



Telemedicine Consent

OVERVIEW

To better serve the needs of the community, especially in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, health care services are now available using telemedicine. Telemedicine allows the health care provider to see and communicate with the patient in real-time using interactive telecommunications technology. The interaction can involve real-time evaluation, diagnosis, consultation, and treatment of health conditions. Although there are many benefits to telehealth such as increased access to care, there are also some differences between in-person treatment and telehealth. Telehealth requires technical competence on both the part of the patient and the provider in order to be successful. For example, technology may be interrupted or stop working during a session. Furthermore, an unauthorized person or persons may access a private patient/provider conversation or access confidential data. There is no guarantee that all treatment of all patients will be effective.

EMBW* utilizes telecommunication softwares developed by NextGen and RingCentral. EMBW uses updated encryption methods, firewalls, and back-up systems to help keep patient information private, but there is always a risk that electronic communications may be compromised, unsecured, or accessed by others.

RESPONSIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telehealth sessions take place outside of our office. There is a potential for other people to overhear sessions if the patient is not in a private place during the session. It is important, however, for the patient to make sure that they are in a private setting to avoid being disturbed or overheard. It is also important for the patient to participate in treatment only while in a room or area where other people are not present and are not able to view the electronic device being used for therapy. **The telehealth sessions shall not be recorded in any way unless agreed to in writing by mutual consent.** EMBW will maintain a record of the session in the same way the provider would maintain records of in-person sessions in accordance with clinic policies.

The nature of electronic communications technologies is such that the provider cannot guarantee that communications will be kept confidential or that other people may not gain access to the communications. **The patient should act responsibly for information security on their devices including but not limited to, computer, tablet, or phone) and in their own location. Additionally patients should use secure networks for telehealth sessions, use passwords to protect the device used for telehealth, and avoid sharing telehealth appointment links or information with anyone not authorized to attend the session.**

For communication between sessions, EMBW staff only uses e-mail communication and text messaging with permission from the patient and only for administrative purposes. **E-mail exchanges and text messages with the office should be limited to administrative matters such as setting and changing appointments, billing matters, and other clerical related issues. EMBW staff will not discuss any clinical information by e-mail or text and prefer that the patient use the patient portal for doing so. Email, texting, or patient portal messaging are not acceptable forms of communication in a medical or psychiatric emergency.**

PATIENT PRIVACY

EMBW has a legal and ethical responsibility to make best efforts to protect all confidential communications that are a part of telehealth services. **A provider or staff member may need to notify emergency personnel in the event he or she feels there is a safety concern, including but not limited to, a risk to self or others or if the provider is concerned that immediate medical attention is needed.**

APPROPRIATENESS OF TELEHEALTH

It may not always be appropriate to conduct telemedicine sessions. EMBW will generally not engage in telehealth with patients who are experiencing a crisis situation and/or are deemed to require higher levels of support and intervention. Before engaging in telehealth, the patient and provider will develop an emergency response plan to address any potential crisis situations that may arise during telehealth sessions. **A patient's provider can discontinue telehealth services if those services do not appear to have any therapeutic benefit or for other reasons that will be explained to the patient. EMBW will communicate if it is decided that telehealth is no longer the most appropriate form of treatment for the patient.** If the patient decides telehealth is not optimal, **it is important that the patient communicate their reservation to the provider.** The provider and patient, if either or both decide telemedicine isn't sufficient for patient's care, will then discuss options of engaging in referrals to another professional who can provide a more appropriate level of care.

INFORMED CONSENT

This agreement is a supplement to the general treatment consent agreed upon by the patient and does not amend any of the terms of said agreement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing this notice, I acknowledge that I understand and agree to the terms of this agreement and received a copy of the same.