

# New Patient Handbook



## **Gloucester Family Health**

**Center** 302 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 282-8899

**Office Hours:** Monday—Friday  
8:30 am—5:00 pm

**Evening Hours:** Monday &  
Tuesday until 6:30 pm

## **Salem Family Health Center**

47 Congress Street  
Salem, MA 01970  
(978) 744-8388

**Office Hours:** Monday—Wednesday  
9:00 am—9:00 pm  
Thursday & Friday: 9:00 am—5:00 pm

## **Student Health Center at Peabody**

### **Memorial High School**

485 Lowell Street  
Peabody, MA 01960

**Office Hours:** Monday—Friday 7:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m. (school days)

## **Peabody Family Health Center**

89 Foster Street  
Peabody, MA 01960  
(978) 532-4903

**Office Hours:** Monday—Friday  
8:30 am—5:00 pm

**Evening Hours:** Monday until  
7:00 pm

## **Teen Center at Salem High School**

Salem High School  
77 Willson Street  
Salem, MA 01970

(978) 740-1220  
**Office Hours:** Monday—Friday 7:00 a.m. -  
3:00 p.m. (school days)

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## **MISSION**

North Shore Community Health's mission is to build healthy communities by providing exceptional care to all.

## **VISION**

Healthy People | Vibrant Communities

## **VALUES**

### **Integrity**

Integrity is the foundation of healthy relationships. We are committed to the highest ethical standards: honesty, fairness, respectfulness, and trustworthiness. We are honorable and respectful in dealings with others and we strive to deal honestly, fairly and in a respectful, ethical and trustworthy manner when in agreement or disagreement.

### **Commitment**

NSCH is committed to the health and well-being of its community, patients and staff. We demonstrate this commitment by constantly striving to align our actions with our mission, vision and values.

### **Accountability**

We take our responsibility to ourselves, each other, and the NSCH community very seriously. We understand our individual roles and positions of power with respect to how others perceive our roles, and actions. We hold ourselves accountable when we make mistakes--acknowledging the error, owning it, taking corrective actions, and moving forward. We follow through on what we commit or resolve to do.

### **Courage**

We see courage as the strength of character to stand up for our convictions and belief system. To have courage is to have the fortitude to take risks and to extend one's behaviors, actions and thoughts beyond one's comfort zone. We appreciate that courage is often required to compromise. Courage is a state of mind to face adverse, difficult, and challenging situations with confidence and positive energy.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is a deep appreciation for another's situation and point of view which is the basis for the golden rule and our intrinsic sense of justice. We strive to bring empathy into our interactions with each other and with our patients.

### **Respect**

NSCH holds its patients in the highest regard. We provide care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient needs and values. We take the time to listen to concerns, understand what is important, and provide appropriate solutions and care. We do this through coordination and integration of care, collaboration and teamwork.

## Who We Are

North Shore Community Health is a primary care organization that offers high quality, convenient, comprehensive health care to all members of the North Shore and Cape Ann communities.

Whether you come to our Salem, Peabody, Gloucester , Salem High School health center, or the Peabody Veterans Memorial High School health centers, you will always be treated with dignity and respect.

Our diverse, friendly staff is multilingual and always ready to help you. If you speak a language other than English, please let our staff know so that we may assist you.

## Our Services

### **Salem, Peabody and Gloucester Family Health Centers:**

- Family Practice Physicians
- Internal Medicine Physicians
- Dentists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Dental Hygienists
- Behavioral Health
- Addiction Treatment
- After Hours Care
- Lab Services

As our valued patient, you have the privilege of choosing from our highly qualified list of providers. You make the very important decision about who will care for you and your family.

## **Salem Teen Health Center and Peabody Student Health Center:**

North Shore Community Health and the Cities of Salem and Peabody School Districts have partnered to provide convenient access to health care for your child.

### **Services include:**

- General check-ups
- Immunizations
- Physical Exams
- Sick Care
- Behavioral Health
- Confidential Teen Related Health Issues

### **Please be aware of the following:**

- Salem Teen Health Center at Salem High and Student Health Center at Veterans Memorial High School in Peabody will provide services whether or not your child has health care coverage.
- If your child is currently insured, the co-pay is not required and we will be the carrier for service.
- If your child is uninsured, we will help determine his or her eligibility for Children's Medical Security Plan. (For more information about Children's Medical Security Plan, please see page 11.)

## Same Day Appointments

NSCH makes every effort to see you when you need to be seen. Same day appointments are available if you are sick.

## After-Hours Telephone Care

When the health center is closed you have 24/7 access to speak to a provider for advice. If you are having a medical or psychiatric emergency you should call 911. If you have an urgent matter you want to discuss with a provider please call the number you would normally call to reach our office and someone from the answering service will page the provider on call.

## When to go to the Emergency Department

If you or your family member believe you are experiencing a medical or psychiatric emergency please call 911 and go to the nearest emergency department.

## Referrals

When specific care for you or your family is not available at one of the North Shore Community Health (NSCH) service sites, your provider will initiate a referral to a specialist. Our referral staff are happy to book these appointments for you and will mail you a letter with the appointment date, time, and contact information of the specialist. Sometimes, you may seek care from a specialist or hospital without your NSCH provider being aware. In instances where you saw a specialist or went to a hospital without your NSCH provider being aware, please call our office and let us know so that we can keep a complete record of your care.

# What to bring to your first visit:

## Photo ID

## Health Insurance Card

This is the most useful identification to bring. If you don't have the insurance card, please bring instead:

- Name of Insurance Company

- Name of the person who holds the insurance policy (the "subscriber")

We will make copies of all of the above the first time you visit, and keep them on file. If you don't have health insurance, our Outreach and Enrollment Coordinators are happy to meet with you and assist in your insurance application. Please call to schedule an appointment.

# Patient Financial Responsibility Form

Upon arrival for your first visit you will be asked to sign our Patient Financial Responsibility form (a sample is provided here for your review)

## Patient Financial Responsibility Form

North Shore Community Health provides quality and affordable care, without discrimination, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. No one is denied access to services at North Shore Community Health. Please read this form, ask us any questions you may have, and sign in the space provided. A copy will be provided to you upon request.

**Patients without Insurance.** We are a federally funded health care program which in turn allows us to offer a wide range of services to patients through the sliding-fee discount program. We offer the sliding-fee discounts to all individuals based on annual household income and family size for services provided at NSCH.

**Insurance.** It is your responsibility to be familiar with your specific benefit plan and coverage. Your health insurance policy is a contract between you and your insurance company. As a service to you, North Shore Community Health will send a claim to your health insurance company. By working together, we can minimize misunderstandings, payment delays and billing costs. In order for us to have the correct insurance information, please bring your insurance card to your visit. **You are responsible for any charges not covered by your benefit plan.**

**Co-payments and deductibles.** All co-payments and deductibles must be paid at the time of service. This arrangement is part of your contract with your insurance company. We accept cash, personal checks, Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

**Coverage changes.** If your insurance changes, please notify us before your next visit so we can make the appropriate changes to help you receive your maximum benefits. If your insurance company does not pay your claim, the balance will automatically be billed to you.

**Nonpayment.** If your account is over 90 days past due, you may receive a letter requesting to bring your account current. If you have difficulty keeping your account current, please contact us and ask to speak with a Billing representative. A partial payment plan may be available.

Please be aware that if a balance remains unpaid, we may refer your account to a collection agency.

**Missed appointments.** Keeping scheduled appointments is an important part of your health care. It allows your provider or dentist to talk about your illnesses and what you can do to stay healthy. When you miss an appointment, you also miss out on the opportunity to improve your health. In addition, it takes the appointment away from another patient who may need it. Please provide us with adequate notice when you need to cancel.

**I have read and understand the policy and agree to abide by its guidelines:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of patient or responsible party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Patients Rights and Responsibilities

## You have the right to:

- Receive services without discrimination based upon age, gender, race, color, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, national origin or ability to pay.
- Be informed of the services available at the Health Center and the provision of off-hours emergency coverage.
- Receive considerate and respectful care, including privacy in treatment.
- Obtain information regarding charges for services and eligibility for third party reimbursements. You may also obtain an itemized copy of charges upon request and when applicable, request the availability of free or reduced cost care.
- Obtain from your provider complete current information concerning you diagnosis, treatment and prognosis in terms you can be reasonably expected to understand.
- Expect a quick response to reports of pain.
- Receive from your provider information necessary to give informed consent prior to the start of any non-emergency procedure or treatment or both. An informed consent shall include at minimum: information concerning the specific procedure, the reasonably foreseeable risks involved, and alternatives for care or treatment in a manner permitting the patient to make a knowledgeable decision.
- Privacy and confidentiality of all records pertaining to your treatment.
- Access to your medical records within 10 days of your request.
- Approve or refuse the release of disclosure of your medical record to any health care practitioner, and/or health care facility except as required by law or third party payment contract.
- Voice grievances and recommend changes in policies and services to Center's staff or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health without fear of reprisal.
  
- Express complaints about the care and services provided and have the Center investigate such complaints. Expect a written response to complaints/grievances by the Center within 30 days regarding the outcome.

## **You have the responsibility to:**

- Always bring your insurance card and picture ID
- Bring with you the name and address of other providers or dentists that you have been seeing. This will enable the Health Center staff to provide better health care.
- Bring childrens' immunization records with you when they are seeing their provider .
- Be on-time for appointments. If you can not keep an appointment, please call to cancel as soon as possible. If you can not keep an appointment with a specialist that we referred you to, please call the specialist directly to cancel.
- If you any reason you can not follow the medical instructions of the Health Center, talk to a staff member right away.
- Inform the Health Center about any changes in your health insurance, name, address, telephone number, or employer right away.
- Pay for professional services rendered on the day or make other arrangements with the Outreach and Enrollment Coordinator in advance.
- Be polite and courteous of other patients and respect their privacy.

## **Patient Medication Refill Guidelines:**

- Please check with your pharmacist first for questions about medications or refills. For medications that you take on a regular basis, please request “AUTO REFILL” at your pharmacy. “AUTO REFILL” is a service provided by the pharmacy to automatically fax refill requests to us when you are running low on your medication.
- Please call during business hours (Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM) for all refill requests
  - Please allow 48 business hours for medication refills. To protect your safety, we may ask you to schedule a medical appointment or laboratory test prior to refilling your medication.
  - Please leave your full name, date of birth, medication needed and pharmacy with correct address when leaving a message for a refill.
  - Your insurance company may sometimes require prior authorization for a medication, which in some cases may delay your refill.

## **Mass Health, Children's Medical Security Plan, Health Safety Net and Private Insurance Plans**

North Shore Community Health provides health care for all persons, regardless of their income. Not only do we accept most private insurance plans, we are proud to be a primary care provider for Mass Health, which offers Medicaid Managed Care and Medicaid PCC Plan. We are also a primary care provider for the Children's Medical Security Plan. For more information about these programs, please see the next page.

Under and Uninsured patients are able to apply for the Health Safety Net (HSN). Those who qualify under the Federal Income Guidelines are able to receive medically necessary services covered by HSN. NSCH offers discounts to patients based on family size and income. By offering these financial services, you can always be assured of receiving excellent health care for you and your family.

### **Mass Health Family Assistance**

To qualify for Mass Health, your family's income before taxes and deductions must be no more than 150% of the federal poverty level. To be eligible for Family Assistance based solely on one's HIV-positive status, your income before taxes and deductions must be no more than 133% of the federal poverty level.

### **Immediate coverage for you children**

Mass Health Family Assistance offers immediate healthcare benefits (for a limited period of time) to your uninsured children who are under the age of 19. You may qualify if:

- You are unable to send us proof of your income;
- You may be able to get health insurance from your employer.

If you are given immediate coverage for your children, please note:

- Your child's health-care benefits begin as soon as Mass Health gets your Medical Benefit request.
- You must give us proof of income within 60 days.  
If you do not, your child's health care benefits will end.
- When we get proof of income, we will collect information about any other health insurance that may be available to you.
- Once we review that information, we will make a final decision about your child's Mass Health coverage. Your child's immediate coverage will not end until we do this.
- You will have to pay a premium for the immediate coverage.

### **Immediate coverage for people who are HIV positive**

Mass Health Family Assistance offers health-care benefits right away for a limited period of time to people who are HIV positive if they give us proof of income before taxes and deductions is no more than 133% of the federal poverty levels

If you are given immediate coverage, please note:

- You must give us proof within 60 days that you are HIV positive. This proof may be a letter from a doctor, clinic, lab, or AIDS service provider or organization that shows the name of the person who is HIV positive and his/her positive test result.
- You will have to pay a premium for the immediate coverage. If we do not get this proof within 60 days, we will determine your eligibility for Mass Health as if you were not HIV positive.

## Connector Care

Connector Care is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' health-care program for adults who do not have insurance but whose income is too high to qualify for Medicaid.

Connector Care benefits include\*:

- Physician Services
- Inpatient and Outpatient health care
- Dental Services
- Prescription Drug and smoking cessation products
- Lab tests and x-rays
- Vision, speech and hearing services
- ER and emergency ambulance services
- Drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment
- Diabetes supplies and equipment
- Much more!

\*Some limits may apply to certain benefits.

## **Payment Plans**

NSCH will work with you to develop a payment plan for balances you and your family owe to us. Please schedule an appointment with one of our Outreach and Enrollment Coordinators for more information.

## **Sliding Fee Plan**

NSCH offers a sliding fee payment program based on family size and income. This plan may reduce any deductibles, co-payments, or balances you or your family owe us.

Please ask for an appointment with one of our Outreach and Enrollment Coordinators for more information on how to apply.

## **Compliments and Concerns**

We want to know your opinion about health care services at North Shore Community Health. Please feel free to call us at (978) 825-1176 Monday through Friday. You can also reach us at [www.nsch.org](http://www.nsch.org), Patient Feedback Form.