

After-hours and appointment availability standards update

Network providers must maintain the following appointment availability and after-hours access standards.

Appointment availability physical health (PH) and behavioral health (BH)

Type of appointment	Standard
PH emergency examinations	Immediate access during office hours
PH urgent (sick) examinations	Within 48 hours of request
PH non-urgent (sick) examinations	Within 72 hours of request
PH non-urgent routine examinations	Within 21 days of request
PH specialty referrals	Within two weeks for routine referrals; within 24 hours for urgent referrals
PH first trimester (OB/GYN)	Within 14 calendar days of request
PH second trimester (OB/GYN only)	Within seven calendar days of request
PH third trimester (OB/GYN only)	Within three business days of request
PH high-risk pregnancy (OB/GYN only)	Within three business days of identification or immediately if an emergency exists
PH postpartum exam (OB/GYN only)	Three to eight weeks after delivery
PH waiting room time	Within 45 minutes
BH emergent	Immediately
BH emergent, non-life-threatening/crisis stabilization	Within six hours of request
BH urgent	Within 48 hours of referral/request
BH initial and/or routine visits	Within 10 business days
BH outpatient following discharge from an inpatient hospital stay	Within seven business days of discharge
BH waiting room time (excluding emergencies)	Within 45 minutes
BH open access process — meaning agencies will see walk-ins or no appointment needed	Within three hours or offer appointment

Behavioral health definitions:

- Emergent: Treatment is considered to be an on-demand service and does not require precertification, but authorization should occur within three days of services being rendered. Members are asked to go directly to emergency rooms for services if they are either unsafe or their conditions are deteriorating.
- Emergent, non-life-threatening/crisis stabilization: On-demand treatment is urgent but not life-threatening. Members can be seen in the office within six hours or directed to the emergency room if they can't be seen in the office.
- Urgent: A service is needed that is not emergent and can be met by providing an assessment and services within 48 hours of the initial contact. If the member is pregnant and has substance use problems, they are to be placed in the urgent category.
- Routine: A service is needed that is not urgent and can be met by receiving treatment within 10 calendar days of the assessment without resultant deterioration in the individual's functioning or worsening of their conditions.