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Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine

Adolescent Confidentiality Policy

At Northampton Area Pediatrics, we want to recognize and support our teenage patients' evolving maturity and independence. Adolescence is a time of transition toward adulthood, and we believe that we should support this healthy transition in our office. Toward this goal, we want our teens and parents to be aware of the following:

*During our adolescent well visits, we will have part of each visit alone with our teens. We see this as an opportunity for teens to become more comfortable speaking alone with an adult healthcare provider, something that they will need to do independently once they are adults themselves. We also want to give all teens an opportunity to address any and all of their healthcare concerns in a private and confidential manner, should they need to.

*When teens share something with us that they ask to remain confidential, we will honor that request, unless they plan to harm themselves or someone else. Although we always encourage adolescent patients to be open and honest with their parents, we also want them to have a "safe" place to go with any health concern, and sometimes we can be that safe place. We hope that parents will trust us to take the best care of our teens in these situations.

*We are also happy to speak privately with parents during the visit, at their request, about any concerns that they may want to share with us about their teen. We will maintain our patient's confidentiality in these discussions, however.

*These confidentiality parameters also extend to any telephone calls that we may have with our teen patients about their healthcare, including discussions about appropriate lab/imaging evaluations and results.

This policy is consistent with Massachusetts state law surrounding adolescent confidentiality, as well as the policies of the *Society for Adolescent Medicine*, and the *American Academy of Pediatrics*. We consider it a privilege to take care of our teens, and we look forward to working together, with this policy in mind, as our teens grow up!