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## EPG POLICY ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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We are pleased that you have trusted us with the care of your child's emotional and mental health needs. It is important for you to understand how this aspect of their care differs from general medical care. We want you to be aware of these important policies about mental health care to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings later.

At Elmwood, we work as a group practice, each of us caring for each other's patients for urgent medical problems and injuries. We feel this is the optimal way to provide the seven day a week care that serves our patient's needs. The area of mental health care is distinctly different. The process of evaluation and ongoing assessment are best done by a single provider, in most cases, your primary care doctor. On some occasions, the entry to mental health care is a crisis for which experts are required. In most cases, the entry to care is urgent, not a crisis, and a mental health visit can be scheduled with your primary doctor within a few weeks of your call.

The first visit will be an extended one, where detailed background information will be obtained and reviewed. You will most likely be in the office for at least an hour. You and your doctor will decide on the frequency of follow up visits during the first appointment. These may be every 1, 2 or 4 weeks. Please schedule your follow up visit before you leave the office. Follow up visits will generally take about 30-45 minutes in the office, with a repeat assessment and time for discussion.

For some patients, it is appropriate to prescribe chronic medications. While effective, these medications are associated with side effects which require close monitoring. It is your responsibility to obtain refill prescriptions from your primary care doctor during regular office hours, at the scheduled follow up visits. Allow 5-7 days to process prescription requests before you run out of medication. Please do not call and request refills if your child is not being seen in the office regularly. Other doctors in the office will NOT refill your child's medication on weekends or evenings. It is in the best interest of your child to have their chronic medications prescribed by one person. Even after a patient is on a stable dose of medication and symptoms have stabilized, it will be necessary to have follow up visits several times a year, at least once every 3-4 months if medication is to be continued.

Please speak with your primary care doctor if you have any questions about these policies on mental health care.