



July 2024

Dear Patients,

As always, we sincerely hope this letter finds you well. This letter is intended to serve as our usual annual newsletter, and we hope you will take a few minutes to review the relevant updates about our clinic

COMINGS & GOINGS

GFHC On The Move: It's happening... Our clinic's move to a brand new home is now currently in progress. As of this writing, construction is continuing in our future home at Yonge & Lawrence. If all goes well, we hope to be making the physical transition to our new space some time in late Summer/early Fall. Please note that we most definitely *will* send out communications to our patients once the move dates are finalized and imminent... **Until then, it is business as usual in our current space at Avenue & Lawrence!**

The Next Generations?: In a year that will see us move to an expanded office space, we would also like to take a moment to celebrate our expanding GFHC family! In November, Dr. Reiter welcomed a beautiful baby girl into her life (and ours!). GFHC saw our family grow again two months later as well, when Dr. Rosenberg celebrated the arrival of her second son in February. We have been fortunate at GFHC to have benefited from excellent coverage of Dr. Reiter and Dr. Rosenberg's practices while both were off on parental leave, and would like to formally thank Drs. Ilana Geist and Dr. Allison Chen for their capable and compassionate contributions to our clinic!

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not also express our utmost gratitude to Peta-Gay Singh for her many years of exemplary work at our reception, and wish her nothing but the best in her well-earned retirement! Many of you have known Peta-Gay even longer than we have, from her pre-GFHC days working with the late (great) Dr. Tom Devitt; her regular smiling presence will be missed at our front desk, but we look forward to seeing what new adventures await her in the coming years!

UNINSURED SERVICES

Accompanying this letter you will find renewal/registration information for our comprehensive uninsured services coverage (Annual Block Fee). While OHIP (Ontario Health Insurance Plan) covers most medical needs, there are some services provided by our office that are NOT covered by OHIP. This includes email/DSG consultations



requested by the patient, phone/fax prescription refills, many forms/documents, and other services.

The demand for many uninsured services has increased dramatically in the past several years. These services require significant time, effort, and cost to administer. As small business owners, our clinic is not immune to the pressures that rising expenses are exerting everywhere, especially while OHIP payments have failed to keep up with inflation. Currently, the extra cost of relocating falls upon us as well. We are committed to continuing to provide the exemplary service that our patients have come to expect from GFHC, and in order to do so will continue to apply our normal Uninsured Services billing system. As in the past, patients have the choice of subscribing to our Annual Block Fee or by paying on a fee-for-service basis as needed.

A note about Email Communication: Our office currently utilizes both DSG Secure Email and Ocean Patient Messaging to send outgoing messages to patients; this might include information about appointments, test requisitions and results, or referral information. Email correspondence is an essential part of our practice; there is *no charge to receive messages from our office*. However, requests for medical advice via email remain uninsured medical services. Patient-initiated email consultation requests will incur a fee through our Uninsured Services program, if not already covered by our Annual Block Fee. Please remember as well that Secure Email is not intended to be used for urgent/acute issues, as we cannot guarantee that messages will be seen in a timely fashion. If you have concerns of an urgent or time-sensitive nature, please call our office directly during office hours.

Please see the enclosed letter (or check our website) regarding Uninsured Services for details. Please note as well that Block Fees, renewals, and new invoices can now be managed online at www.doctorservices.ca/online-payment.

A.I. SCRIBE - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PILOT PROJECT

Several physicians in our clinic are participating in a quality improvement project across North York to help family doctors spend less time charting and more time with their patients. With patient consent, GFHC is using a computerized scribe tool called "Tali A.I." to help maintain accurate and complete documentation in the medical record.



Tali records the discussion between a patient and their doctor during an appointment. The transcript of the recording is analyzed and a note is created and placed in the medical record. This helps ensure that important information provided by the patient and discussed with the doctor is available for use in providing high-quality patient care. This project was approved by North York General Hospital and a rigorous approval process was conducted to ensure that Tali meets appropriate privacy standards. Consent to Tali being used is entirely voluntary, and your care will not be affected if you decline. If you have any questions, talk to your doctor at the beginning of your next visit.

COMING SOON: MUSCULOSKELETAL/CHIROPRACTIC + DIETITIAN SERVICES

We are pleased to announce that in the very near future additional allied health services will be available at our clinic:

- Chiropractor - with a focus on Sports Medicine and musculoskeletal injuries
- Registered Dietitian - Naomi Andrews

We are pleased to be welcoming these new colleagues into our shared clinical space. Consultations (non-OHIP) will become available in the coming weeks.

SATURDAY MORNING AFTER-HOURS CLINIC

We continue to operate our Saturday Morning After-Hours Clinic (9am-12pm). This clinic is intended primarily for acute concerns.

PREVENTATIVE CARE / CANCER SCREENING

Recommended cancer screening intervals can vary for individual patients depending on their personal risk factors. Likewise, screening guidelines do change and get updated over time, including recently proposed changes to [Ontario screening recommendations](#) for the general population/average-risk patients.

Screening guidelines (for patients at average risk):

- [Breast cancer screening](#) (women, age 40-74):



- Age 50-74: Mammogram - every 2 years
- Age 40-50: As of September 2024, the [Ontario Breast Screening Program \(OBSP\)](#) is starting to welcome patients 40-49 years old for screening. Patients will be able to self-refer for mammograms at [OBSP clinics](#).
- [Cervical cancer screening](#) (sexually active women, age 25-70):
 - Pap test - every 3 years (average risk)
- [Colorectal cancer screening](#):
 - Average risk/no family history of colon cancer (age 50-74): FIT stool test - every 2 years
 - [FIT can be ordered](#) by your doctor, or via self-referral
 - Higher risk - personal/family history (start at age 50 or 10 years earlier than a relative's diagnosis): Colonoscopy - every 5 years

If you believe you are overdue for screening tests, please get in touch with the office.

IMMUNIZATIONS

We are stocking several non-OHIP covered vaccines that are recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. These vaccines are currently available with an appointment:

1. **Shingrix (Shingles):**
 - for the prevention of shingles and lingering nerve pain - recommended for everyone over age 50
 - two doses separated by 2-6 month
2. **Arexvy (RSV):**
 - prevention of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) pneumonia - recommended for everyone over age 60
 - one dose, no booster recommendation (at this point)

Additionally, the following vaccine is recommended by NACI, however is not currently stocked in our office (available via prescription; can be administered at the pharmacy or brought to our office):

3. **Pevnar 20 (Pneumococcal infection - pneumonia):**
 - Prevention of diseases such as pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis caused by 20 types of the bacteria Streptococcus
 - Recommended for everyone over age 65 and high-risk patients under age 65



- A pneumococcal booster may be indicated if it has been more than 5 years since your last pneumonia vaccine

OFFICE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- **Contact information:** Please do not forget to inform us of changes to your contact information so that we can reach you if the need arises. This includes changes to your primary email address.
- **Health Cards:** Remember that OHIP/provincial health cards can expire! Please ensure that your health card is up to date to ensure that you stay covered.
- **Office Masking & Testing:** It is important to recognize that there is no “one size fits all” approach to masking and other means of protection from viral illnesses. When contacting or visiting the clinic, our staff may conduct a brief “point-of-care risk assessment” or screening; if you have a cough/fever/respiratory illness or are considered to be at a higher risk of infection, you might be asked to wear a mask in our office in order to protect yourself as well as those around you. As always, individual masking decisions are personal ones, based on one’s personal risks and comfort level; we ask that all our patients continue to respect the decisions of everyone attending our office.

OFFICE-RELATED WEBSITES:

- Clinic website: generations.ourmd.ca
- DSG Secure: dsgsecure.com
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/GenerationsFHC (@GenerationsFHC)