

## Steven E. Locke, MD

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## PRACTICE PROCEDURES

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### Practice procedures

The changing health care system has made the process of giving and receiving care more complicated. To minimize the intrusion of these administrative details into our office time, I am providing the following information to you in writing. After reading this, we can discuss any questions you may have. Please save this for future reference.

### Appointments

My regular practice hours are limited to 8 a.m to 1 p.m., Monday through Thursday. We can arrange alternate appointment times for emergencies or other unusual situations should they arise.

### Emergencies

Please call me whenever you have an urgent concern. **On your first visit, I will give you my mobile phone number.** If you miss me and your message is non-urgent, leave a message on my voice mail. I retrieve messages several times daily. Please leave a brief message about your concern and I will return the call as soon as possible. Be certain to leave your phone number and the date and time that you called as I sometimes retrieve my messages remotely. Always leave a voice message for me if you have not spoken with me directly. In addition, if it is urgent that you reach me be sure to indicate the degree of urgency in the message that you leave.

If you are unable to contact me and cannot wait for a return call, go directly to the emergency room at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center where there is always a psychiatrist on call who can assist you until I reach you. If you prefer, go to the emergency room of your local community hospital if it offers emergency psychiatric coverage. When you arrive at the emergency room, tell the staff that I am your doctor and ask them to contact me. If you are in a managed care insurance plan, your plan may require that you go to a specific hospital for emergency care. You should obtain this information from your insurer as soon as possible. When I am out of town, I cover my practice remotely by cellphone. If necessary, I arrange for a covering doctor whose contact information will be available from my voice mail.

E-mail: steven.locke@drstevenlocke.com

E-mail may be used for non-urgent communication. However, standard e-mail is not secure and therefore privacy cannot be assured. Do not include personal health information in an email. Never use e-mail for any urgent communication as there is no way to know whether I have received it.

### Medication

Depending upon your clinical needs, we may consider the use of medication. We will work together to evaluate such a decision. I will help you to make an informed choice about this by providing you with information about the reasons for using medication, the potential benefits and risks, any available alternatives to medication, and my judgment and advice about the use of medication. Because all medications have potential side effects and risks, I will discuss these with you, answer your questions and address your concerns in order to provide you with the information you need to make an informed decision. Because of the possibility of drug-drug, drug-herb and drug-food interactions it is important that you disclose to me all medications that you use (both prescription and over the counter), as well as herbal remedies, vitamins, and nutritional supplements. Prior to starting any medication, I recommend that you always request and read the patient education material provided by the pharmacist. **Please call me whenever you have questions about the use of the medication or to report symptoms that might represent possible side effects. If you do not understand the patient information provided by the pharmacist, call me before starting the medication.**

### Insurance

Often health insurance pays for a portion of your psychiatric treatment costs if the insurer determines that such care is medically necessary. Benefit plans vary widely so be sure to check with your insurer to determine the extent of your benefits. Most policies contain co-payment and/or deductible requirements for which you are responsible. The co-payment is due at the time of each appointment. It can be paid by check, cash or credit card in that order of preference. Whenever you receive an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from your insurer advising you of a portion of the bill that you owe to me, please remit to me the balance for which you are responsible. Your insurance

carrier should notify you on the EOB if your benefits have been exhausted or the service is uncovered, in which case you are responsible for the bill. **Each policy year you have a deductible for which you are personally responsible. Be sure to check your deductible amount as you will be invoiced directly for your care until your deductible is satisfied and your insurance coverage begins.**

## Insurance and Managed Care

I participate in specific insurance plans such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and Tufts Health Plan (but NOT Tufts Direct) and Always Health Partners (Partners Healthcare employees only). I am not a MassHealth provider or a Harvard Pilgrim provider. You may need a referral from your PCP or have to call the insurer's behavioral health toll-free number. Some insurance policies do have "out-of-network" benefits that may offset the cost of your care. You will need to contact your insurer to determine if you have this additional coverage benefit and arrange authorization.

## Billing

If you use commercial insurance, you will usually have a co-pay due at the time of the visit. I prefer payment by personal check, but cash or credit cards are accepted. The remainder of the visit fee will be billed to your insurance. For some insurers, you are responsible for direct payment of your bill. For assistance with insurance reimbursement, please contact my practice manager, Susan Brown, at (978) 317-3303 or [susan.brown@drstevenlocke.com](mailto:susan.brown@drstevenlocke.com). Statements are sent electronically or mailed each week. Payment is due within 14-days of receipt unless otherwise arranged. If you have a question about your bill, please call me or discuss it with me during the session. You may also contact Ms. Brown. Some services may not be covered benefits under your plan and your insurer will not pay for them. You will be notified when this occurs and the fee will be discussed. You are responsible for payment of any uncovered services.

## Missed appointments and cancellations

The time of your appointment has been reserved for your use. Without advance notice, I cannot use it for someone else. For this reason, unless I have 24-hours advance notice, you will be charged for missed visits or late cancellations. Most insurance plans will reimburse for telemedicine visits and if you are unable to travel due to weather or illness we can still meet at the scheduled time using a secure, HIPAA-compliant videoconference session. Alternatively, if we can arrange a make-up visit within the same week, you will not be charged for the missed visit. With sufficient advance notice, I can usually fill cancelled hours. Insurance does not pay for missed appointments. You can sign a form to give me permission to send automatic appointment reminders by SMS or email.

## Phone calls

**If it is urgent that you reach me, it is best to call my mobile phone, which I will have given you on your first appointment.** Please leave non-urgent messages for me at (508) 343-0001. There is no fee for occasional, brief telephone calls. If you are calling about medication, be sure to indicate the name of the name and address of the pharmacy you use. For any controlled substances, be sure to indicate the date you picked up your most recent prescription. medication, the strength, the instructions for use and the refill requests are only sent electronically to pharmacies.

## Prescriptions

Please check your medicine bottles at each refill and before each office visit so you know when you will need your next prescription. To provide the best care, it is best to write prescription refills in the office where my records are available and potential drug interactions can be reviewed. This permits better supervision of medication use. In an emergency, I can send an electronic prescription (eRx) to your pharmacy. However, if you allow your medication to run out and require refill authorizations outside of scheduled office visits, there will be a \$25 filling fee assessed. When leaving messages about medication always leave your full name, your phone number, the name and address of the pharmacy, the name of the medication(s), strength, and frequency. If your last prescription is about to run out or you notice that there are no refills left on the label, it is time to schedule a re-evaluation visit. In that situation, I may only prescribe a small amount of medication until I have been able to re-evaluate you in the office.

## Confidentiality

The psychiatrist-patient relationship is a special one that requires assurance of privacy to foster self-disclosure. Therefore, your relationship with me is confidential and all communications from you to me are privileged, with the following exceptions: 1) communications with the referring physician or therapist; 2) communications to coordinate your care with other doctors or therapists; 3) communications with your insurer and its care managers if you choose to use insurance benefits; 4) communications with others to protect your safety or the safety of others; and 5) communications mandated by court order or legal proceedings. Because of the importance of these issues, I will discuss this matter with you in greater detail during our initial meetings.

Additional information is available on the practice website: **[www.drstevenlocke.com](http://www.drstevenlocke.com)**

There are a variety of resources available on the website, including handouts, forms, questionnaires, articles, and audio files for relaxation training and stress management exercises.