

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are writing to inform you about an important aspect of our clinical practice: routine depression screening for children aged 12 and above. Depression is a common yet serious illness that affects nearly 1 in 8 teenagers and young adults every year in the United States. It can significantly impact your child's thoughts, feelings, and behavior, leading to difficulties at home and school. Early identification, accurate diagnosis, and treatment can make a significant difference in the outcomes and life trajectory of these young individuals.

At the office, we have incorporated routine depression screening as part of every well visit for children aged 12 years and above. The tool we use for this screening is the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2), a validated and reliable tool for detecting depression. PHQ-2 is a quick and simple two-question test, which helps us to identify whether your child is experiencing any depressive symptoms that require further evaluation. Importantly, this screening is a recommended quality measure by insurance companies, underlining its significance in promoting mental health.

We understand that medical costs can be a concern. It's important to note that some insurance plans may not cover the cost of the PHQ-2 screening, or they may apply it to your deductible. However, we firmly believe that the benefits of this low cost screening in promoting your child's mental health far outweigh the potential costs.

We are committed to providing the highest quality care and will work with you to understand your insurance coverage and discuss any potential out-of-pocket costs. If you have any questions or concerns about your insurance coverage or the cost of the PHQ-2 screening, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you do not want your child screened, please let the staff know at your child's well visit. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter, and thank you for entrusting us with your child's healthcare.

Drs. Maxey, Chugani & Ference