



Provider Manual Addendum Access & Availability Changes

Effective July 1, 2026, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) standard for after hours will be changing. Please review the outlined changes below. The changes will be updated in the Georgia Medicaid Provider Manual in the next annual review.

The following section on page 93 of the current [Georgia Medicaid Provider Manual](#) will be updated:

“PCPs must provide 24 hour availability to your CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or a taped message used after hours, patients should be provided the means to contact their PCP or a back up physician to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that does not provide access to you or your back up physician and only recommends emergency room use for after hours.”

Updates to this section will include:

- An “Update to After Hours Standard Effective July 1, 2026” header
- The addition of behavioral health providers
- A statement about the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline

The updated section will read:

Update to After-Hours Standard Effective July 1, 2026

PCP and Behavioral Health (BH) providers must provide 24-hour availability to their CareSource patients by telephone. Whether through an answering machine or a taped message used after hours, patients should be given the means to contact their PCP/BH* provider or a back-up provider to be triaged for care. It is not acceptable to use a phone message that does not provide access to you or your back-up provider and only recommends emergency department use for after hours.

*BH providers may refer their patients to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline if a provider is not available for the call.

Please contact Provider Services at 1-855-202-1058, available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern Time with any questions.