

Appointment Availability

Did you know that Health Plans frequently call to check that your office is complying with appointment availability agreements? As a reminder, as a contracted provider, you have agreed to maintain the following availability standards:

 <h2>Emergency Care</h2> <p>Requires immediate face-to-face medical attention</p> <p><i>Call 911 or go to the nearest ER</i></p>	<p>Medical care for a condition that, without immediate treatment, could result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placing the member’s life or general health in severe jeopardy • Causing severe impairment in one or more bodily function(s) • Causing severe dysfunction of one or more body organ(s) or parts <p>Examples of emergency conditions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seizure • Stab/gunshot wound • Diabetic coma • Cardiac arrest • Meningitis • Obvious fracture
 <h2>Urgent Care</h2> <p>Requires timely face-to-face medical attention within 24 hours</p>	<p>Medical care given for a condition that, without timely treatment, could result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deteriorating into an emergency • Causing prolonged impairment of bodily functions • Developing a chronic illness <p>Examples of urgent conditions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal pain of unknown cause • Unremitting new symptoms of dizziness • Suspected fracture
 <h2>Non-Urgent Care</h2> <p>Requires face-to-face medical attention within 48 to 72 hours</p>	<p>Medical care given for a condition that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not emergent or urgent in nature • A delay of several hours would NOT increase the likelihood of an adverse outcome <p>Examples of non-urgent sick visit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold symptoms • Sore throat • Nasal congestion
 <h2>Primary Care</h2> <p>Requires a face-to-face visit within 4 weeks</p>	<p>Medical care given to diagnose and treat conditions to prevent deterioration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize/reduce risk of development of chronic illness • Minimize the need for complex treatments • Help prevent health problems before symptoms appear <p>Examples of routine primary care visits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccines • Breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings • Blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol tests

24 Hour Coverage Requirements: All network practitioners must be available, directly or through coverage arrangements, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Availability must be by live voice direct to the practitioner or covering practitioner, or via an answering service that can reach the practitioner or covering practitioner. If an answering machine is used, it must provide an option for the member to directly contact the practitioner or covering practitioner in case of emergencies. An answering machine cannot simply refer the member to an emergency room unless it is a life-threatening issue.