



## Policy and Procedure

Policy Name:	Telephone Protocol When Staff Not Available/After Hours		
Effective Date:		Revision Date:	
Department(s)/Site(s):			
Document Owners:			
Approved By:			
Relevant Law/Standard:	California Department of Health Care Services under Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 53230. (Requires the review and certification of Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) sites.)  Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) All Plan Letter 20-006, Site Reviews: Facility Site Review and Medical Record Review		

**Purpose:**

Physician coverage is available and accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Effective clinic office management supports the provision of appropriate, coordinated health care services. The review of clinic office management is to evaluate if effective systems are in place and whether site personnel appropriately follow established site-specific procedures.

**Definition:**

Current clinic office hours are posted within the office or readily available upon request. Current site-specific resource information is available to site personnel about physician office hour schedule(s), local and/or Plan-specific systems for after-hours urgent care, emergent physician coverage available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, and system for providing follow-up care. When a physician is not on site during regular office hours, personnel are able to contact the physician (or covering physician) at all times by telephone, cell phone, pager, etc.

**Policy:**

The site will have a provision for appropriate, coordinated health care services twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

**Procedure:**

1. The staff will ensure that current clinic office hours are posted within the office or readily available upon request.
2. The PCP will ensure that current site-specific resource information is available to site personnel about physician office hour schedule(s), local and/or Plan-specific systems for after-hours urgent care, emergent physician coverage available 24 hours a day, 7days per week, and system for providing follow-up care.

**After Hour Sample Script (see Appendix A)**

_____	_____
First Name Last Name – Title	Date
_____	_____
First Name Last Name – Title	Date

The material in this document is a knowledge-sharing tool provided by the FSR team to enhance compliance with Facility Site Review requirements. All content is for informational purposes and may be used and/or modified according to site-specific practices. Ensure appropriate review and approval by site management prior to adoption.

## AFTER HOURS SAMPLE SCRIPT

One of the following scripts may be used by your medical group as a template for ensuring members have access to timely medical care after normal business hours.

### I. CALLS ANSWERED BY A LIVE VOICE (E.G. ANSWERING SERVICE OR CENTRALIZED TRIAGE):

If the caller believes the situation is an emergency, advise the caller to call 911 immediately.

If the caller believes the situation is an emergency, advise the caller to call 911 immediately or proceed to the nearest Emergency Room or Urgent Care Center. Give the address of the Emergency Room or Urgent Care.

If the member indicates a need to speak with a physician, facilitate the contact with the physician by:

- a) Putting the caller on hold momentarily and then connecting the caller the on-call physician, or
- b) Get the members number and advise a physician will call them back within the hour, or
- c) Giving the caller the pager number for the on-call physician and advising them to call back if they have not heard from the physician within one hour.
- d) If a member indicates a need for interpreter services, facilitate the contact by accessing interpreter services.

### II. CALLS ANSWERED BY AN ANSWERING MACHINE

If this is an emergency, please hang up and call 911 immediately.

Hello, you have reached (Name of the Doctor/Medical Group). If you wish to speak with the physician on-call,

- a) Please hold and you will be connected to (dr.name)\_\_\_\_\_.
- b) You may reach the on-call doctor directly by calling\_\_\_\_\_.
- c) Please call\_\_\_\_\_. The doctor will be paged and you may expect a return call within one hour. If you do not hear from the doctor within one hour, please go to the Urgent Care Center or the nearest Emergency Room if an Urgent Care Center is not available.
- d) Our urgent Care Center is located at \_\_\_\_\_.

[Appropriate language options should be provided for the location.]

**IMPORTANT:** Effective telephone service after normal business hours provides for callers to reach a live voice or answering machine within 45 seconds.

## Sample On-Call Provider Schedule and Contact Numbers

January				
Day	Scheduled MD On-Call	Contact Number	Alternate MD On-Call	Alternate Contact Number
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
<b>After Hours</b>				
Day	Scheduled MD On-Call	Contact Number	Alternate MD On-Call	Alternate Contact Number
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
<b>After Hours</b>				
Day	Scheduled MD On-Call	Contact Number	Alternate MD On-Call	Alternate Contact Number
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
<b>After Hours</b>				
Day	Scheduled MD On-Call	Contact Number	Alternate MD On-Call	Alternate Contact Number
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
<b>After Hours</b>				
Day	Scheduled MD On-Call	Contact Number	Alternate MD On-Call	Alternate Contact Number
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
<b>After Hours</b>				

# Dr. John Smith, MD

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## Office Hours

Monday	9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Tuesday	1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Wednesday	9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Thursday	9:30 am – 5:30 pm
Friday	9:00 am - 12:30pm

Closed for lunch between  
12:30 pm and 1:30 pm daily

Please call **911** if you are having a medical or psychiatric emergency

For non-life threatening concerns you may reach my answering  
service by calling

**415-123-1234**