

# Appointment availability and after-hours access requirements



To ensure members receive care in a timely manner, PCPs and pediatricians must maintain the following appointment availability and after-hours access standards.

## Appointment availability requirements per COMAR 10.09.66.07

Appointment type	Appointment standard
Well-child assessments	Within 30 days
Initial assessments of pregnant and postpartum women/individuals requesting family planning services	Within 10 days
Urgent visits	Within 48 hours
Routine and preventive care visits	Within 30 days
Routine specialist follow-up appointments	Within 30 days or sooner as deemed necessary by the PCP; PCP office shall make the appointment directly with the specialist's office
Initial visit for newborn	Within 14 days of discharge from the hospital if no home visit
Emergency visits	Providers may refer patients to the emergency room or urgent care center to ensure access for emergency visits if needed

## After-hours access requirements

■ Providers must offer 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week telephone access for members. A 24-hour telephone service may be used. The service may be answered by a designee such as:

- An on-call physician
- A nurse practitioner with physician backup

If the answering system includes a recorded or automated message, this message must give the option to speak

to a live party or respond to patient inquiries within 30 minutes.

- You or another physician must be available to provide medically necessary services.
- It is a requirement for covering physicians to follow the referral/precertification guidelines.
- It is not acceptable to automatically direct the member to the emergency room when the PCP is not available.



**Additionally,** we encourage you to offer after-hours office care in the evenings and on Saturdays.

**Thank you for the quality care you provide to our members.**

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