

From the desk of: Dr. Elizabeth M. Ellis

WELCOME TO THE PRACTICE

We appreciate your choosing this practice and hope to provide the best psychological services available to you and your family.

DIRECTIONS:

Our office is located at 2400 Pleasant Hill Road at the intersection with Old Norcross Road, one block north of Gwinnett Place Mall. We are in suite 165 on the first floor. It is a three story brown building set back from the road and surrounded on three sides by trees. The number "2400" is on the front of the building. At the side entrance there is a bright blue sign that says "JM Net."

From Alpharetta, go south on State Bridge, which becomes Pleasant Hill. You will see a Rite Aid Drugs on the right as you see the building on the left. From Lawrenceville, go south on Highway 316, merge into I-85 South. Exit Pleasant Hill to the right, the Gwinnett Mall exit. Go up about 7 intersections to Old Norcross Road, go through the intersection, and look for the driveway on the right. From Atlanta, proceed north on I-85 to the Pleasant Hill exit. Exit to your right, and go left on Pleasant Hill, following the directions above.

APPOINTMENTS

The appointment is a commitment between us. I am committed to being there and giving you the best of my 35 years of advanced training and clinical experience. I ask that you make a similar commitment to treatment.

How to be a good patient.

Please make every effort to keep all appointments. Canceling an appointment because it is inconvenient tells me that your treatment is a low priority. **If you cannot keep an appointment, please call at least 2 days in advance.** Canceling an appointment on short notice is upsetting and is a loss for everyone. It means a significant loss of income for the practice. It puts us in the position of scrambling to fill the opening. It often means that someone who was on a waiting list for an opening couldn't be reached in time to make arrangements to get there to take that opening. And it means that there will be a disruption in your treatment, because you might not be seen again for several weeks.

In some cases, where there are transportation problems, or you're confined at home for some reason, I can have a telephone session with you. This way I can still provide some continuity to your treatment. Please have your phone with you and turned on. Please be ready to answer the phone when I call.

I reserve the best appointment times for good patients. I also give priority to returning their phone calls over other calls that come in during the day.

I bill \$65.00 for a missed appointment (those canceled less than 2 days in advance), to recover part of the loss, unless we are able to offer someone else your hour at the last minute. Appointments after 3:00 and on Saturdays are very in demand and are referred to as PRIME TIME appointments. We bill \$75.00 for missed PRIME TIME appointments and will reschedule you at a

non PRIME TIME opening. Appointments for a 90 minute or 2 hour block of time must be cancelled 4 business days in advance. The missed appointment fee for those appointments will be \$95 and \$120, respectively.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency, our phone is answered 24 hours a day. When you call in, simply press 0 for the operator. She will page me, and I will return the call as soon as possible. If it is a life threatening emergency, such as a threat of suicide or homicide, call 911 or take the family member to the nearest hospital for evaluation.

CHARGES

My usual charge for professional services is \$150. for the initial 50 minute office visit and \$140 for subsequent office visits. If you do not use your health insurance plan, or are uninsured, we have a sliding scale fee range from \$90. to \$140.

When you access the benefits of your managed care plan, these fees are irrelevant. Managed care health plans set the fee at a deep discount, at 30% to 50% below the usual and customary rates in the area. They also set the deductibles and copays. We are required by these plans to accept the discount and to bill you only for the copays and deductibles. **We are a small office and are not able to process debit and credit card payments.** We are happy to accept your check or cash payment.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Most of the services offered here are covered by health plans; however, not all of them are. We have asked you to call ahead and investigate your benefits with your insurance carrier. Psychoeducational evaluations, to diagnose ADHD in children, or to diagnose learning disorders, are not covered by most plans because their purpose is for educational placement and remediation. Court ordered evaluations, such as those required by juvenile court or DF&CS, child custody evaluations, and co-parenting coordination are not covered by health plans as their purpose is not for treatment but to assist the court in rendering a legal decision. Marital therapy is covered only when one person is being treated for a diagnosed psychiatric disorder and the therapist has determined that conjoint sessions are a necessary part of the treatment plan. If there is no diagnosis, there is no coverage.

In today's health care market, coverage for outpatient mental health services can be very complex. You may need to pre-certify to get your visits approved by your health plan. We do not know ahead of time what your plan covers and what it excludes, what deductibles have to be met, what your copay is, or how many visits have been pre-approved. Please make the necessary phone calls and write down instructions for us.

If your insurance coverage changes, and you don't inform us and provide us with new information, our claims will be denied, and we will have to call your insurance company, investigate the problem, and file a new claim. We will charge you \$30.00 for this added service.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I am dedicated to preserving the privacy and confidentiality of my clients. Some state laws, however, may require me to break confidentiality under certain circumstances.

(1) If you tell me that you intend to take your life or that of another identifiable person, I am required to notify the police. (2) If you tell me that you have abused a child under the age of 18, a handicapped person over the age of 18, or a person over age of 60, I may be required to notify

state authorities. (3) I may need to consult with colleagues in order to improve my work or provide for emergency coverage. (4) If you have filed a personal injury lawsuit, or have filed for disability benefits, and have named me as a health care provider who treated you, I may have to release records to them. (5) If you direct me to file a claim with your insurance carrier, I will have to submit data to them such as your diagnosis, dates of service, and type of service rendered.

When you access the benefits of your managed care plan, you waive many of your rights to confidentiality. Some managed care plans may require me to file reports with them about your treatment plan, whether you keep appointments, and such personal questions as your alcohol use and whether you are having suicidal thoughts, before they agree to cover your visits. Please discuss with me any concerns you may have about confidentiality.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

Under the **HIPAA** guidelines passed by Congress in April 2003, your rights to privacy of your health care information have been strengthened.

1. You have the right to ask that we communicate with you in a particular way—such as calling you at home instead of at work, or not discussing your concerns in public areas such as the waiting room.
2. You have the right to ask that we limit what we tell certain individuals involved in your care such as family members and friends.
3. You have the right to look at the health care information we have about you such as your medical and billing records. You can get a copy of these records, but we may charge you a fee for the copying.
4. You have the right to have your records out of sight in the office and locked up at night.
5. If you believe the information in your records is incorrect, you can ask us to make some kinds of changes. You must make the request in writing and tell us the reason you want to make the changes.
6. You have the right to file a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You can file a complaint with Dr. Ellis or with the Secretary of the Dept. of Health and Human Services. All complaints must be in writing. If you have any questions, please contact me at elizabethphd@bellsouth.net.