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OFFICE UPDATE 2023

Oh what a year! This has been a year for the ages for my family and it is not over yet. It has been a while since I have written a letter or sent a blast to you. “Too busy to write” as my kids used to say when they were at sleepover camp years ago. Now that I have tweaked your interest, I will make you wait until the end of this letter to read about my busy and eventful year, both personally and professionally.

OFFICE UPDATE:

1. Our office is back to pre-pandemic policy. Most appointments now should really be in-person. A new requirement from the Ministry of Health is that in order to have a virtual appointment, you must have been seen in the office within the past 2 years. Virtual appoin

2. We have a new member of our physician team! I would like to introduce you to Dr. Naomi Driman. Dr. Driman is well known to our office as she was a previous resident trainee having graduated in 2008. She has worked for several years elsewhere but has decided to “come home” to continue her family medicine career.

2. We continue to have an online appointment booking system that allows you to make your own appointment. This has worked very well so far for those of you who have taken advantage of this technology. It is only an option for you. Each appointment is relatively brief, so do not expect to be given all the time you need if you have multiple concerns. If you feel more comfortable speaking to my staff on the phone as you have done historically, please do so. To access our online appointment booking page, here is the link.

<https://www.lesliemedical.com/>

Go to the top of the page where it says *On-Line Booking*, click on it and then *Dr. Kahane*. You can only book appointment between 48 hours – 2 weeks in advance.

- If you need an urgent appointment within 48 hours, call the office directly.
- If you need an appointment time slot that is not listed in the menu options, call the office directly, as I am in the office at other times of the day other than those listed online.
- You can choose in-person or virtual appointments. If your concerns primarily involve chat/mental health or to get advice and do not require a physical examination it best to choose virtual. If you have a concern that will clearly require a physical examination (abdominal pain, rash, PAPs, infant and children check-ups, any joint pain) it is best to choose in-person.
- If you are not sure what type of appointment you need, call the office and my receptionist can help you.

Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm, our office staff is available to answer your calls. Our receptionists, Tara, TJ and Wendy, have been exceptional. Please do not hesitate to reach out to them if you need to make an appointment.

3. Please note that we are NOT doing "Physicals", nor have we been for many years. They are now called "Health Reviews" and focus on history, preventative care, vaccinations, and lab and radiology investigations. As I have said before in my broadcasts, DO NOT wait for a Health Review to address all of your medical concerns or questions.

4. Please note that EAR SYRINGING for wax removal is no longer covered under OHIP regardless of the cause (pain, hearing loss, for hearing aids). Our office is charging \$25 for ear syringing regardless of one ear or both, and how often you may need it.

5. You know by now that I strive to have same day/next day appointments for those of you in urgent need. Please do not call at 3 pm and expect to be seen that day. I continue to have one late day per week which is Thursday for those specifically who need to come after work/school.

6. With such open access to myself, and my office, I still do not tolerate anyone's use of walk-in clinics due to "convenience" or proximity to your home/work. I STRONGLY discourage the use of in-person, telephone and virtual walk-ins. If you need assistance, call my office. If it is that urgent that you can't wait 24 hours, go to an Emergency department.

COVID-19 Update:

1. Covid is still here. BA.2.86 is the latest variant and as many of you already know, it is making a significant comeback in our community. BA.5 is also prevalent. Both are highly contagious even if you have had COVID infection already. Be vigilant as their clinical symptoms appear more severe than previous strains for many people.
2. If you believe you may have symptoms of COVID-19, do NOT come to my office! Stay home and isolate according to current guidelines. Wear a mask to protect others around you.
3. If you are in one of the following categories, you may qualify for antiviral treatment. Here is the link to help guide your eligibility. If you qualify for treatment, contact my office as soon as possible. Most fully vaccinated (3 or more COVID vaccines) people do NOT qualify unless they are over 70 years of age regardless of when they have received their last dose.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-treatments>

You may be at higher risk if you are:

- over 18 years old and immunocompromised (have an immune system that is weakened by a health condition or medications);
- over 70 years old;
- **over 60** years old with **fewer than three vaccine doses**;
- **over 18** years old with **fewer than three vaccine doses** and at least one of the following risk conditions:
 - obesity
 - diabetes
 - heart disease, hypertension, congestive heart failure
 - chronic respiratory disease (including cystic fibrosis)
 - cerebral palsy
 - intellectual or developmental disabilities
 - sickle cell disease
 - moderate or severe kidney disease
 - moderate or severe liver disease
 - pregnant and unvaccinated (zero doses)

Influenza Update:

With the influenza season approaching, there is a lot of discussion in the medical community on how to prevent and manage this flu season. To keep you healthy and safe, it is strongly recommended that you receive the flu shot this year. With Public Health guidance, we will work to deliver the flu shot in a safe and efficient way. Please visit our website <https://www.lesliemedical.com> for updates about our flu clinics and office practices. We are tentatively scheduled to offer **flu shots at our office on Saturday November 4 from 9am – noon**. There is some talk about flu shots being available early this year. Stay tuned as the above date may change.

RSV Vaccine:

Yes, there is a new RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) vaccine approved in Canada. Arexvy, an RSV vaccine, has been authorized for use in Canada for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease caused by RSV in adults 60 years of age and older. The cost is around \$300 for the one shot (NOT be covered under OHIP – except to those in long term care home). It appears the vaccine works only for 2 years/seasons and will then need to be repeated. The vaccine is available now in short supply. If you are interested, please make an appointment to discuss first. We hope to have access to some of the vaccine soon.

Teaching in our Office:

Even in the midst of the pandemic, it is still important to teach our medical students and residents to be excellent physicians. As you know, I am passionate about teaching. Our residents, Dr. Emily Bryson and Dr. Aaron Zahavi, are excited to be part of your care team.

Thank you for allowing them to learn from you by including them in your care. You are an integral part in their education and a key element in making them competent and responsible physicians. Please note that our students are always closely supervised by me.

Annual Fee:

The Ministry of Health continues to delist services that would typically be covered by OHIP and are making them patient-pay. Ear wax syringing, wart treatment (location dependent), any benign skin lesion, prescription renewal by phone, sick notes, completion of government forms. Many of these services are either waived or significantly discounted for patients who chose to pay our annual fee.

We have maintained a fee schedule for uninsured services that is in alignment with OMA policy and recommendations. For further details, please review the uninsured services fee guide included with this letter. There are two ways you may address these fees. To provide peace of mind to you, and to assist me in minimizing administrative costs of billing each service individually, I ask that you consider paying the Annual Fee, often referred to as a “block fee”, which covers uninsured services for one year. This method appears to be preferred by many of my patients. The decision to enroll in the Annual Fee Program will help reduce the amount of time the office staff spends sending out individual invoices, allowing more time to provide patient care. For this, I am grateful. It can also amount to substantial savings if unexpected needs arise over the year.

The 2023/2024 Annual Fees are: \$150 for an individual, \$275 for a couple, \$300 for a family (including kids < 21).

If you decide not to participate in this offer, we will bill you per service and the charges will be due by your next appointment.

You can pay any of our fees by cheque (payable to ‘Steven Kahane Medicine Professional Corporation’), or by calling our office with your credit card number, or online by visiting <http://www.lesliemedical.com/kahane>.

Personal Update:

So, here is where I see how many of you have taken the time to read all the way through.....

What a year!

The highlight was clearly the wedding of our daughter Brittany to her longtime best friend Derek in early July. It is hard to believe how we spent an entire year planning for an 18 hour day. However, the day was perfect from weather, to venue, to a great party had by all – including an epic father-daughter dance for the ages.

Brittany and Derek have been playing Quadball (yes this is a sport) since their university days and have continued to play competitively for the Toronto Raiders in the Major League Quadball

association. They both also made it onto Team Canada and represented Canada at the World Quadball Championship in Richmond, Virginia. The tournament was literally the week following their wedding! So much for a honeymoon...

We also were fortunate to have the ability to travel this year. We went to Cuba, the Azores, Richmond Virginia (see above) and our family finally went White Water Rafting in the Grand Canyon in early August after being delayed since 2020 due to COVID-19. My son Aidan and I celebrated 20 years of father-son camping last week up in Algonquin. I think we are staying home for a while!

Wendy and I are doing great. Busy year for both of us. So happy to be able to celebrate good times together along with our family and friends. Aidan is still at home and working with the same company for the past few years as a packaging design specialist.

For me, I feel great. I continue cycling and hiking as much as possible.

Final Thoughts:

The main theme for this Annual Letter is “Good Times, Great Memories”. It is time to stop blaming COVID for ignoring your health, fitness, weight, mood and everything else you may have neglected since March 2020 and beyond. If you haven’t done the preventative tests as recommended, I urge you to do so. (This includes PAPs, Mammograms, Colon Cancer Screening, Bone Density Scans, etc) If you haven’t spoken or seen me in a while, it is up to you to take the initiative and reach out.

It is time to focus on your whole self. Work on improving your personal fitness level, as exercise is great for your body, mind and soul. If you are concerned about any aspect of your health that we haven’t discussed, contact me. I care about you and your health.

That's it for now. More to come as the need arises. Once we hear how flu, COVID and RSV vaccines will be rolled out, I will send another email.

Wishing you continued good health,

Steven Kahane BSc, MD, CCFP, FCFP