

# Enhancing Patient Experience Through Timely Access

Meeting appointment wait time standards

*Primary care physicians (PCPs), practitioners and specialists<sup>1</sup> must follow rules about how quickly patients get appointments. It is important to ensure that appointments or responses to patients are made within regulatory guidelines.*

By following these requirements, physicians, practitioners and other providers help guarantee timely access to care and improve the overall patient experience.

## Medicare appointment standards for primary, specialty and behavioral health care

Appointment standards for primary and specialty care	
Type of care	Standard
Emergency care	Immediately
Urgent care	Appointment within 24 hours of request
Sick care (services that are not emergency or urgently needed, but the enrollee requires medical attention)	Appointment within 7 business days of request
Routine care and preventive care	Appointment within 30 business days of request
Rescheduling of appointments	Must be promptly rescheduled in a way that ensures continuity of care and meets the patient's needs, consistent with professional standards

(continued)



<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.

Behavioral health appointments	
Type of care	Standard
Access for life-threatening emergency	Immediately
Non-life-threatening emergency	Within 6 hours
Urgent care appointment with non-physician mental healthcare provider or mental healthcare physician (psychiatrist) that does not require prior authorization	Appointment within 48 business hours of request
Urgent care appointment with non-physician mental healthcare provider or mental healthcare physician (psychiatrist) that requires prior authorization	Appointment within 96 business hours of request
Non-urgent care appointment with non-physician mental healthcare provider	Appointment within 10 business days of request
Non-urgent appointment mental healthcare physician (psychiatrist)	Appointment within 15 business days of request
Non-urgent care follow-up appointment with non-physician mental healthcare provider	Appointment within 10 business days of request
Rescheduling of appointments	Must be promptly rescheduled in a way that ensures continuity of care and meets the patient's needs, consistent with professional standards

**Check out the Provider Library for more details.**

**Follow these steps:**

- 1** Go to **providerlibrary.healthnetcalifornia.com**.
- 2** **Select** a line of business.
- 3** **Select** *Provider Manual > Provider Oversight > Service and Quality Requirements > Access to Care and Availability Standards.*

## Qualified Advanced Access Providers are automatically compliant!

PCPs and other qualified primary care providers who become Qualified Advanced Access Providers with Wellcare By Health Net (Health Net\*) will automatically be compliant for urgent and non-urgent appointment standards for the Plan's annual Provider Appointment Availability Survey for the next three years!

**Do you or your PCPs offer same-day scheduling?** Contact us at [Access.Availability.PNM@healthnet.com](mailto:Access.Availability.PNM@healthnet.com).



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

To **request interpreter services** for your **Wellcare By Health Net patients**, contact **Wellcare By Health Net at 800-929-9224**.

**Behavioral health providers** should call **800-647-7526**. Both numbers are available **Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time (not available after hours)**.

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