

Stepping Stones Medical Centre - Electronic Communications Policy

Introduction

Stepping Stones Medical Centre uses electronic communication, including SMS and email, to support effective, timely, and proactive patient care. Patients are asked to consent to, or decline, electronic communications when completing their new patient registration form. These communications help us provide reminders and important health-related information while respecting patient privacy and individual preferences.

SMS

Stepping Stones Medical Centre uses SMS messaging via Bp Comms and Hot Docs, primarily to send appointment reminders and other practice-related communications. Patient consent must be recorded in the clinical system before a patient can be enrolled to receive SMS messages through Bp Comms or Hot Docs. Consent is managed under the patient's Consent Status, where the mobile phone number can also be updated. Recorded consent is not required for sending eScripts, as verbal consent is obtained from the patient at the time the eScript is issued.

Email

In the interests of patient privacy and confidentiality, electronic communication with patients is rarely used at Stepping Stones. As a rule, Stepping Stones does not transmit personal or medical information to a patient via email, unless...

- this method of communication is specifically requested by the patient
- and the patient has provided a signed patient consent form
- and depending upon the sensitivity of information involved, the GP has given their approval.

Patients are discouraged from sending emails to the practice and only matters of a non-urgent nature should ever be emailed.

Fax

Information sent by facsimile includes a Fax Cover sheet that states "CONFIDENTIAL FAX" and contains a disclaimer notifying the recipient of the potential confidential nature of the fax content, and what to do if the fax is received in error. Communication by fax is generally only done between Stepping Stones and another healthcare provider. Communication by facsimile with patients is not encouraged as persons other than the patient may have access to the recipient fax machine.

Phone

The preferred method of contact with Stepping Stones is by telephone.