

Client Agency Orientation Handbook



Suncoast Center, Inc.

FY24-25

*Strengthening, protecting, and restoring lives for a
healthy community.*

Pursuant to applicable federal laws and Chapter 760, Florida Statutes (2016), Suncoast Center services are available to any client regardless of age, race, religion, color, disability, national origin, marital status or sex. Auxiliary Aids, Interpreter/Language Services, and accommodations due to disability will be provided at no cost. Concerns of discrimination may be directed to the Suncoast Center Compliance Officer/ADA Single Point of Contact or a complaint can be filed with the Office of Civil Rights at 202-307-0690 or 202-307-2027 (TDD/TYY). See additional information posted in Suncoast Center locations.

Request handouts/see website for these services

- HIM Services
- Central Intake Services
- Care Coordination Services
- Peer Recovery Services
- Form Completion Services
- Billing Dept Services
- Advanced Directives
- Scheduling Services

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SUNCOAST CENTER, INC. FUNDERS



Suncoast Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Corporation.

Selected programs at Suncoast Center accredited by Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352.

Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.

For Complaints or Additional Resource Information

Department of Children & Families
Office of Civil Rights
1317 Winewood Blvd.,
Bldg. 1 Room 110
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700
850-487-1901
Fax: 850-921-8470

TDD: 850-922-9220U. S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
Office of Civil Rights
Atlanta Federal Center,
Suite 3B70
61 Forsyth Street S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
404-562-7886
TDD: 404-331-2867

Florida Department of Health –
Pinellas
205 - 9th St/Dr. ML King Street N.
St. Petersburg, FL
727-824-6900

Central Florida Behavioral Health
Network
719 South US highway 301
Tampa FL 33619
813-740-4811

Disability Rights Florida
2473 Care Drive, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32308
1-800-342-0823
1-800-346-4127 (TDD)

You may contact our Compliance Officer at 727-327-7656, ext. 4117 for further information about the complaint process.

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for health information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice. The notice will contain the effective date. In addition, we will offer you a copy of the current notice in effect.

WELCOME LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT /CEO

Dear Clients and Guests,

Welcome to Suncoast Center, Inc.

We are happy you are here!

We extend a warm welcome to you and hope your experience with us is helpful and fulfilling.

Your well-being is very important to us. We encourage you to provide feedback to us on how we can continually improve our services. Listed below are some ways to let us know your thoughts:

- Share your recommendations with your case manager, therapist or medical provider.
- Complete a formal grievance form that is available upon request.
- Send an email to communications@suncoastcenter.org.

The highest compliment we can receive is the referral of your family and friends. We hope your experience makes you want to recommend us to others.

We look forward to working with you to meet your life goals.

Sincerely,

Jean Pierre, LCSW, MBA
President/CEO

AGENCY OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

Suncoast Center's mission is strengthening, protecting, and restoring lives for a healthy community.

VISION

Suncoast Center's vision is to provide inspiration, leadership, and hope to the community we serve.

QUALITY AND SATISFACTION

Quality and satisfaction are important to us. While receiving services here, or after you have completed services, you may be asked to complete a satisfaction survey, or you may receive a phone call or letter asking whether our services helped you. We would appreciate your honest response to these questions. Your participation will enable us to monitor the quality of our services, so we can continually improve them.

ACCESSIBILITY

Our doors are open to the community; offering professional, accredited services, when and where we are needed. Flexible appointments are available across a variety of community sites, as well as in clients' homes.

PAYMENT OF SERVICES

Suncoast Center accepts private pay, Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance. Reduced fees or no-cost services may also be available to those who qualify. Payment is expected when services are provided.

SMOKING

Suncoast Center and all of its properties are smoke free facilities. No smoking, use, or trade of tobacco products, including snuff and chewing tobacco or "smoking products" that include, but are not limited to, all products (cigarettes, bidis, kreteks, e-cigarettes) and all smoke-producing products (cigars, pipes, hookahs, vaporizers, etc.), will be allowed inside or on the grounds of any facility owned, leased, or operated by Suncoast Center.

You can call 1-877-822-6669 to speak with a Quit Coach® who can help you quit tobacco.

COMPLAINTS

If you feel you need to make a complaint about a problem you have with Suncoast Center services, you can make your complaint without fear of any retaliation. Your services will not be impacted by your decision to communicate a complaint or file a formal grievance. The agency embraces the opportunity to improve services by carefully addressing all complaints and analyzing trends. Staff are educated in the importance of the grievance system and individual rights.

Following are the steps to file what is called a formal grievance.

1. Talk with your counselor, case manager, or therapist about your problem first, or you may ask to speak with the program manager.
2. If you feel your problem has not been resolved, you may file a grievance in two ways. (1) Complete a Client Grievance form obtained from the front desk personnel. You can ask for help in filling out this form. Family members and other people important to you may also fill out the form for you. Or, (2) Call the Compliance Officer at 727-327-7656, ext. 4117.
3. When you finish filling out the form, hand it in to the front desk or mail it to Suncoast Center. The Compliance Officer or designee will read your complaint and contact you within five working days in accordance with the communication preference documented in your file or in the grievance. If you do not have a preference listed, a letter will be sent to the address on file.
4. If the Compliance Officer does not resolve your complaint, your complaint will be elevated to the next level until the complaint is resolved. You may appeal the decision and the grievance will be addressed with the President/CEO. If it reaches the level of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, their decision will be final.

Suncoast Center has 30 days in which to respond to your complaint.

You may also file your complaint with the agencies which fund the program you are enrolled in.

Discrimination complaints may be filed with DCF Office of Civil Rights or with the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights.

occurred as a result of criminal conduct, (5) in the event that a crime occurs on the premises of the practice, and (6) In emergency circumstances to report a crime; the location of the crime or victims; or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.

Military and Veterans - When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose protected health information of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs of your eligibility for certain benefits.

National Security - We may also disclose your protected health information to authorized federal officials for conducting national security and intelligence activities, including for the provision of protective services to the President of the United States or others legally authorized.

Workers' Compensation - Your protected health information may be disclosed by us as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally-established programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

Coroners - We may release health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death.

Research - Information from clinical records may be used for statistical and research purposes if the information is abstracted in such a way as to protect the identity of individuals.

Inmates - The client is committed to, or is to be returned to, the Department of Corrections from the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Corrections requests such records.

Required Uses and Disclosures - Under the law, we must make disclosures to you when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500 et. seq.

SAFETY

Suncoast Center takes client, staff, and visitor safety very seriously. To ensure that everyone is safe, here are some things to remember when visiting any of our offices:

- Suncoast Center does not permit firearms, explosive devices or any concealed or non-concealed article that could result in serious physical harm to a person. If brought into the building, items that will be confiscated include, but are not limit to:
 - Illegal or legal substance – drugs, and/or alcohol
 - Firearms
 - Sharp objects and/or projectiles, which may be injurious to self or others
 - Medications
 - Any items that may be considered harmful or dangerous to self or others
- At times, our waiting rooms can become very busy. Each person in the waiting room would like to be seen for services in a timely manner. To make waiting more pleasant for yourself and others, please remember to:
 - Be courteous and respectful of others by avoiding use of the lobby when you do not have scheduled services. Clients with canes, walkers, and small children require room to move about.
 - Avoid use of cell phones, if you must take a call, speak softly or step outside to have a conversation.
 - Foul language and profanity are not allowed in the waiting areas. Any individual who uses profanity will be asked to refrain the use or asked to leave the location.
 - The safety of children is critical. Children are never to be left unattended. Parents are required to remain onsite when children are in services and are asked to provide supervision and activities to keep children quiet and occupied.
 - Bring something to keep yourself occupied.

- Please keep your valuables on your person or leave your valuables at home. The agency is not responsible for any personal property that is lost or damaged.
- Please do not throw or leave trash on our premises. We have trash containers available throughout the buildings where you and your children can throw away any unwanted trash.
- Keep in mind that everyone is given a window of time; however, sometimes unforeseen delays can disrupt scheduled appointment times. Please be patient, you will be seen as soon as possible.
- All staff are educated on peaceful, verbal de-escalation of individuals who are in crisis. Clients in all setting have the choice to end or exit a service at any time.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If an emergency arises during your visit to our locations that require evacuation or other safety precautions, please follow the directives of the agency staff and proceed to the nearest and safest exit route or designated shelter area. If possible, take any hand held belongings.

- Do not return to collect your belongings.
- Do not use the elevator during an evacuation.
- Do not reenter the building until notified that it is safe to return to the building by the agency staff.

The following icons will help you locate a shelter area or supplies in the event of an emergency:

person. Any disclosure; however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

Public Health Risks - We may disclose protected health information about you for public health activities.

These activities generally include the following:

- to prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
- to report births and deaths;
- to report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- to notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
- to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition.

Abuse or Neglect - We may disclose your protected health information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to report the abuse or neglect of children, elders and dependent adults; to notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a client has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.

Health Oversight - We may disclose protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

Legal Proceedings - We may disclose your protected health information when the court orders such release. In determining whether there is good cause for disclosure, the court shall weigh the need for the information to be disclosed against the possible harm of disclosure to the person to whom such information pertains. Information may be released if the patient is represented by counsel and the records are needed by the patient's counsel for adequate representation. (Florida Statute 394.4615)

Law Enforcement - A patient has declared an intention to harm other persons. When such declaration has been made, the administrator may authorize the release of sufficient information to provide adequate warning to the person threatened with harm by the patient. These law enforcement purposes include (1) legal processes and otherwise required by law, (2) limited information requests for identification and location purposes, (3) pertaining to victims of a crime, (4) suspicion that death has

receive a limited summary of that person's treatment plan and current physical and mental condition. Release of such information shall be in accordance with the code of ethics of the profession involved.

Emergencies: We may use or disclose your protected health information in an emergency treatment situation. If this happens, the agency shall try to obtain your consent as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of treatment. If your agency staff is required by law to treat you and the agency has attempted to obtain your consent but is unable to obtain your consent, he or she may still use or disclose your protected health information to treat you.

Research: Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose protected health information about you for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all patients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. All research projects, however, are subject to a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of protected health information, trying to balance the research needs with patients' need for privacy of their health information. Before we use or disclose protected health information for research, the project will have been approved through this research approval process, but we may; however, disclose protected health information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project, for example, to help them look for patients with specific needs, so long as the health information they review does not leave the agency. We will almost always ask for your specific permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at the agency.

OTHER PERMITTED AND REQUIRED USES AND DISCLOSURES THAT MAY BE MADE WITHOUT CONSENT, AUTHORIZATION OR OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT

Required by Law - We may disclose your protected health information when it is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety - We may use and disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another



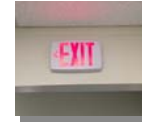
- Shelter Rooms are identified by the Tornado Shelter sign.



- First Aid Kits are located in each kitchenette, on the wall near restrooms, or at the reception area.



- Fire Extinguishers are located at or near emergency exit doors.



- Exit Doors are identified with a red exit light.

Periodically, Suncoast Center will conduct unannounced safety drills in the areas of fire, tornado, power failure, bomb threat, threat of violence or medical emergencies. Please follow the directions of Suncoast Center staff in your immediate area. Drills are required to protect your safety in the case of a real event.

If the agency closes due to local weather or other emergency, you will be notified via phone, text, agency website (www.suncoastcenter.org), social media, or you may call the agency at 727-327-7656. These communication tools will be updated throughout the emergency to announce the Continuation of Operations Plan. The Plan will include how to obtain interim prescriptions and medications for continuity of medication management.

OUTPATIENT SERVICES LOCATIONS

4024 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33711	2188 58 th Street North Clearwater, FL 33760
4010 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33711	2455 N. McMullen Booth Rd. Clearwater, FL 33759

OTHER AGENCY LOCATIONS

3800 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33711	928 22 nd Avenue South St. Petersburg, FL 33705
4050 Central Avenue St. Petersburg, FL 33711	1001 16 th Street South St. Petersburg, FL 33705
940 22 nd Avenue South St. Petersburg, FL 33705	2960 Roosevelt Blvd. Clearwater, FL 33760

Suncoast Center also provides services in over 30 community sites throughout Pinellas County, including Pinellas County schools, and the jail.

use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and service we provide. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of health information, so others may use it to study health care and health care delivery without learning who the specific clients are.

We may disclose your protected health information to interns or students that see clients at our agency locations. In addition, we may also call you by name in the waiting room when staff is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment.

We will share your protected health information with third party business partners that perform various activities (e.g., pharmacy, billing, and transcription services) for the practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your protected health information, we will have a written contract that contains terms that will protect the privacy of your protected health information.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES BASED UPON WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION

Other uses and disclosures of all or part of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law as described below. You have the opportunity to agree or object to the use or disclosure of protected health information. If you are not present or able to agree or object to the use or disclosure of the protected health information, then your provider may, using professional judgment, determine whether the disclosure is in your best interest. In this case, only the protected health information that is relevant to your health care will be disclosed. You may revoke this authorization, in writing, at any time.

Individuals Responsible for Your Care: Florida Statute 394.4615 states that your clinical record shall be released when the patient or the patient's guardian authorizes the release. The patient or the patient's guardian or guardian advocate may authorize the release of information and clinical records to appropriate persons to ensure the continuity of the patient's health care or mental health care. The parent, next of kin, or guardian of a person who is treated under a mental health facility or program may

purpose of providing health care services to you. Your protected health information may also be used and disclosed to pay your health care bills and to support the operation of the agency's practice.

Following are examples of the types of uses and disclosures of your protected health care information that Suncoast Center is permitted to make once you have signed our consent form. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to describe the types of uses and disclosures that may be made by our office once you have provided consent.

Treatment: We will use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party that has already obtained your permission to have access to your protected health information. For example, we may disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to another agency that provides care to you. We may also disclose protected health information to other physicians who may be diagnosing and treating you when we have the necessary permission from you to disclose your protected health information.

Payment: We will use your health information for payment. This may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the health care services we recommend for you such as; making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. This may also include information required for payment by funders such as the Department of Children and Families, the Juvenile Welfare Board, or other funders.

For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used. Information may also be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for day treatment services.

Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose protected health information about you for agency operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the agency and make sure that all of our clients receive quality care.

For example: Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may

CONTACT INFORMATION

Suncoast Center's Outpatient Services Hours of Operation* are:

Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Fridays 8:00am – 5:00pm

4010 Central Avenue and 4024 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg
2188 58th Street North, Clearwater
2455 N. McMullen Booth Rd., Clearwater/Safety Harbor
Agency Locations are closed during most major holidays
Call the Main Number to confirm or confirm with your service provider.

**Please refer to individual program brochure for specific hours and contact information.*

Suncoast Center lines auto transfer the caller to PEMHS when selected for after-hours help to the 24 –Hour Mental Health Assistance Line: 727-541-4628.

Text messaging between clients and staff is strictly for business purposes only. If you experience a mental health emergency when the agency is closed, contact one of the following sources:

Emergency
9-1-1

Suicide Hotline
727-791-3131

24 Hour Sexual Assault Services Helpline
727-530-7273

Abuse Hotline
1-800-962-2873
1-800-453-5145 (TDD Accessible)

Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing
7-1-1
Telecommunications Relay
Service (TRS)

**Dept. of Children and
Families**
Circuit 6 (Pinellas)
727-373-7677

Tampa Bay Cares
2-1-1
Information/Referral Source

**Personal Enrichment
Through Mental Health
Services, Inc.**
(PEMHS)
12:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

11254 – 58th Street North
Pinellas Park, FL
727-541-4628

Medication Line
727-327-7656, Ext. 4050
Mobile Crisis Response Team
727-362-4424

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Suncoast Center understands that information about you and your health is personal, and we are committed to protecting health information about you.

If you have any questions about this Notice please contact our Privacy Contact at:

Medical Records Manager
4024 Central Avenue, P.O. Box 10970
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-0970
727-327-7656, ext. 4211

COPIES OF THIS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL OFFICE LOCATIONS FROM THE FRONT DESK OR YOUR CASE WORKER/THERAPIST/CLINICIAN.

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information. "Protected health information" refers to information about you that may identify you and your past, present or future physical or mental health and related health care services.

By law, we are required to:

- make sure that health information that identifies you is kept private;
- give you notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information about you; and
- follow the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practice that is currently in effect.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

You will be asked by the medical staff, clinical staff or case manager to sign a consent form. Once you have consented to the use and disclosure of your protected health information for treatment, payment and health care operations, and agency staff will use or disclose your protected health information as described in this section. Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by the medical staff, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Universal Precautions are work practices that help prevent contact with other people's blood and certain bodily fluids.

Infection can occur if infected blood enters the body through:

- A needle stick.
- A cut or break in the skin.
- A cut or break in mucous membranes (mouth, eyes and nose).

Universal Precautions help prevent infection through the use of:

- Protective barriers such as gloves, gowns, masks and protective goggles.
- Safe work practices such as proper disposal of needles and infectious waste.

Steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Wear gloves whenever contact with blood or other infectious bodily fluid may occur.
- Wash your hands and other skin surfaces for a minimum of 15 seconds with soap and water immediately after direct contact with blood or other bodily fluids.
- Cover open wounds and broken skin.
- Use resuscitation bags or mouthpieces, whenever possible, for giving mouth to mouth resuscitation.

If a work area becomes contaminated with blood:

- Notify maintenance immediately for clean-up of the contaminated location.
- Close off the area until maintenance has decontaminated it and removed the clean-up materials.

What to do if you are exposed to blood or other infectious fluids:

- Wash the exposed area immediately.
- Report the incident.
- Follow procedures for testing and treatment.

CODE OF ETHICS

Suncoast Center's primary responsibility is to serve clients and ensure their safety, dignity and rights, and to ensure the safety dignity and rights of others. To that end, all Suncoast Center personnel, including employees, volunteers, interns, and contract workers are educated on and required to:

- maintain confidentiality and respect clients' right to privacy;
- act in accordance with the highest standards of professional and personal integrity at all times;
- recognize clients rights to self-determination;
- strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice;
- provide services and represent themselves as competent, only within the boundaries of their education and professional experience;
- treat all others with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith;
- demonstrate a commitment to Suncoast Center and its mission and values;
- set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries with clients;
- refrain from receiving or giving gifts from or to clients or their family members/care givers except on behalf of the agency;
- refrain from entering into any personal financial transaction with clients or their family members/care givers, including, but not limited to, giving, lending, and/or borrowing either gifts or money;
- refrain from forming non-professional relationships with clients or their family members/care givers;
- not have social or business relationships with current clients or known former clients with whom they have had a direct professional relationship;
- not accept as clients anyone with whom they have had a social or business relationship;
- not, under any circumstances, engage in sexual behavior with current or former clients or clients' immediate family members/care givers;
- to not provide clinical services to anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior;

- refrain from using physical, psychological, emotional or fiduciary abuse of clients, family members or staff, including humiliating, threatening and/or exploitive actions;
- ensure that all material Suncoast Center uses for marketing or community consultation will be accurate and correct.

Reports of violations of this code must be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will take the report verbally, if the violation reporter is unable to write the information. The Human Resources Department will immediately notify the President/CEO who will review the information supplied and start the investigative process. All information regarding the alleged violation will be held in confidence. The actions taken as a result of the findings will be documented in a report and maintained in the Human Resources Department.

Tuberculosis (TB)

- TB is a bacterial infection that can spread to any organ in the body, but is usually found in the lungs. It is transmitted through the air and can be very contagious. However, it is nearly impossible to catch TB through casual contact with an infected person.
- People who are malnourished, live in crowded conditions, or have weakened immune systems, such as those with AIDS or leukemia, are at greater risk of contracting TB.
- 90% of people infected with TB have latent infections and never develop symptoms, nor can they transmit the infection to others.
- A positive tuberculin skin test is the only way to diagnose TB.
- Symptoms begin gradually and develop over a period of weeks or months. Some people have one or two symptoms, others have several symptoms. Symptoms include coughing up thick, cloudy, sometimes bloody mucus for more than two weeks, fever and chills, fatigue, weight loss, night sweats, shortness of breath, loss of appetite, chest pain that is worse when inhaling, rapid pulse, and muscle weakness.
- Treatment is antibiotics used to kill the TB bacteria. People who have inactive TB infections are treated to prevent the infection from becoming active, which can spread.

RESOURCES

For more information on infectious diseases contact the following agencies:

Pinellas County Health Department

727-824-6900

Testing for HIV, STDs, and TB is routinely available through county health departments.

DCF Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office

813-337-5700

National Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

1-800-232-4636

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- Less than 5 percent of spouses of people with HCV become infected & less than 5 percent of infants are infected during childbirth. No evidence of transmission through breastfeeding.
- Symptoms may occur immediately, lie dormant for years, or never develop. More than half of infected people have no symptoms. Symptoms include loss of appetite, fatigue, nausea, fever, dark-dark urine, yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice). Liver enzymes may be elevated.
- Treatment for Hepatitis C is 3-times weekly injections of Rebetron (combination of antiviral drug Ribavirin with Interferon). Currently, there is no vaccine available for Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis D (HDV):

- Caused by contact with contaminated blood. Hepatitis B must be present for Hepatitis D to survive, so it is contracted at the same time as Hepatitis B or the person already has Hepatitis B.
- Symptoms are the same as Hepatitis B (loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fever, fatigue, abdominal pain, dark urine, or yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice), except more severe.
- Treatment for Hepatitis D is injections of the drug Interferon Alpha, which is the same treatment for Hepatitis B.

Hepatitis E (HEV):

- Caused by consuming contaminated uncooked shellfish, fruits, and vegetables, and contact with water contaminated with feces.
- Symptoms are nausea, vomiting, fever, fatigue, abdominal pain, dark urine, and yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice).
- There is no drug treatment or vaccine available for Hepatitis E. The recommended treatment is plenty of bed rest.

For more information on hepatitis contact the following agencies:

**American Liver Foundation
(Hepatitis)**

39 Broadway, Suite 2700
New York, New York 10006
212-668-1000
www.liverfoundation.org

Hepatitis Foundation Int'l

8121 Georgia Avenue
Silver Springs, MD 20910
1-800-891-0707
www.hepfi.org

YOUR RIGHTS

- ◆ To be treated with respect and dignity.
- ◆ To have your privacy and confidentiality protected.
- ◆ To have the risks, benefits, and length of your treatment explained to you.
- ◆ To have other treatment options explained to you.
- ◆ To authorize any treatment you receive.
- ◆ To refuse treatment services.
- ◆ To participate in developing a plan of treatment that is right for you.
- ◆ To request that all your health information not be used or shared.
- ◆ To look at your records, request to add your own comments or that information be corrected.
- ◆ To have your services reviewed by professionals.
- ◆ To ask that we not share your information with family members.
- ◆ To choose someone to exercise your rights and make health choices for you.
- ◆ To request that we contact you in a specific way.
- ◆ To receive a complete explanation of how much your treatment will cost.
- ◆ To be informed of Suncoast Center's Code of Ethics and Privacy Practices.
- ◆ To file a complaint about services or problems you may have with Suncoast Center.
- ◆ To have all of the above rights without fear of loss of services or retaliation.
- ◆ All individuals applying for or receiving services for mental health and substance abuse disorders are guaranteed the protection of fundamental human, civil, constitutional, and statutory rights including those specified in subsections 397.501(1)-(10), F.S.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ◆ To maintain behavior that is thoughtful, courteous, and respectful of others.
- ◆ To refrain from bringing into our offices any items which may be harmful or threatening.
- ◆ To refrain from using foul language or profanity.
- ◆ To provide supervision and activities to keep children quiet and occupied.
- ◆ Be represented in an honest way by providing accurate information.
- ◆ To keep all scheduled appointments, and notify staff if unable to keep an appointment.
- ◆ To cooperate, as best as possible, with the treatment plan.
- ◆ To respect others privacy by not talking outside of the program about what was seen or heard while in the program offices.

Maintenance of Services

Suncoast Center has some services that can be provided by Telehealth, however the following services require you to make and keep an in-person appointment in order to confirm your status, obtain your signature, and collect crucial medical/demographic information. If you decide not to keep the required in-person appointments, we may terminate services and provide referrals.

- Initial Enrollment/Admission Appointment
- Initial Assessments and Treatment Plan Development
- Updated Enrollment Appointment when required for insurance and accurate billing
- Updated Self-pay and drug plan eligibility when required
- Treatment Plan Review twice per year
- Updated vitals and labs when required for medication prescriptions

Hepatitis

Hepatitis is liver inflammation caused by a viral infection. There are 5 different viral infections that result in Hepatitis: A, B, C, D, and E.

Hepatitis A (HAV):

- The most common form of hepatitis.
- Caused by eating or drinking food or water that is contaminated with feces containing the virus.
- Symptoms include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice). Liver enzymes may be elevated.
- Can last from 3 weeks to 6 months.
- Treatment for Hepatitis A: Immune globulin vaccine for short-term protection and for people already exposed, bed rest and avoidance of intimate contact. For long-term protection, a Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended.

Hepatitis B (HBV):

- Caused by exposure to infected blood, unprotected sex, sharing contaminated needles, and through childbirth or breastfeeding by infected mothers.
- Symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fever, fatigue, abdominal pain, dark urine, or yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice). Some people have no symptoms and infection goes away without treatment.
- If infection remains in blood cells and liver for 6 months or more chronic HBV is diagnosed. Chronic HBV can result in cirrhosis and liver cancer. People with Chronic HBV usually do not have symptoms unless liver disease is present.
- Treatment for Hepatitis B is injections of the drug Interferon Alpha.

Hepatitis C (HCV):

- Most common blood-borne infection in the United States.
- Most serious of the 5 types of hepatitis.
- Caused by exposure to infected blood through unsafe, high-risk sexual behavior, injecting or snorting drugs using contaminated equipment, getting a tattoo or body piercing with contaminated equipment, using infected person's toothbrush, razor, or anything else that has contaminated blood on it.

- Caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- Transmitted through contact with blood, blood products, semen, or vaginal fluids, and from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding. The most common method of transmission is through sexual contact.
- Sharing needles, syringes, cookers, cotton, spoons, or eyedroppers may result in injecting HIV-infected blood into one's system.
- Symptoms present in a wide variety of ways that include flu-like fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and pains, enlarged lymph nodes in neck, armpits, and groin, skin rash, abdominal cramps, nausea, or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.
- Treatment is the use of three or more antiretroviral medications that attacks the virus at different stages in its life cycle.

For more information on HIV/AIDS, please contact the following:

HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral Sites:

Pinellas County Health Dept.
6350 - 76th Avenue North
Pinellas Park, FL
547-7780

Pinellas County Health Dept.
205 - 9th St/Dr. ML King Street
North.
St. Petersburg, FL
824-6900

St. Petersburg Woman's Health
Center
3401 - 66th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL
381-6620

King of Peace Church (main
location)
Metropolitan Charities
3150 - 5th Avenue North
321-3854

Evara Health
1310 - 22nd Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL
821-6701

AIDS Community Project
136 - 4th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL
893-1554

King of Peace Thrift Store
(secondary site)
733 Central Avenue
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
896-7467

DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES

Suncoast Center provides mental health, substance abuse, and trauma services for individuals who meet the criteria for admission into the agency's programs. Based on the assessment, individuals are admitted to the appropriate level of care. When demand exceeds the resources available in a program, priorities for service are established.

Each program has its own criteria for admission, transfer, and discharge. Specific program criteria are discussed during the initial intake.

As a client of Suncoast Center, your rights and responsibilities will be reviewed with you during the initial intake. If you should have difficulty carrying out your responsibilities, every effort will be made to assist you in addressing the problem. If there is no satisfactory improvement; if you are not actively receiving care; if you are not keeping your scheduled appointments; or if no future appointments have been scheduled, it may be necessary to end your services with Suncoast Center.

If your services are stopped, we will make an attempt to contact you with an explanation of why services were discontinued and your service options.

If you disagree with the decision, you have a right to file a complaint according to Suncoast Center's complaint procedures outlined in this booklet.

INFECTION CONTROL

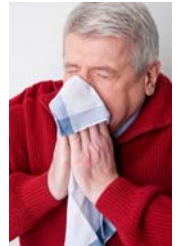
Suncoast Center is committed to promoting good physical health as well as good mental health. In keeping with this commitment, we feel that it is important to address infectious diseases that are prominent in today's society; diseases to which we all can be susceptible. The following information is presented to help prevent infectious diseases and encourage you to seek appropriate medical treatment, if you are concerned. This information is not all-inclusive. We encourage you to get more information from the resources listed at the end of this document.

Suncoast Center has a policy and procedure for infection control approved by the Medical Director. In summary, the policy states that Suncoast Center will identify and handle potential and actual infectious diseases of both employees and clients.

The Medical Director will receive all reports of infectious illness, both clients and employees, and make recommendations to the President/CEO for handling these cases.

If you have an infectious disease, your treatment will continue until your condition deteriorates to the point where your health may be jeopardized, mental health therapy becomes problematic, or if you become a health threat to other clients and/or employees.

The agency confidentiality policy/procedures will be followed. Unauthorized disclosure of sensitive information and discrimination in decision-making regarding client care will not be permitted.



All agency responses to employees and clients with infectious diseases will comply with applicable federal, state and other relevant guidelines, including notification of proper authorities.

The agency reports communicable diseases to the Florida Department of Health in accordance with Section 381.0031 and 384.25, F.S.

TYPES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

- A set of diseases and symptoms that develop years after infection.

constricted pupils, watery eyes, itching, slurred speech, mood swings, and sweating. Death by overdose is commonly due to depression of respiratory functions. The use of narcotics with your medication may produce increased sedative effect and irregular or slowed heart rhythms. As narcotics are primarily depressants and upon withdrawal promote anxiety and nervousness, the effectiveness of your medications will most likely be reduced.

AMPHETAMINES AND OTHER STIMULANTS

Stimulants (Dexedrine, Benzedrine, Crystal Meth, Speed, Crank, Ritalin, Cylert, Preludin, Ephedra) are most often used to control symptoms of hyperactive disorders and promote weight loss. Stimulants cause increased heart and respiratory rates, elevated blood pressure, sweating, blurred vision, headache, dilated pupils, and decreased appetite. Combined with your medications, these drugs may produce increased anxiety, toxic effects, irregular heart rhythms, loss of coordination, physical collapse, psychosis and stroke.

HALLUCINOGENS

Hallucinogens (PCP, LSD, Mescaline, Psilocybin, Mushrooms) interrupt the functions of the neocortex in the brain. The user may experience illusions and hallucinations while the additional effects of the drug produces elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and tremors. The user may also experience panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety and loss of control. Delayed effects (flashbacks) may occur even when use has ceased. When combined with medications, increased blood pressure, increased tremor and possible psychosis could result.

Needless to say, if you are seeking to stabilize disorders of mood or perception and thinking, the substances mentioned above should be avoided unless prescribed to you. Remember that these drugs can often interfere with your response to any prescribed medication and cause it not to work when it otherwise might. If you feel you have a problem in abstaining from these substances, Suncoast Center has counselors and groups that may be helpful. Just ask your health care provider or your therapist.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

For over 75 years, Suncoast Center has been providing services to children, adults, seniors, and families throughout Pinellas County. We hold true to our mission of *strengthening, protecting, and restoring lives for a healthy community*, by providing services that focus on three core areas: emotional wellness, child advocacy, and trauma services.

We provide services to individuals who may be struggling with concerns ranging from depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, medication issues, and family relationship problems. We also provide priority services to IV drug users, pregnant women and clients involved with child welfare investigations.

Suncoast Center's Children Advocacy Services is dedicated to reducing trauma to children and families affected by abuse or neglect by providing coordination of community services during investigation, assessment, treatment, and recovery. The Child Protection Team evaluates children who are referred due to symptoms of physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect. Children requiring further medical examinations or psychological evaluations are often seen within other programs at Suncoast Center.

Suncoast Center holds the certification of Pinellas County's Sexual Assault Services, certified through the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence. Services consist of: sexual violence prevention education, outreach and events, a 24-hour helpline, crisis counseling and intervention, court advocacy and accompaniment, information and referrals, support groups, Sexual Assault Victims Examinations (SAVEs) and after care.

In addition, Suncoast Center provides the following services countywide:

- Individual, family, and group counseling, and therapy
- Case management, including assisting families in attaining benefits and providing comprehensive family services
- Psychiatric evaluations and medication management
- Neuropsychological assessments related to child abuse or head injuries

Services are designed to improve the lives of individuals and families, while creating positive social empowerment experiences that promote healthy, long-term ties with family members, friends, and the community.

METHODS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Your services are available in various methods:

- Office-based Services;
- Community-based services
- Clients who require new/updated treatment plans, verifications, and nursing services, are required to receive these services in-person (see page 16 for details)
- Telehealth Services – some are arranged with the service provider to be provide via ZOOM/secure encrypted and password protected with a unique ID sent to you.
 - You are required to be in a private place.
 - In order to protect safety and privacy, a telehealth service will be rescheduled if you are driving or in a public setting.
 - Telehealth services for clients without a phone or internet access is available in some agency office locations. Staff are trained to educate you on the use of the equipment and will ensure that the equipment is clean and safe prior to and after your services.

MARIJUANA

Use of marijuana (cannabis) impairs short-term memory and comprehension, alters sense of time, and reduces the ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination. Motivation and thinking processes may also be altered, making the understanding and retention of new information difficult. Marijuana may produce mood swings and paranoid thinking. High doses may initiate symptoms of latent schizophrenia. Using marijuana while taking your medication may produce drowsiness, irregular heartbeat, and increased chance of medication side effects, tremor and possible psychosis.

COCAINE

Cocaine (powder, crack, and freebase) stimulates the nervous system, heightens sensations and may produce paranoid thinking and hallucinations. Long-term effects may lead to brain damage, heart rhythm disturbance, seizures and/or respiratory failure. Using cocaine with your medication may produce increased risk of heartbeat irregularity, dangerous blood pressure rise, decreased effect of the medication, and possible psychosis.

TRANQUILIZERS

Tranquilizers (Xanax, Valium, Tranzene, Klonopin, Librium) are often prescribed medications for the treatment of anxiety disorders, as an adjunct or additional aid for agitation, and for alcohol withdrawal. They can sometimes be used by general physicians or specialists as adjuncts or additional aids for seizure disorders or muscle spasms. These groups of medications effects are in many ways similar to the effects of alcohol. Small doses can produce calmness and relaxed muscles, but larger doses can cause slurred speech, staggering gait and altered perception and mood swings. Overdoses result in respiratory depression, coma and death. Regular use of tranquilizers over time can result in physical and psychological addiction. Combining tranquilizers with your medication when it is not prescribed or using more than is prescribed can lead to excessive sedation, respiratory failure, coma and death.

NARCOTICS

Narcotics (Heroin, Morphine, Codeine, Percocet, Darvon, Fentanyl, Talwin, Demerol) are primarily used in medicine for their pain reliving properties. Narcotics initially produce a feeling of euphoria that often is followed by drowsiness and sometimes nausea. Habitual users may also experience

MEDICATION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

There are a number of substances that can be misused or abused. These include alcohol, street drugs, and prescription medications that are addictive. Some examples are marijuana, benzodiazepines or tranquilizers, stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines, narcotic pain medications and other opiates such as heroin, and hallucinogens. These substances have the ability to powerfully alter your mood, thought process, and behavior. They can produce a temporary, though false, sense of well-being. With continued regular or intermittent use, these substances can lead to unpredictable, and at times, dangerous behaviors, mood instability and disturbance, and many types of physically harmful effects. These substances can also interact with other medications in harmful, sometimes, life-threatening ways.



The following is a list of the most common substances of abuse, including prescription medication. If you are not able to discontinue the use of any of these substances not prescribed for you, then you should consider seeking assistance in stopping the use.

ADDICTIVE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

It is important to note that the prescription medications that are addictive also have helpful therapeutic purposes when used appropriately; that is, prescribed by a knowledgeable professional for an appropriate condition and monitored carefully on an ongoing basis. These medications include benzodiazepines, which are sometimes used for anxiety and agitation, stimulants used to treat attention deficit disorder symptoms and certain sleep disorders, and narcotic pain medications.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol depresses the action of all parts of the central nervous system. At lower dosages, alcohol depresses normal mental activity and muscle functions. In larger amounts, alcohol causes nausea, stupor, memory impairment, unconsciousness and withdrawal effects. Using alcohol while taking your medications may result in excessive sedation and in some cases may increase toxic effects on the central nervous system.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The success of your treatment at Suncoast Center is very important to us. One part of that treatment is the medication evaluation appointment. This appointment is scheduled with a member of the medical staff to assess your compatibility to the medication prescribed and ongoing usage. It is up to you to be here, on time, on the day of your appointment.

In keeping with our commitment to provide you with the best quality care possible, Suncoast Center has implemented a walk-in clinic. This clinic will provide you with an opportunity to be seen by a provider for a medication review without an appointment. The walk-in clinic is on a first come, first served basis, and you will be seen based upon provider availability. Since the walk-in clinic is very busy, there is no guarantee that you will be seen, so plan on arriving early. If you are not seen, you will be encouraged to attend the next scheduled walk-in clinic day. Prescriptions are not provided unless you have seen a provider.

Please call the day before to ensure that your provider will be available for the walk in clinic day (727-327-7656 extension 4050).

Walk-in Clinic Guidelines:

- ◆ You are required to have an active treatment plan and your contact and financial information must be up to date.
 - ◇ You will not be seen without an up-to-date treatment plan.
- ◆ You must have already had completed a service appointment with a medical provider.
 - ◇ You will not be provided prescriptions without being seen by a medical provider.
- ◆ You must arrive early and check in prior to the start time of the clinic.
- ◆ You must be in the lobby when called by the provider or risk losing your spot.

Remember, it is your responsibility to keep your appointments with the medical staff.

MEDICATIONS AND YOU



Medication cannot “cure.” What it does do is assist the body’s natural defenses and processes to promote recovery. All effective medications produce desirable changes in the body, but these same medications may also cause undesirable adverse reactions or side effects. Likewise, a particular medication will

not be useful to everyone. The complexity of the human body, individual responses (in different people and in the same person under different circumstances), past and present health, age and gender all influence how well a medication works.

Some suggestions for wise medication use apply to all medications:

Provide medical practitioner with accurate information. Remember to always give your medical provider a complete list of all medical history, your current medications, allergies or adverse reactions to medications, and your current medical plans. Be sure to mention your progress with or concerns about your treatment with current medications. Tell your doctor about any unexpected new symptoms you have while taking medication.

Know your medications. Learn the medication’s generic, as well as brand name, your dosage, and the times you are to take your medication. Be familiar with all the medication’s effects, including its “side effects.” Resources for information are: your medical practitioner, pharmacist, books in your public library and the Internet.

Never take medications other than those prescribed. Medications don’t always fall into the category of “taking more increases the benefits.” Some medications act differently at different dosages, and only your medical provider should make dose adjustments. The label on your medication package will give specific instructions for dosages and schedules. You should also request a supplemental medication information fact sheet from your pharmacist to supplement the information on the medication label.

Avoid mood altering substances. Alcohol, cocaine, marijuana or other mood altering substances may prevent your medication from being effective and can cause life-threatening interactions with your medications. Avoid the use of these substances.

6. PHYSICAL—Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition
 - Take the stairs instead of the elevator; replace driving with walking or bicycling when possible.
 - Get enough sleep—your body needs it to rejuvenate and stay well!
7. INTELLECTUAL—Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills
 - Research a topic that interests you and share what you learned with others.
 - Find creative outlets that stimulate your mind and sense of curiosity.
8. ENVIRONMENTAL—Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being
 - Appreciate nature and the beauty that surrounds you.
 - Seek out music and other experiences that have a calming effect on your well-being.

WELLNESS AND RECOVERY

Including wellness as part of our daily life not only increases mental and physical health, but it also make recovery more attainable. When we are feeling our best, we reduce our stress level and our risk of illness, and we are able to create a path to our full potential.

To help us understand and achieve wellness, The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services \(SAMHSA\)](#) has outlined the [8 Dimensions of Wellness](#):

1. EMOTIONAL—Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships
 - Be aware of and listen to your feelings.
 - Express your feelings to people you trust.
2. FINANCIAL—Satisfaction with current and future financial situations
 - Be thoughtful and creative about your budgeting and spending.
 - As needed, meet with financial professionals who provide free or low-cost services for guidance.
3. SOCIAL—Developing a sense of connection, belonging, a well-developed support system
 - Make at least one social connection per day by calling, e-mailing, or visiting someone.
 - Get active in a support group.
4. SPIRITUAL—Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life
 - Make time for practices that enhance your sense of connection to self, nature, and others.
 - Take time to discover what values, principles, and beliefs are most important to you.
5. OCCUPATIONAL—Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived through one’s work
 - Work toward a career in a field you are passionate about or a volunteer activity that has meaning for you.
 - Communicate with your supervisor regularly and get support when needed.

Check your prescription bottle before taking any medication. One of the more common ways people mismanage their medications is to pick up the wrong medication bottle and take a pill before checking to make sure that it is the correct medication at the prescribed dosage. Never take medication in the dark.

Properly store your medication. Keep your medications away from moisture and heat and out of the reach of children. Safely secure them against theft. Put them where you will remember to take them at the proper time.

Don’t double dose if you miss a dose. If you should miss a dose of medication, don’t automatically double the amount of medication at the next scheduled dosage. Consult your information/fact sheet about how to handle missed dosages of your medication. If you should need to change the dosage schedule, consult your medical care provider.

Follow diet instructions when you take your medications. Some medications work better on a full stomach; others on an empty stomach.

Notify your medical care provider of medical status changes. If you should experience any changes in your medical status (pregnancy, development of a medical condition, pending surgeries, etc.), notify your medical care provider immediately to make sure that your medications are safe to continue using. If you are seeing a mental health practitioner, as well as a medical doctor, make sure you have authorized communication between them about your care.

FOLLOW YOUR MEDICAL CARE PROVIDER'S RECOMMENDATION

It is important to follow your medical care provider's recommendations in order to benefit the most from treatment. You will be asked to complete a treatment plan when receiving medical treatment. A treatment plan is made with your input and works towards the goal of improving your health and ability to function. Patients that do not follow their provider's recommendation often fail in their treatment. Below are some examples of recommendations that may be difficult to follow, and what you can do:

1. If you do not understand the instructions, ask your provider to explain it again. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that the instruction or recommendation will make a difference. If you are not sure how it will make a difference, ask your provider.
2. Recommendations for lifestyle changes (abstaining from alcohol, dieting, exercise, etc.) are sometimes very difficult to follow through with. Let your provider know if you are struggling – he/she may have some tips to help.
3. Long-term treatment regimens (such as continuing treatment for chronic conditions) can be very discouraging. This is common for anybody with a long-term illness. Let your therapist and your provider know. There are support groups you can attend that may help, and talking to your therapist may also make you feel a little better.
4. You may think that a lessening or disappearance of symptoms indicates that your medications are no longer necessary. This actually means they are working like they are supposed to. This is a great step. Now, following the recommendations of your provider becomes very important to make sure you continue to feel better.
5. Side effects of medications may be unpleasant or uncomfortable. This is common, but still not something you probably look forward to. Talk to your provider about ways to manage these side effects. Sometimes they will go away; other times there are ways to make



them not seem so bad. Make sure you report any side effects each time you talk to your provider.

6. Cost of treatment and medications is financially difficult. There may be other options to receive treatment and medications that could be within your financial reach. Ask your medical provider.
7. Failure to keep appointments or follow through with recommended laboratory tests or medical physicals can be detrimental to your progress and long-term results. Try as hard as you can to keep your appointments, as this is the best time to report what is happening to people who can hopefully help.
8. Attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of others can keep you from being committed to treatment recommendations. Remember, you and your provider need to be the ones to make the decisions about you. Don't let others make these important decisions for you.

In order for your treatment to be effective, you and your health care providers must work as a team. If you do not follow their instructions and communicate with your provider about how things are going, you cannot expect that the treatment will be effective. If you have reservations or fears about treatment, discuss them with your medical care provider. There are several groups available to provide you with both information and support to address your concerns about your condition and its treatment.