



An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

**ACCESS TO CARE STANDARDS  
FOR ALL PRODUCTS IN ALL LINES OF BUSINESS -  
EXCLUDING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID  
SPECIALISTS INCLUDING NON-MD SPECIALISTS**

The following Access to Care Standards for Specialists has been established by the BCBSNC Physician Advisory Group. Non-MD specialists are chiropractors (DC), podiatry (DPM), physical therapy (PT), speech therapy (ST), and occupational therapy (OT).

**1. Waiting time for appointment:**

**a. Urgent - not life threatening, but a problem needing care within 24 hours**

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Pediatrics</b> | within 48 hours |
| <b>Adults</b>     | within 48 hours |

**b. Regular:**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Pediatrics</b> | (e.g., tube referral) - within 2 weeks  |
| <b>Adults</b>     | <u>SUB-ACUTE PROBLEM</u> (of short duration): within 2 weeks<br><u>CHRONIC PROBLEM</u> (needs long time for consultation): within 4 weeks |

**2. Time in waiting room (minutes):**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>(A) Scheduled</b> | after 30 minutes, patient must be given an update on waiting time with an option of waiting or rescheduling appointment; maximum waiting time = 60 minutes      |
| <b>(B) Work-ins</b>  | (called that day prior to coming)<br><br>Pediatrics and Adults - after 45 minutes, patient must be given an update on waiting time with an option of waiting or |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | rescheduling; maximum waiting time = 90 minutes |
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**3. After Hours Calls and Coverage**

**a. Response time returning call after-hours:**

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>A(1) Urgent</b>     | 20 minutes |
| <b>B(2) Not Urgent</b> | 1 hour     |

**b. Coverage**

Practice has a recorded telephone message instructing the patient to call 911 or go to the ER for any life threatening event and to refer them to the physician on-call or to an answering service.

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>(A) Daytime hours/week</b>  | 40 hours/week        |
| <b>(B) Night hours/weekend</b> | 24 hour/day coverage |

**4. Language**

Interpreter services are available either in the practice, with a contracted interpreter phone line or through hospital interpreter services.

**5. Office Hours:** Indicates hours during which appropriate personnel is available to care for members.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>(A) Daytime hours/weeks</b> | 15 hours/week minimum covering at least 4 days |
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GOAL: 100% compliance

- Definitions of "Regular" appointments:
  - **Pediatrics:** any pediatric patient with a non emergent, non urgent condition being referred to a non-MD provider
  - **Adult Sub-acute problem:** any problem which, if treated appropriately, should be of short duration
  - **Adult Chronic problem:** any problem which will requiring a long period of care to reach resolution

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