

KanCare | Healthy Blue

Kansas | Healthy Blue | Medicaid

Appointment access and availability training

Agenda

- Purpose of the standards
- Audit purpose and frequency
- Appointment availability standards
- After-hours access standards
- Unacceptable practices
- Attestation completion

Purpose of the standards

To maintain a high standard of care by ensuring patients receive timely access to treatment and that care providers adhere to appointment availability and after-hours access standards.

We require network providers to meet our appointment availability and after-hours access standards to help guarantee members can access care when they need it.

Audit purpose and frequency

To secure and maintain NCQA accreditation and comply with state contract requirements, MCOs must audit care provider adherence to the appointment availability and after-hours access standards and requirements.

We conduct the survey annually, depending on the market or state contract.

The audit highlights non-compliance and areas for improvement to support corrective action planning or state reporting.

Appointment availability standards

Care provider type	Covered services	Access standards
[All care providers	Emergency care	Immediate; available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
PCPs	Urgent care	Shall not exceed 48 hours of request for services
	Routine care	Shall not exceed three weeks from day of request
	Adult physical; Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT); well-child	Shall not exceed three weeks from day of request
Specialists	Urgent care	Shall not exceed 48 hours of request for services
	Routine care	Shall not exceed three weeks from day of request
Behavioral health (BH)	Urgent BH	Assessed within 72 hours of a request for service
	Routine BH	Assessed within 10 business days of the date the services are requested
Substance use disorder (SUD)	Urgent SUD	Assessed within 24 hours of request for services; services shall be delivered within 24 hours of the assessment
	Routine SUD	Assessed within two weeks from day of the request
	Pregnant SUD and people who inject drugs (PWID)	Services provided within 24 hours of assessment or 48 hours of initial contact, to include prenatal care.
	PWID	Assessment and shall be admitted for treatment no later than two weeks of request for assessment
Obstetrician (OB)	First trimester	Within three weeks from day of request
	Second trimester	Within two weeks from day of request
	Third trimester	Within one week from day of request
	High risk	Please report average time for appointment (no specific standard).
Pediatric dental (PD)	Routine care	Shall not exceed three weeks from day of request
All care providers	After-hours referrals	24 hours a day, 7 days a week]

Appointment availability standards, also known as access standards, are guidelines or regulations that provide directives regarding the timely provision of healthcare.

These standards specify the timeframe within which patients should be able to receive care, depending on the severity of their condition or the type of care needed.

After-hours access standards

After normal business hours
The office telephone is answered by a recording in both English and Spanish. The recorded message(s) should direct the patient to call another number to reach the PCP or another care provider or network designated by the PCP. Someone must be available to answer the designated care provider's telephone; another recording is not acceptable.

After normal business hours — calls are transferred
The office telephone is transferred to another location where the person answering calls can contact the PCP or designated network medical practitioner who must return the call within 30 minutes.

After normal business hours — answering service
The office telephone is answered by an answering service equipped to contact the PCP or another designated network medical practitioner. All calls handled by an answering service must be returned within 30 minutes. The answering service must have both English and Spanish language capabilities.

Practices that do not meet standards

Care providers may not use discriminatory practices such as demonstrating a preference to other insured or private-pay patients (for example, including separate waiting rooms, hours of operation, or appointment days). We routinely monitor care providers' adherence to access standards.

The phone response protocols below are examples of noncompliance:

- Answering the office telephone only during office hours
- Answering the office telephone after-hours with a recording that directs patients to go to the emergency room for needed services or to leave a message
- Returning after-hours calls outside a 30-minute timeframe

Next steps

In accordance with the state contract requirements for appointment accessibility, Healthy Blue must enforce access and other network standards. We will take appropriate action with care providers whose performance is determined to be out of compliance.

Upon completion of the training, please attest within 72 hours that the course has been completed and send the signed form to providerinquiry@healthybluekansas.com.

The attestation page can be found at: AppointmentAvailabilityAttestationForm.pdf.





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