



# Kat Toups, MD, DFAPA

Functional Medicine Psychiatry  
Bay Area Wellness  
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**PRACTICE POLICIES AND FEES**

# Bay Area Wellness Practice Policies

## FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM

- Dr. Toups has created a comprehensive three-visit program for evaluating chronic health problems, as well as Psychiatric issues. She understands that Psychiatric problems do not exist in a vacuum, but are instead related to inflammatory conditions in the body. Dr. Toups addresses all of the factors that contribute to your health and well-being, including diet, nutritional deficiencies, genetics (including MTHFR and other methylation and Detox genes), hormonal issues (sex hormones, stress hormones, and thyroid hormones), GI issues (there is a primary connection between the gut-brain axis, as well as the gut being the root of our immune system), contribution of toxins to illness, and of course the effects of stress on your health. Due to the extremely comprehensive nature of this program, it takes three visits to arrive at a full understanding of your health situation and derive a targeted treatment plan that incorporates all of these aspects.
- At your initial appointment, you will visit with Dr. Toups to review your in-depth Intake Forms that cover the gamut starting with your mother's pregnancy with you, and extending all the way through the present time. Dr. Toups wants to understand all of the factors in your Timeline that have contributed to your present state of health or illness. At your appointment, she will obtain additional history, and discuss the application of a Functional Medicine approach to your health care problems. She will order appropriate laboratory testing, discuss nutritional/dietary approaches to your healing, and make recommendations for basic supplements personalized for your situation. Please allow at least 3.0 hours for this appointment.
- You will then follow up with Dr. Toups in 2-3 weeks to discuss your initial laboratory results in detail, and create the next phase of your targeted healing plan.
- The third appointment will incorporate results from specialty lab testing, like a Comprehensive Stool Analysis, Cortisol or Melatonin testing, Genetic Testing, Allergy Testing, etc. This appointment generally occurs 2 weeks after Visit 2.
- Note: You are not required to sign up for three appointments up front, but it is helpful for ease of scheduling to consider doing this, especially if you would like to move quickly toward developing a personalized treatment plan for multiple problems.
- Please Note: There is a **one week cancellation policy for new patient appointments**, and a **3 business day cancellation for follow-up appointments** (please see the **CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS** section in this form). We always have a waiting list for people who would like earlier appointments, so this will help us to accommodate them if you are unable to make your scheduled appointment.

## FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE APPOINTMENT FEES

- Initial Consultation is \$1000.
- Follow-up visits with Dr. Toups are \$400.00 for 60 minutes or pro-rated in 15 minute increments (\$200 for 30 minutes, \$300 for 45 minutes, \$500 for 75 minutes, \$600 for 90 minutes)
- Please note that this program is not a typical fee-for-service medical model – rather, it is a transformational program designed to create wellness. Dr. Toups spends many additional hours researching and formulating your case beyond the face-to-face time.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS**

- We accept credit card (MasterCard, VISA, Discover, and American Express), check, or cash payments, and require payment at the time of your visit.
- In addition, you can also use funds from a Health Savings Account (HSA) card.
- When you schedule the initial visit, we request a credit card on file to hold the appointment time for you. No charges will be applied to your credit card unless you miss or cancel an appointment without appropriate notice. Your credit card will be stored encrypted for your privacy.

**BILLING/INSURANCE**

- We will provide you with an itemized SuperBill receipt with traditional ICD-9 diagnosis codes and CPT procedure codes at the completion of your visit that you may submit to your Health Insurance Plan for reimbursement.
- SuperBills are also available on your on-line Patient Portal, so you will always have access to them when you are ready to submit claims to your insurance in the future.
- Dr. Toups is not a contracted provider on any insurance plans, since they will not adequately reimburse for the extensive amount of time it takes to undertake a Functional Medicine assessment.
- However, your fees will generally be reimbursed at the Out-of-Network rates on your Health Insurance Plan, based on what the Insurance Company considers usual and customary fees. Since Dr. Toups is a Medical Doctor, most patients are reimbursed for a portion of their visits.
- Reimbursement also requires that you have met your deductible for the calendar year.
- You can usually obtain claim submission forms on the website of your Insurance Company, and then include the SuperBill receipt we provide with each visit.
- If you would like us to respond to insurance carrier requests for additional information about your claim, Dr. Toups will bill at a pro-rated amount of her hourly fee to submit this information.

**MEDICARE**

- Dr. Toups is not a Medicare provider, which means that you will be unable to bill Medicare for any portion of her services. We will ask that you sign a Medicare Opt-Out contract to indicate your understanding of this policy.
- If you have a Supplemental or Secondary coverage plan, you are allowed to submit your claim to this carrier.
- Dr. Toups has been certified as an Ordering and Referring Physician through Medicare, which means that she is able to order lab tests and make referrals that will be covered if they are allowable Medicare charges.
- Many of the specialty lab tests that Dr. Toups might order on your behalf are covered 100% by Medicare.

**KAISER PATIENTS or PATIENTS WITH NO INSURANCE**

- Dr. Toups has contracted with Cleveland Heart Lab to provide extremely low cost lab testing for patients with Kaiser Insurance or patients without health insurance.
- Health Diagnostics Lab is another good option for patients with Kaiser Insurance.

**OBTAINING PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATIONS or CERTIFICATION LETTERS and FORMS**

- Both Prior Authorizations for non-covered medications and forms or letter-writing can take Dr. Toups some time to complete. She is happy to assist, but will bill a pro-rated amount of her hourly fee to cover the time needed to complete these.

### CONSULTING WITH YOUR OTHER PHYSICIANS

- Dr. Toups is certainly willing to discuss your case, labs, or treatment plan with your other treating clinicians. Please be sure that you have signed a Release of Information form on the Portal for them, and ask your Physician to call or email. (Unfortunately, many mainstream M.D.s are not interested in a Functional Medicine approach, so we find it is best if they contact us if interested.)
- Consultation time will be billed at a pro-rated amount of the hourly rate if this takes more than a brief call.

### PHONE CALLS and MD-HQ PORTAL MESSAGES

- Phone or MD-HQ Portal messages left will be responded to within 2 – 3 days during the work week. We do not have a full-time receptionist available to handle these.
- If you have a Medical Emergency, please do not wait for a return call, but call 911 or go directly to the nearest Emergency Room.
- We prefer MD-HQ Portal messages from our registered patients, as then we both have a copy of your questions and our responses. (Once a new patient schedules an initial appointment, we will set up your online Patient Portal.)
- Both Dr. Toups and her Patient Coordinator (who is trained in HIPPA compliance to protect your confidentiality) are able to see these Portal requests and can respond to them more quickly than phone or email messages.
- The Portal is also a good way to request changes in your appointments or schedule follow-up appointments. Please click on the Appointments Tab in the Portal.
- When leaving a phone message, you can hit Option 1 to leave routine messages. If you have a medical emergency that requires Dr. Toups's immediate attention, you can hit Option 2 and she will be paged with your message. (Please be respectful and reserve this option for emergencies. You can also use this option if you are running late for an appointment or lost for your first appointment.)
- If you do send an email message, please send to the [info@BayAreaWellness.net](mailto:info@BayAreaWellness.net) address. Dr. Toups cannot respond to messages on her personal email – she gets so many emails that they can easily get lost.
- Also, be aware that email messages are not confidential. Our MD-HQ Patient Portal is HIPPA compliant to protect your confidentiality. We prefer receiving messages on the Portal, and they are generally responded to more quickly.
- \*Please Note: **Dr. Toups cannot practice Medicine by email, phone, or Patient Portal.** This includes reviewing labs or making treatment or supplement re-ordering recommendations. If your question requires more than a brief clarification, we ask that you schedule an appointment or phone consultation so that your questions can be given full attention and integration with your entire clinical picture. Piecemeal answers are not an appropriate way to practice Functional Medicine.

### CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS

- We require 7 days notice for cancellation of new patient appointments, and 3 business days notice to cancel or reschedule follow-up appointments.
- **If appropriate notice is not given, we reserve the right to charge your credit card on file for the full cost of the scheduled appointment. Please be aware that holidays and weekends do NOT constitute business days.**
- Due to the time allotted and cost associated with each new patient appointment, the only exceptions to being charged for a **missed new patient appointment** are due to emergencies. We define an emergency as a death in the family or a hospitalization.

- You may cancel your appointment by calling the office at (925) 265-2300, using your Patient Portal at MD-HQ, or emailing [info@BayAreaWellness.net](mailto:info@BayAreaWellness.net). A Portal message is best.
- We generally have a long waiting list and ask that if you know that you need to cancel or reschedule, please let us know as soon as possible so that we may offer your appointment to someone on the waiting list.
- By signing below, you agree to our cancellation policy and authorize Bay Area Wellness to charge your credit card on file for any missed visits.

#### **LATE ARRIVAL APPOINTMENTS**

- We are committed to being on time with patient appointments in order to prevent you from waiting. If you arrive late for your consult, we will need to end your appointment at the scheduled time. You will be charged for the length of the originally scheduled visit.

#### **FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT REMINDERS**

- If you are scheduled for a follow up appointment, we assume you will honor this appointment time unless you notify us otherwise at least 3 business days prior to your scheduled appointment. We will endeavor to send a reminder email from our office about your appointment, but these reminders are a courtesy only. Please know it is your responsibility to remember your appointment date and time.
- When you log onto your patient portal, any upcoming appointments will be noted on the home page. This is a good way to check the date and time if you are unsure.

#### **SMOKING/FRAGRANCES**

- ***Please do not wear any fragrances to your appointment or smoke before your appointment.*** Dr. Toups and many of her patients have fragrance and chemical sensitivities. You may be asked to leave if there is a noticeable presence of fragrance or smoke odor. This includes perfumes, colognes, scented body lotion, deodorant, shampoo and soaps.
- ***Please also advise any friends or family members who plan to accompany you to your appointment.*** Thank you for your consideration.

#### **PRESCRIPTION REFILL REQUESTS**

- For prescription refills, we ask that you send a request for refill via the Portal messaging. Please be specific about the medication strength and how you are taking it.
- **It may take up to 72 business hours to process a prescription refill.** Please note that Dr. Toups is generally not in the office every day to authorize refills, and urgent refill requests may incur a fee. Please plan ahead to avoid any interruptions in your medications – refill requests are best handled at the time of an appointment.

#### **PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN**

- Dr. Toups is a Functional Medicine Psychiatrist, and not a Primary Care Physician or Gynecologist. This means that Dr. Toups is not able to address Urgent Care or Primary Care issues. We recommend that you have a Primary Care Physician.

#### **SUPPLEMENTS**

- Dr. Toups does not sell supplements, but will give access to her patients to order through her supplement accounts. Here you will be able to purchase pharmaceutical grade supplements of the highest quality, and Dr. Toups has negotiated a 10% discount for you, which will make your supplements much less costly than the Health Food Stores. Shipping is only \$1.99 with the deal she has negotiated for you.

- We caution against purchasing supplements from Amazon or other third-party retailers. In addition to being more costly than they will with the discount we provide, there is no quality control about the conditions in which the supplements are stored and transported, or their freshness.

### **LAB TESTING**

- Dr. Toups uses a variety of lab testing options, from conventional labs to state of the art functional medicine testing. The goal of this testing is to understand how your body is working and to discover the root causes of your illness.
- Conventional labs, like those available through Quest, LabCorp, HDL Labs, or Cleveland Heart Lab encompass things like Vitamin D levels, Thyroid testing, sex hormone testing, advanced Lipid Particle Profiles and glucose monitoring, inflammatory markers, MTHFR Folate genetics, salivary cortisol testing, and some vitamin and anti-oxidant levels.
- Dr. Toups endeavors to utilize conventional labs as much as possible, as these are generally covered on a patient's insurance plan.
- As mentioned previously, Dr. Toups has contracts with Cleveland Heart Lab and Health Diagnostics Lab that provide very low-cost lab studies that she can utilize for Kaiser patients or those with no insurance or from out of the country.
- In addition to the conventional testing, Dr. Toups uses a variety of tests from cutting edge Functional Medicine specialty labs, like Doctors Data, Cyrex Labs, Genova/Metametrix, Commonwealth Labs (SIBO Breath testing), RealTime Labs (mold testing), GenoMind (genetic testing), Vitamin Diagnostics, Meridien Valley Labs, and ZRT to name a few.
- We will upload the results of all lab testing to your MD-HQ Patient Portal for your review and access, and you will be able to print these out to share with other clinicians. **Please be advised that you will need to make a follow-up appointment to review the testing results with Dr. Toups and have her make appropriate treatment recommendations.**

### **COPIES OF MEDICAL RECORDS & LABS FROM OUR OFFICE**

- All treatment recommendations and labs will be easily visible in your MD-HQ Patient Portal.
- To access your portal, go to [toups.MD-HQ.com](http://toups.MD-HQ.com)
- In addition to your labs and all visit note recommendations, you can also print out a list of your supplements and medications. Our patients tell us they love this Patient Portal, and find it very easy to negotiate and helpful.
- This access means you can easily print out all of your information to share with your other treating providers.
- If you need us to send records to another provider, a \$35 fee will be charged to cover our staff time and faxing or mailing the records.

### **MEDICAL RECORDS FROM OTHER DOCTORS/CLINICS/HOSPITALS**

- We respect your privacy. Medical records or information about you can only be released with your written authorization. You can access the Release of Information forms on your MD-HQ Patient Portal. Please also sign a Release for any family members that you wish Dr. Toups to speak with. If you are currently in Psychotherapy, please sign the Therapy Co-Treatment release form.
- You can sign these Release forms directly on the computer by using your mouse (or your finger with the newer computers and I-pads). Don't forget to hit "Submit" after you sign!
- **We ask that you take the responsibility to obtain previous medical records from other physicians or health care providers that you wish Dr. Toups to review.** If you feel your medical records are pertinent to your appointment, please contact your physician or other

health care provider to obtain these records and make sure that we have received them at least 3 days prior to your initial appointment. If you have a copy, you can upload them directly to your Portal.

- **It is especially helpful if you obtain copies of any lab results you have from the previous year** and upload these into your Portal for Dr. Toups to review.
- Your medical records can be faxed or mailed to: (925) 265-2301 Fax  
Kat Toups, MD, DFAPA  
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2900 Camino Diablo Suite 200  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
- Please note that if you have an extensive amount of medical records and labs for Dr. Toups to review, this may take extra time that could be subject to additional fees. Dr. Toups is very conscientious about studying all of the details of these records, and this sometimes adds a substantial amount of extra time above the hour that she allots to review your Intake forms.

#### **ACCESSING YOUR MD-HQ PATIENT PORTAL**

- To register, please go to [toups.MD-HQ.com/set\\_password](https://toups.MD-HQ.com/set_password)
- Once registered, you can access the portal in the future at [toups.MD-HQ.com](https://toups.MD-HQ.com)
- If you forget your password, please go to [https://toups.MD-HQ.com/reset\\_password](https://toups.MD-HQ.com/reset_password)
- Please make sure you keep your Personal Info, your Insurance Info (useful if I fax in a prescription or order labs for you), your Credit Card info, and your Pharmacy info in the Portal up-to-date. Please designate your preferred phone number.

#### **OUT OF TOWN PATIENTS**

- In order to establish a Doctor-Patient relationship, as well as to comply with California State Medical Board requirements, you will need to be seen in person for the first visit.
- After the initial appointment, Dr. Toups is able to conduct follow-up appointments by phone.
- If you are coming from out-of-town, please let us know and we will be glad to help with hotel recommendations. We are closest to the Oakland International Airport (OAK), but San Francisco (SFO) is also accessible at 50 minutes away. Downtown San Francisco is 25 minutes without commute traffic.

**Wishing you all the best,**

**Kat Toups, MD, DFAPA and Bay Area Wellness**

**Please read the following, and sign both agreements below to indicate your consent:**

## **Bay Area Wellness Policies**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to the policies of Bay Area

Wellness. I give full consent for my Functional Medicine evaluation and provision of treatment as necessary by Kat Toups, MD, DFAPA. If I have any questions about the Policy information, or about anything related to my treatment, I will discuss this with Dr. Toups.

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Print name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Functional Medicine Agreement**

In Functional Medicine, we focus on treating the whole patient and the root causes of illness, with the goal of restoring health. In Functional Medicine, our approach is different. In traditional Medicine, the emphasis is on treating a particular disease, rather than the underlying causes of that disease. It is important that you understand that we use dietary and lifestyle interventions as part of a Functional Medicine treatment to manage medical conditions. This means that you will need to actively participate in your healthcare plan and do your best to make the lifestyle changes recommended, rather than to simply take a pill that your doctor prescribes.

This is not the common way that health issues are managed in most conventional medical practices, therefore it is not the traditional standard of care. In traditional medicine, there is often unfortunately not a consideration of the whole person and the inter-connectedness of their multiple health issues. Often prescription medications are the first or main treatment. Frequently these medications are treating the symptoms but not the underlying problems. Functional Medicine approaches your health with the goal of treating the causes and thus improving function. In choosing Functional Medicine, you are selecting to combine the use of conventional with complementary and alternative medicine methods to manage your health.

Functional Medicine is based on science from the medical literature. However, it can be considered complementary and alternative medicine. We want you to be informed of this and consent to this type of treatment.

### **Functional Medicine Agreement**

I have been informed, and agree to a Functional Medicine approach to manage my health.

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Print name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_