

April, 2016

Important: please read carefully

Dear Patient,

As of Feb 2015 my medical practice converted to a **Family Health Organization (FHO)**. This is part of an Ontario government initiative to improve health care delivery and efficiency and reduce visits to walk in clinics. In a FHO, patients are rostered (connected) to one Physician. The physician is part of a larger group who share an after-hours service for all patients in the FHO. There are 10 doctors in my FHO.

What does this mean for you?

1. Improved continuity of care: When you see another doctor in the FHO your medical visit details will be sent back to me.

2. Improved access to care. With increased staff, phone lines are now answered Monday to Friday during regular business hours. Sometimes we are able to deal with your concerns, repeat prescriptions, etc. without booking an appointment so you should always call our office first. If you have an urgent health matter, we will do our best to give you a same day appointment.

If you need to be seen and I am unavailable, or if it is outside our regular business hours, you can use the after-hours service. The doctor on call for the FHO will see you in his/her office. You may call our office to see who is on call or call our FHO phone line ([905-427-3610](tel:905-427-3610)) for the weekly schedule. The after-hours service is available Monday-Thursday 5-8 PM and on Saturdays 9-1 PM, excluding statutory holidays.

Patient rostering inside a FHO requires a dual commitment from the doctor and the patient.

- Patients commit to seek treatment from their enrolling physician (or group when your physician is unavailable) unless they are traveling or find themselves in an emergency situation.
- Physicians commit to providing comprehensive care, accessible through a combination of regular office hours, access to telephone health, and on-call services.

Please call our office before seeking help outside our group. The Ministry of Health charges a penalty if you see a doctor outside my FHO. This is called '**Outside Use**' and includes visits to walk-in clinics, sports medicine clinics, diet and nutrition clinics, addiction clinics and home visits. (Specialist appointments and Hospital Emergency visits are excluded).

Each month I receive an Outside Use report from the Ministry of Health detailing patient visits to clinics outside the FHO. Excessive outside use by patients results in de-rostering. Please inform us if I am no longer your family physician.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for entrusting me with your care.

Dr. Copeland