



## Custodial Neutral Clinic Policy

The clinic's goal and focus is to provide quality medical care in an environment that is in the best interest of our patients, their families, and our staff. When children are involved in custody issues, for whatever reason, there are often concerns regarding violence or requests for keeping the non-custodial parent(s) informed of appointments, health care provided, balances, insurance eligibility etc., which consumes our limited resources. The purpose of this policy is to outline to our patients and staff our position of neutrality and our desire to ensure safety, conserve clinic resources and to provide options for non-custodial parent(s). In general, at our discretion, we will not provide extraordinary services that are outside of our primary focus, which is providing quality healthcare to pediatric patients.

**Foster Care:** When it comes to our attention that a patient has been placed in foster care, the account is marked as such to ensure the privacy of the foster parent's personal information. Foster parents may be asked to verify their identity with picture ID for appointments and by verifying personal information when calling.

Parents with children in foster care are welcome and encouraged to participate in their child(ren)'s medical appointments and decisions, unless outlined otherwise in the documents provided to us by the state. In these situations, parents need to obtain appointment and treatment information through their assigned case worker.

**Custodial/Non-Custodial (whether biological or by adoption):** Non-custodial parent(s) are welcome and encouraged to participate in their child(ren)'s medical appointments and decisions. However, for them to obtain appointment and treatment information they must go through the custodial parent, a guardian ad litem, attorney, etc. The Kids Clinic is unable to participate in time consuming notification processes. Joint custody arrangements for health care decisions as outlined in separation, divorce and/or parenting plan documents are binding on the individuals named. Those documents do not obligate or apply to The Kids Clinic. The Kids Clinic will provide healthcare whenever authorized by a legally authorized 'parent'\* or individual authorized by a legally authorized 'parent'. We are not able to give legal advice in any way. We encourage parents to supply such documents to us if items are specifically outlined in them that *may* apply to us as a healthcare provider.

Legally authorized 'parents' always have access to their child(ren)'s record through our record request process unless, their parental rights have been terminated by a court of law or if a child is under supervision by the State of Washington. The Kids Clinic does follow and abide by the laws of the State of Washington regarding the disclosure and release of healthcare information. This includes but is not limited to 1) individuals allowed access to a health care record, 2) the time required to release records which allows up to 15 days and 3) a charge for the copying of medical records. If parental rights have been terminated it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to file a copy of the court document with our office. The medical record will be noted to reflect parental termination.

Whether custodial or non-custodial, it is the responsibility of both 'parents' to ensure that we have current, active insurance on file and any balances are paid in accordance with our Financial and Appointment Policies. We remain neutral when it comes to our billing practices as well. It is the custodial parents responsibility to forward balance due statements to the responsible party, obtain insurance information from the responsible party, etc. It should be noted that we are unable to limit or decline medical treatment because of financial concerns by custodial or non-custodial parent. Again, these issues are between the parents, their attorneys, and the courts.

*This policy shall be applied equally regardless of race, color, religion, gender, creed, disability, or medical need, national origin, sexual preference or orientation, political belief and status with regard to public assistance or economic need.*

\*We use the term *parent* loosely, as we are quite aware that family make-up is not always "mother" and "father". ☺