



## Policy and Procedure

Policy Name:	Protocol to Ensure Health Care Services are Readily Available		
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 or any superseding APL		

**Purpose:**

To maintain an organized system that is clear (in use) for scheduling appointments appropriately, notifying and reminding members of scheduled appointments, and following up of missed or canceled appointments.

To ensure appointments are schedule according to patient’s clinical needs. Providing timely access to appointments for routine care, urgent care, prenatal care, pediatric periodic health assessments/immunization, adult initial health assessment, specialty care, and emergency care. Also, to give patients the opportunity to reschedule canceled and missed appointments. Missed appointments are an avoidable cost and resource inefficiency which impact upon the health of the patient and treatment outcomes.

**Definition:**

Triage: Medical screening of patients to determine their relative priority for treatment order.

Timeliness: The fact or quality of being done or occurring at a favorable or useful time.

**Policy:**

Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plans require the following timeliness standards for access to appointments:

- Urgent Care: 48 hours
- Access to the first Prenatal Visit: 10 business days
- Non-urgent (Routine) Care: 10 business days

The site shall have sufficient health care personnel to provide timely, appropriate health care services. Triage is the sorting and classification of information to determine priority of need and proper place of treatment. Telephone triage is the system for managing telephone callers during and after office hours.

Staff/ Automated system shall notify and remind members of scheduled and/or preventive screening appointments. Staff will also follow up on missed and/or canceled appointments via phone, text, mail, or email. At least two attempts to reach the patient will be made and documented in the patient's record.

**Procedure for timely appointments:**

The PCP will ensure that appropriate personnel handle phone triage to ensure appointments are schedule according to patient's clinical needs.

Follow these steps when receiving a call:

- Inform the member that if they are experiencing a medical emergency, they should hang up and call 911 or proceed to the nearest emergency medical facility.
- Question the member according to the PCP's or PPG's established instructions (who, what, when, and where) to assess the nature and extent of the problem.
- Schedule an appointment for the patient following Medi-Cal timeliness standards.

**Procedure for notification of up-coming appointments:**

Notification of up-coming scheduled routine/preventive appointment: Choose appropriate option for clinic.

- Option 1: Staff will call to remind patients of their schedule routine, preventive appointments \_\_\_\_day(s), hours prior to appointment.
- Option 2: The automated system \_\_\_\_\_ will phone/text/email to reminder patients of their scheduled routine, preventive appointments \_\_\_\_day(s), hours prior to appointment.

**Procedure for verifying follow-up on missed and cancelled appointments:**

For missed of cancelled appointments, staff or automated system will make two outreach attempts by \_\_\_\_\_(phone/text/email/mail) and outreach attempts will be documented in the patient's medical record.

**Link:**

DMHC [https://www.dmhc.ca.gov/Portals/0/Docs/DO/TAC\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.dmhc.ca.gov/Portals/0/Docs/DO/TAC_accessible.pdf)

The DMHC Help Center is available at 1-888-466-2219 or www.HealthHelp.ca.gov to assist you if your health plan does not resolve the issue. The DMHC Help Center will work with you and your health plan to ensure you receive timely access to care.

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