

## ***PLEASE KEEP IN MIND:***

- All appointments with the psychiatrist are made through your counselor by calling 227-7469. **YOU are responsible for scheduling follow-up appointments and attending counseling sessions as directed.**
  
- Be sure to **schedule follow-up appointments well in advance, especially if you will be needing refills of your medication** or want to continue your medication and/or transfer your medication management care during school breaks (including summer).
  
- Discuss any questions about your medication usage as well as options for services during the semester. Contact your therapist if you have any additional questions or concerns regarding your psychiatric services.
  
- If psychiatric services are needed and desired beyond what is available or recommended at the Counseling Center,  
  
Seek treatment at WCU's Health Center (227-7640) with their physicians at no cost (while enrolled as a student) or  
  
Seek treatment with the psychiatrist or physician of your choice in surrounding areas or near your permanent home.

# Referral to Psychiatrist: Important Information



**Western Carolina University**  
**Counseling and Psychological Services**

Division of Student Affairs  
Western Carolina University  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Bird Building, Cullowhee, NC 28723  
Phone: (828) 227-7469; Fax: (828) 227-7004  
**CounselingCenter.wcu.edu**

**You have been referred to consult with our psychiatrist, Tony Bird, M.D.,** for further assessment and treatment recommendations. Dr. Bird works closely with our staff to devise a comprehensive treatment plan which ideally will assist you in addressing the issues that brought you to counseling. Dr. Bird's psychiatric appointments are scheduled one day each week during fall and spring semesters.

**As an enrolled Western student, you are eligible for** assessment and follow-up sessions. All appointments with the psychiatrist will be charged to your health insurance. Your initial visit with Dr. Bird will last approximately 60 minutes; if additional consultations are scheduled, these sessions will usually last approximately 20 minutes. As part of your treatment plan, Dr. Bird may prescribe medication. If you choose to take medication under Dr. Bird's care, please be aware of the following:

- **To ensure effective coordination of your health care,** Dr. Bird's recommendations, diagnostic assessment, and/or other specific information related to the medication evaluation, will be routinely sent to the university Health Center. Since most university psychiatric services are housed in university health centers, this coordination of communication around medically-relevant treatment will strengthen the quality of care you receive from both the Health Center and the Counseling and Psychological Services Center.
- **Dr. Bird will need to meet with you for follow-up appointments to assess your progress on the medication.** It is *your* responsibility to schedule these appointments (as well as your counseling appointments) according to the time frame and treatment plan recommended. Also, since his time on campus is very limited, it is vital that you schedule appointments well in advance. Follow-up appointments can be scheduled in person or by calling 227-7469.
- **It is important that you have a clear understanding of how to use the medication.** Please make sure to fully discuss with Dr. Bird any concerns about your medication. Issues such as dosage, daily schedules, when to take the medication, side effects, use of alcohol/other drugs while on medication, when and how to discontinue the medication, etc., are important and should be clearly understood by you.

- **Your therapist will serve as your primary contact person between psychiatric appointments.** If you have any concerns about the medication you are taking, please bring these issues up with your therapist. When necessary, your therapist will contact Dr. Bird to consult about your situation and determine appropriate action, which could include a referral to Health Services.
- **In order to participate in psychiatric services, we require students to concurrently participate in regularly scheduled counseling.** Research has shown that for a majority of concerns, combining medication treatment with ongoing psychotherapy is most effective for making progress and preventing relapse. In some cases, Dr. Bird may decide that ongoing medication management alone is sufficient; if this is your situation, you may choose not to continue therapy. However, your previous therapist will remain your contact person with respect to medication issues, and you will be required to see your therapist for at least one initial appointment (intake) per academic year. Failure to attend counseling sessions as directed above may result in cancellation of your next psychiatric visit.
- **As noted above, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that you have adequate medication and medication refills.** Because Dr. Bird is generally not available over the summer and during school breaks, it is *your* responsibility to ensure that you have an adequate supply of medication/medication refills to cover these periods. If you require a prescription renewal, you will need to schedule an appointment with Dr. Bird before you leave campus; again, make sure to schedule your appointment well in advance.
- **Except in emergency situations,** all sessions occur during the hours Dr. Bird is at this Center. For emergencies, contact your CPS counselor to determine appropriateness and coordinate care. If your situation involves an urgent health risk, go to the closest emergency room. Before being discharged from the ER, authorize the hospital staff to coordinate aftercare with your CPS counselor and Dr. Bird and schedule follow-up appointments accordingly.
- **Finally, please honor your appointment time.** Dr. Bird is usually booked with a full schedule, so please arrive on time. If you cannot keep your appointment, call us as soon as possible to reschedule. **If you fail to cancel appointments 24 hours in advance or no-show your appointment, you will be personally charged for that session.**

