

AG Health Services Policies

Effective Date: January 1, 2025 | Updated: June 2026

Location: Maryland | Services: Primary Care & Psychiatric/Mental Health

1. Patient Care Policy

AG Health Services is committed to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care through secure telehealth platforms. Our services include:

- Primary care clinical evaluations, diagnostic screenings, preventative care, and treatment planning
- Psychiatric and behavioral health evaluation, diagnosis, and medication management

All services are delivered by licensed healthcare professionals practicing within their scope and Maryland licensure.

2. Appointments

- Telehealth services are available by **appointment only**.
 - Patients must ensure access to appropriate technology and a private environment for the duration of their appointment.
 - Initial psychiatric evaluations may require a longer appointment window than standard primary care visits.
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3. No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy

- A "no-show" is defined as failure to attend a scheduled appointment without canceling at least four (4) hours in advance.
 - A \$50 administrative fee will be charged to the patient's account for any no-show.
 - This fee is not covered by insurance and is the responsibility of the patient.
 - Patients will receive an email notification documenting the missed appointment and associated charge.
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4. Billing Policy

- AG Health Services bills in compliance with all Maryland state and federal regulations, as well as any applicable third-party payer requirements.
 - Patients are responsible for any fees not covered by insurance, including no-show fees or elective services.
 - Psychiatric services are billed separately from primary care visits and may be subject to different insurance coverage terms; patients are encouraged to verify mental health benefits with their insurer.
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5. Confidentiality and Privacy (HIPAA Compliance)

- AG Health Services adheres to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
 - All protected health information (PHI), including patient records, clinical data, and telehealth sessions, is transmitted and stored securely using HIPAA-compliant systems.
 - Both transmitting and receiving ends of communication must be secure to maintain patient confidentiality.
 - Mental health and psychiatric records receive additional protection under Maryland law beyond standard HIPAA requirements and are not disclosed without specific written patient authorization, except where required by law (see Section 13, Mandatory Reporting).
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6. Patient Consent

- Patients (or legal guardians) must provide informed consent prior to receiving any telehealth services, including psychiatric services.

AG Health Services will inform patients of:

- The nature and purpose of telehealth services
- Any potential risks, limitations, and benefits
- For psychiatric services: risks, benefits, and alternatives related to psychiatric medications and treatment
- Their right to decline or withdraw consent at any time without affecting future care

Written or electronic documentation of consent will be maintained in the patient's medical record.

7. Medical Record Documentation

- All encounters, diagnoses, treatments, and patient communications must be documented in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR).
 - Providers are responsible for accurate and timely documentation that reflects the full scope of services rendered.
 - Psychiatric encounters must include documentation of mental status exam findings, risk assessment (including suicidal/homicidal ideation screening), and treatment plan rationale.
 - Any crisis intervention, safety assessment, or emergency referral must be documented in the EMR regardless of whether the visit was completed or terminated.
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8. Provider Qualifications and Responsibilities

All providers must:

- Be licensed in the State of Maryland in good standing
- Comply with all Maryland laws and regulations governing the practice of medicine, nursing, and telehealth
- Practice within their certified scope (e.g., psychiatric services are provided exclusively by a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, PMHNP-BC)
- Disclose to patients their right to informed consent, including an explanation of the risks, consequences, and benefits of proposed treatment
- Acknowledge and uphold the patient's right to withdraw consent at any time

Maryland-licensed Nurse Practitioners, including PMHNPs, hold full practice authority and do not require a collaborating physician agreement under Maryland law.

9. Legal Representation (For Minors or Incapacitated Adults)

- When applicable, a legal representative (e.g., parent, guardian, or power of attorney) must sign a consent form prior to treatment.
 - The legal representative must confirm understanding of the services and affirm that this information has been discussed with the patient's primary care provider if necessary.
 - Maryland law permits certain minors to independently consent to specific mental health, reproductive health, and substance use services without parental/guardian involvement; AG Health Services will comply with applicable state law on a case-by-case basis.
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10. Technology Use and Limitations

- Patients must confirm they are physically located in Maryland during appointments.
 - A reliable internet connection, secure device, and private setting are required.
 - AG Health Services is not liable for session disruptions due to user-end connectivity issues.
 - In the event of a practice-wide platform outage, patients will be notified and offered a phone consultation or rescheduled appointment at no additional charge.
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11. Clinical Appropriateness for Telehealth

AG Health Services is committed to providing safe and effective care through telehealth. However, certain medical or psychiatric concerns may not be appropriate for virtual evaluation or management.

Pre-Appointment Screening

If the patient's chief complaint or reason for visit is determined to be inappropriate for telehealth during pre-screening or intake, AG Health Services will:

- Notify the patient via email, explaining the reason for cancellation
- Recommend that the patient seek an in-person evaluation at their primary care provider, a local urgent care center, a psychiatric facility, or the emergency department, depending on the nature of the concern
- Cancel the appointment at no cost to the patient

During the Telehealth Visit

If it becomes evident during the telehealth visit that the patient's condition requires an in-person physical or psychiatric assessment, the provider will:

- Inform the patient that telehealth is not clinically appropriate for the current concern
- Provide a recommendation to seek care at a primary care office, urgent care, psychiatric facility, or emergency room
- End the session and cancel the appointment in the electronic medical record

The patient will not be charged for visits that are terminated due to clinical inappropriateness.

12. Controlled Substance Prescribing Policy

- AG Health Services follows all federal (DEA) and Maryland state regulations regarding controlled substance prescribing via telehealth.
 - Certain Schedule II–IV controlled substances (e.g., stimulants, benzodiazepines) may require an in-person evaluation prior to prescribing, per DEA telehealth prescribing requirements.
 - Controlled substances will not be prescribed without an established provider-patient relationship and appropriate clinical documentation.
 - Patients prescribed controlled substances may be required to complete periodic urine drug screening and/or sign a medication management agreement.
 - Prescribing practices are subject to change based on evolving federal and state telehealth prescribing regulations.
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13. Mandatory Reporting

Providers, including psychiatric providers, are required by law to report certain information regardless of patient confidentiality protections, including but not limited to:

- Suspected abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or vulnerable adult
- Imminent risk of serious harm to the patient or to an identifiable third party
- Certain court-ordered disclosures

These reporting obligations override standard confidentiality protections and are required under Maryland law.

14. Psychiatric Emergency Procedure

Telehealth is not appropriate for the management of psychiatric emergencies, including but not limited to active suicidal or homicidal ideation, self-harm, or acute psychosis.

Immediate Response

- If a provider identifies signs of an acute psychiatric emergency during a telehealth visit, the provider will immediately direct the patient to call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or contact 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).
- If the patient is unable or unwilling to seek emergency care and is determined to be at imminent risk, the provider may contact emergency services directly on the patient's behalf.
- Maryland law permits a provider to initiate an emergency petition for involuntary evaluation when a patient presents an imminent danger to self or others and is unwilling to seek voluntary care.

Duty to Warn

- If a patient discloses a specific, credible intent to harm an identifiable third party, the provider has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to protect the intended victim, which may include notifying law enforcement and/or the identified individual, consistent with Maryland law.

Provider Availability

- AG Health Services does not maintain a 24/7 on-call crisis line. Patients experiencing a psychiatric emergency outside of scheduled appointment hours must contact 911, 988, or go to the nearest emergency room rather than waiting for provider contact.

Documentation

- All crisis assessments, actions taken, referrals made, and outcomes must be documented in the patient's EMR, regardless of whether the visit was completed or terminated.

Follow-Up

- Following any psychiatric emergency referral, the provider or designated staff member will attempt to contact the patient within 24–48 hours to confirm follow-through on the referral and assess current safety status.
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15. Coordination of Care

- Where a patient receives both primary care and psychiatric services through AG Health Services, providers may share relevant clinical information internally to coordinate safe, effective treatment, consistent with HIPAA and Maryland confidentiality law.
 - Patients may request that certain information not be shared between their primary care and psychiatric providers by submitting a written request; AG Health Services will accommodate such requests where clinically appropriate.
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16. Medication Monitoring Requirements

- Certain psychiatric medications require periodic laboratory monitoring (e.g., metabolic panels, lithium levels, thyroid function).
 - Patients prescribed medications requiring monitoring will be referred to a local laboratory or in-person provider for specimen collection, as AG Health Services does not perform in-person lab draws.
 - Failure to complete required monitoring labs may result in modification or discontinuation of the relevant medication for patient safety.
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17. Termination of Care

AG Health Services reserves the right to discharge a patient from care under circumstances including, but not limited to:

- Repeated missed appointments or non-adherence to a treatment plan
- Failure to complete required safety monitoring (i.e., labs, follow-up visits after a new psychiatric medication)
- Behavior that compromises provider safety or the integrity of the patient-provider relationship
- Determination that the patient's needs exceed the scope of telehealth-based care

Patients being discharged from care will receive written notice and a reasonable transition period (generally 30 days) to establish care elsewhere, except in cases of immediate safety concerns.

AG Health Services Privacy Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2025 | Updated: June 2026

1. Introduction

AG Health Services ("we," "us," "our") is committed to protecting your privacy and securing your personal and health information when you use our telehealth services in Maryland, including both primary care and psychiatric/behavioral health services.

This Privacy Policy explains:

- What information we collect
 - How and why we use it
 - Your rights
 - Our legal obligations under HIPAA and Maryland law
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2. Information We Collect

a. Patient Identification & Verification

To verify your identity, we may collect:

- Government-issued photo ID
- Insurance/Medicare/Medicaid card
- Date of birth and home address

b. Health & Telehealth Data

We collect and use:

- Medical and clinical history
- Psychiatric history, mental status exam findings, and behavioral health treatment records
- Images, lab results, and other diagnostic data
- Telehealth session logs and communications

c. Contact Information

Includes email, phone number, and address — used for scheduling, billing, follow-ups, and emergency contact.

3. How We Use & Share Your Data

a. Treatment, Payment & Operations

Use of Protected Health Information (PHI) for:

- Diagnosis and treatment
- Insurance claims, billing
- Quality improvement, staff training

- Coordination of care between a patient's primary care and psychiatric providers within AG Health Services

b. Legal Disclosures

We may share PHI:

- If required by law (e.g., public health reporting, court orders)
- To prevent harm or report abuse, neglect, or imminent danger to self or others
- With your written authorization for third-party disclosures

c. Business Associates

Third-party services (e.g., telehealth platforms, billing vendors) are HIPAA-compliant and bound by Business Associate Agreements.

4. Special Protections for Mental and Behavioral Health Information

- Psychiatric and behavioral health records are treated as a specially protected category of information under Maryland law, with confidentiality protections beyond standard HIPAA requirements.
 - Mental health records will not be disclosed to third parties without specific written patient authorization, except where required by law (e.g., mandatory reporting, imminent risk of harm).
 - If AG Health Services provides or coordinates substance use disorder treatment in the future, additional federal protections under 42 CFR Part 2 may apply, which impose stricter consent requirements for disclosure than standard HIPAA rules.
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5. Security Measures

We maintain administrative, technical, and physical safeguards in accordance with the HIPAA Security Rule and Maryland telehealth regulations:

- Encrypted data transmission and storage
 - Access controls and audit logs
 - Secure telehealth platforms
 - Regular workforce training
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6. Patient Rights

a. Access & Amendments

You can request access to your records or request corrections. We respond within 30 days per HIPAA.

b. Minimum Necessary

We only use or share the minimum PHI necessary to accomplish a purpose.

c. Consent & Acknowledgement

We obtain your oral or written acknowledgement before your first telehealth session, including an explanation of risks and benefits specific to the service(s) you are receiving (primary care and/or psychiatric).

d. *Alternative Contact*

We maintain backup contact methods should our primary communications fail.

e. *Data Breach Notification*

In case of unauthorized access to your PHI, we will notify affected individuals in accordance with HIPAA and Maryland state law.

f. *Right to Restrict Information Sharing*

Patients receiving both primary care and psychiatric services may request that certain information not be shared between their providers within the practice, as outlined in the Patient Care Policy.

7. Maryland-Specific Telehealth Requirements

- We confirm your physical location in Maryland during remote visits
 - We inform you of all individuals present during the session
 - We establish emergency protocols and alternative ways to reach you
 - For psychiatric services, we maintain documented crisis response and mandatory reporting protocols consistent with Maryland law
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8. Updates to This Policy

We may update this Privacy Policy to stay compliant with legal requirements or reflect business changes. We'll post the updated date and notify you accordingly.

9. Contact Information

For questions, access requests, breach concerns, or complaints, contact:

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