Practice Policy  

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<th>Arrangement of Alternative Appointments</th>
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**PURPOSE:**
To provide enhanced access to patients and families by offering alternative appointments with the primary physician, nurse practitioner, or other provider using technology.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**
To provide scheduled routine or urgent appointments by telephone or other technology-supported mechanisms. The practice offers a combination of telephone, video chat, and instant messaging as the alternative appointment options. Patient/family access to these alternative appointments will be based upon medical needs.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**  
Lead Clinical Team Member

**DETAILS:**
A. Only established patients may schedule an alternative appointment. New patient visits must be scheduled in-office with the primary physician.
B. Patients who call to schedule an alternative appointment will be triaged appropriately based on medical urgency and the patient/family's request. Alternative appointments will not be scheduled for urgent care.

C. Telephone triage and scheduling of an alternative appointment  
   - The front office staff or master scheduler is available during normal practice hours.
   - All "sick" appointments are scheduled in 7.5-15 minute increments.
   - All "well visit" appointments are scheduled in 20-60 minute increments.
   - The schedule will have open appointment slots for alternative appointment types on its master schedule template. Alternative appointments will be part of the schedule template and available on a daily basis.
   - Some open slot appointments may be pre-scheduled for the next day at the discretion of the physician or nurse practitioner. All patients who need to be seen that day will be seen, and the on-call physician or nurse practitioner will triage appointments after hours.
   - The front office staff or master scheduler will schedule the patient for the alternative appointment for the required amount of time. For routine and non-urgent care, the front office staff will schedule an appointment within ________, at the patient's convenience, or as determined by the physician or nurse practitioner.
   - If the front office staff is unsure about the urgency of the visit or time duration, they will consult with the physician or nurse practitioner, who may opt to schedule a same day appointment.
   - The patient will be given the appointment date and time, as well as any instructions for the visit. The practice will provide a reminder telephone call one to two business days prior to the appointment. The front office staff will document the reason for the appointment in the patient record or EHR.

**MONITORING:**
Adherence to these policies will be monitored quarterly by examining data from 5 consecutive business days. The personnel assistant is responsible for delegating the spot checks and will report quarterly at a staff meeting.

This policy shall be reviewed at least every 2 years.
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