

## Practice Policy & Guidelines

Policy: Appointment Availability	Developed by:	Approved by:
Updated:	Signature:	Signature:

### **PURPOSE:**

To ensure that office schedules maintain appropriate availability to maximize patient access to care.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

To ensure patients have access to physician support 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

At the beginning of each office day, to have sufficient time in the schedule to accommodate same-day appointments for all patients who need to be seen for medical problems identified by triage, and by all patients who request to be seen for preventative care/health maintenance.

### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

All staff (details below)

### **DETAILS:**

All patient telephone calls regarding medical matters are taken at the time of the call by a licensed nurse during regular office hours. The triage nurse follows standardized (insert title) Telephone Protocols, to triage the call, dispense advice, and document appropriately in the message center of the EHR, including reference as to title of triage reference used. The staff then uses the protocols to schedule an appointment for an appropriate length of time within a medically appropriate time frame, if needed.

In addition, at their first visit to the office, every family is given a copy of Practice Handbook and is provided with the link to the (insert practice Web site) website where the handbook is available to them 24/7.

Phone calls will be answered as they come in to dispense timely advice and triage appointments appropriately. All medical phone advice will follow (insert title of triage book) advice protocols. Appointments will be scheduled based on medical triage protocols or if patient/parent requests an appointment, one will be offered. If a phone call results in a same day appointment, documentation of phone advice is not necessary; the EHR will automatically record details including time that the appointment was booked, and who scheduled the appointment. If at an office visit, a provider realizes that the appointment was triaged inappropriately, follow-up education will be provided to the triage nurse.

### **MONITORING:**

At least twice yearly, the Quality Manager will take a sampling of messages documented in the EHR over a week period to assess the office performance in meeting these standards.

At least every 6 months, the Quality Manager will select a random sample day and look retrospectively at every appointment in the calendar to assess the following:

- Were appointments scheduled appropriately and according to triage guidelines?
- Were appointments scheduled same day if appropriate based on triage guidelines and/or parent request? (indicated as Yes/No/Not Indicated/Not Requested)
- Are there available unfilled well and sick appointments at the end of the day to document appointment availability?
- Are there any open items on the patient care plan or immunizations that could have been taken care of during the appointment but were not (if clinically appropriate) and reason why was not documented?

Results of this retrospective analysis will be reported and shared to the entire office staff. If report demonstrates a need for improvement, appropriate quality initiatives will be implemented.

**This policy shall be reviewed at least every 2 years.**

Approved Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**APPROVALS:**

Physician Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Administrative Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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