



Timely Access to Care

# Improve Your Patients' Experience with Timely Access

Make appointments or respond to patients within regulatory standards

Appointment wait time standards<sup>1</sup> must be met by primary care physicians (PCPs) or specialty care physicians (SCPs). Your patients have the right to appointments within these standards.

|  Appointment |  Access standard |
|---|---|
| <b>Urgent care</b>  |   |
| Urgent care appointment <b>with PCP</b>   | Within <b>24 hours</b> of request   |
| Urgent care appointment <b>with SCP</b>   | Within <b>24 hours</b> of request   |
| Urgent care appointment <b>with non-physician mental health provider</b>                      | Within <b>24 hours</b> of request   |
| <b>Non-urgent</b>   |   |
| Non-urgent care appointment <b>with PCP</b>   | Within <b>7 business days</b> of request  |
| Non-urgent care appointment <b>with SCP</b>   | Within <b>7 business days</b> of request  |
| Non-urgent care appointment <b>with non-physician mental health provider</b>                  | Within <b>6 business days</b> of request  |
| Appointment for <b>specialty care</b>   | Within <b>30 business days</b> of request   |

(continued)



In-office wait time for scheduled appointments must not exceed 15 minutes.

<sup>1</sup>The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) require health plans to assess and report availability by contracted providers.

## Directing patients to the appropriate after-hours care can:

- **Reduce improper** use of emergency room services.
- **Improve** health outcomes.

Be sure to discuss after-hours and weekend access to care during your first visit with each patient and at least yearly.

|  <b>After-hours access</b> |  <b>Standard</b> |
|---|---|
| <b>Emergency care</b>   | <b>Call 911</b> or go to the emergency room.  |
| <b>Urgent care</b>  | <b>Call the provider's office</b> 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.                                  |

Scripts are available so you can tell your patients how to access timely care when they call after business hours. Sample scripts can be found in the provider portal.

|  <b>Phone response</b> |  <b>Standard</b> |
|---|---|
| Phone <b>answer time at provider's office</b>   | Answer calls within <b>30 seconds</b> .   |

### Non-emergency timely access standards for behavioral health services through MHN

|  <b>Access type</b>      |  <b>Standard</b> |
|---|---|
| Access to <b>urgent care</b> (that does not require prior authorization) with a behavioral health provider  | Within <b>48 hours</b>  |
| Access to <b>urgent care</b> (that requires prior authorization) with a behavioral health provider          | Within <b>96 hours</b>  |
| Access to <b>non-urgent</b> appointment with non-physician behavioral health care provider for routine care | Within <b>10 business days</b> of request   |
| Access to <b>non-urgent</b> appointment with psychiatrist for routine care                                  | Within <b>15 business days</b> of request   |



**Reminder:** Interpreter services must be available at the time of the appointment.

To request interpreter services for members, contact **866-999-3945**.



Check out the Provider Manual for more information.

#### **Follow these steps:**

Log on to **www.wellcare.com/California/Providers/Medicare**. Select *Resources*, and then you will be directed to a page where you can download a PDF document of the Provider Manual.