

Access & Availability Standards – Medical & Dental Health



MetroPlusHealth follows all state and federal regulations regarding access and availability standards. These standards, which apply to all lines of business, are used to improve patient access to routine, urgent, preventive, and specialty care. We also follow 24-hour access standards to measure after-hours access. We hope you find this information helpful as we partner to provide our members with excellent care!

Appointment Availability Standards

Care Needed	Time Frame
Emergent Care	Immediately
Urgent Care	Within 24 hours
Non-Urgent Sick	Within 48–72 hours
Well-Child/Preventive	Within 4 weeks
Routine Preventive (non-urgent)	Within 4 weeks
Specialist Referral (non-urgent)	Within 4–6 weeks
Adult Baseline/Routine Physical (new patient)	Within 12 weeks
Newborn Initial Visit	Within 2 weeks of hospital discharge
Initial Prenatal Visits	First trimester: Within 3 weeks Second trimester: Within 2 weeks Third trimester: Within 1 week



**Accepting new patients?
Did you know?**

Medical Records:

While your office may require a new patient's medical records, the records cannot serve as a prerequisite to scheduling an appointment.

Health Questionnaires:

Having a patient complete a health questionnaire helps you get to know the patient; however, you cannot require a completed questionnaire prior to scheduling an appointment. You may only ask for a patient's name, date of birth, and their health insurance plan name. Eligibility can then be checked on epaces: epaces.emedny.org

Appointment Wait Times (Health Care Provider/Specialist)

Should **not exceed one hour** for scheduled appointments

24-Hour Phone Coverage

To help ensure 24-hour coverage, health care providers **must** maintain one of the following arrangements for members to contact **after normal business hours**:

- Office phone answered by an answering service that can contact the primary care provider or another designated network medical practitioner, or
- Office phone message directing the member to call another number to reach the health care provider or another designated provider. Someone must be available to answer the designated provider's phone; another recording is not acceptable, or
- Office phone transferred to another location where someone will answer the phone. The person answering calls must be able to contact the health care provider or a designated network medical practitioner, or
- Office phone message directing member to leave a message and providing information about how message will be handled, including timeframe for response. Only acceptable if message is automatically transferred to on-call provider who would then return call.



Please be aware that the following phone answering procedures are **not acceptable**:

- Answering the phone only during office hours.
- Recording that directs members to go to the ER for any services.
- Recording that tells members to leave a message but does not indicate a timeframe for call back.

Things to avoid:

“Appointments are not being scheduled at this time”

If one of your providers is not accepting new patients, please contact us so that we can update our provider directory.

“Doctor is not at this site”

If one of your doctors has changed locations, or is no longer with the practice, please contact us so that we can update our provider directory.

“Pregnancy is too far along”

It is never too far along in a pregnancy for a member who requires care to be seen. If your practice is not accepting any new patients, please contact us so that we can update our provider directory.

Care Needed	Definition
Emergent Care	<p>Medical care provided for a medical condition of sufficient severity such that the average person could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in: a) placing the patient's health in serious jeopardy, b) avoidance of serious impairment or dysfunction.</p> <p>Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major trauma • Chest pain
Urgent Care	<p>Medical care provided for a condition manifesting itself by acute systems of such severity that, without timely treatment, could be expected to deteriorate into an emergency or jeopardize patient's ability to regain maximum functioning.</p> <p>Does not appear to be a medical emergency, but prompt evaluation is warranted to prevent serious deterioration of health.</p> <p>Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash • Suspected fracture • Urinary tract infection
Non-Urgent Sick	<p>Medical care provided for an acute onset of symptoms which is not emergent or urgent in nature.</p> <p>Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nasal congestion • Back pain not resulting from injury
Well-Child/ Preventive	<p>Periodic care that tracks a child's development, including age-appropriate screenings, anticipatory guidance, and physical examination.</p>
Routine Preventive (non-urgent)	<p>Medical care provided to help detect and prevent medical conditions or illnesses and promote maintenance of good health. May include immunizations, physical exams, and condition-specific screenings.</p>
Specialist Referral (non-urgent)	<p>Initial visit for a patient in need of specialist care.</p> <p>Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podiatry • Gastroenterology • Pulmonology
Adult Baseline/Routine Physical (new patient)	<p>Comprehensive physical exam of a new patient to establish baseline functioning and wellbeing.</p>
Newborn Initial Visit	<p>Assessment of mother and baby to assess wellbeing and identify potential support needs. Includes physical exam of an infant to assess for physical status.</p>
Initial Prenatal Visits	<p>Medical care provided to a patient who has tested positive for pregnancy. Visit includes history, laboratory screenings, physical exam to assess wellbeing of mother and fetus, and development of care plan.</p>

Please submit all provider updates through the MetroPlusHealth **Provider Portal** for faster and secure processing. For any other assistance, email us at ProviderRelationsOps@metroplus.org.