disorders.

GUIDELINES:

1. The medical practitioner shall identify any patient requiring a behavioral health referral.
2. The office shall provide a referral, if required, to the behavioral health practitioner/provider including patient demographic and clinical information.
3. The patient shall sign a release of information in the event medical records are requested by the behavioral health practitioner/provider. Documentation must be noted in the patient's medical record if the patient refuses to sign a release of information.
4. Communication between the primary care physician and the behavioral health practitioner/provider should occur when the initial diagnosis and treatment plan are determined or changes are made, psychotropic medications are prescribed or discontinued, there are significant changes in the patient's clinical condition (diagnosis, prognosis) or the patient is hospitalized for behavioral health and/or substance abuse.
5. Communication between the primary care physician and the behavioral health practitioner/provider may occur via mail, fax or telephone call (followed by documentation of the telephone call in the medical record and/or a hard copy of the communication).
6. Following receipt from the behavioral health practitioner/provider, the primary care physician shall review and sign all communications and notify the patient of results as appropriate.