



ACCESS TO CARE AND AFTER HOURS STANDARDS



CareSource® promotes access to care by partnering with health care providers to ensure our members receive the best possible health care services. It includes evaluation of the availability, accessibility, and acceptability of services rendered to patients by participating providers. CareSource expects network providers to have procedures in place to see patients within the following time frames, and to offer office hours to their CareSource patients that are no less (in number or scope) than those offered to non-CareSource patients. In addition, a member’s waiting time at a provider’s office should be no more than one hour from the scheduled appointment time, except when the provider is unavailable due to an emergency. Ensuring coverage that allows your patients to speak with a practitioner is important for them to receive appropriate care and maintain their health.

Please keep in mind the following access standards for each level of care:

PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS (PCPs)

Service Type	Maximum Appointment Wait Time from the Day of Request ¹		
	Urban	Rural	Frontier
Routine Care Visit (Adult and Pediatric)*	10 business days	15 business days	15 business days
Urgent Care	Within 48 hours		
Emergency Needs	Immediately upon presentation		

*These appointment wait time standards do not apply to regularly scheduled visits that are for monitoring a chronic medical condition if their schedule calls for visits that are less frequent than would be allowed by the standards.

NON-PCP (SPECIALISTS) PROVIDERS

Service Type	Maximum Appointment Wait Time from the Day of Request ¹		
	Urban	Rural	Frontier
PHYSICAL/OCCUPATIONAL/SPEECH THERAPY			
	15 business days	20 business days	20 business days
OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY (OB/GYN)			
OB/GYN (Other than Prenatal Care)	10 business days	15 business days	15 business days
First and Second Trimester Visit	7 calendar days	10 calendar days	10 calendar days
Third Trimester or High-Risk Care Visit	3 calendar days	5 calendar days	5 calendar days
Urgent Care	Within 48 hours		
Emergency Needs	Immediately upon presentation		

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH) AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) PROVIDERS

Service Type	Maximum Appointment Wait Time from the Day of Request ¹		
	Urban	Rural	Frontier
Initial Visit for Routine Care	10 business days		
Follow-up Routine Care	30 calendar days		
Outpatient Mental Health and SUD Treatment (Adult and Pediatric)	10 business days		
Urgent Care	Within 48 hours		
Emergency Needs	Immediately upon presentation		
Non-Life Threatening Emergency Care	Within 6 hours		

¹Providers should see members as expeditiously as the member's condition and severity of symptoms warrant. It is expected that if a provider is unable to see the member within the designated time frame, CareSource will facilitate an appointment with another participating provider, or a non-participating provider, when necessary.

Update to After-Hours Standard Effective July 1, 2026: PCP and 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 or the CareSource Crisis Line at 1-833-687-7396 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-326-6868) if a provider is not available for the call.

For the best interest of our members and to promote their positive health care outcomes, CareSource supports and encourages continuity of care and coordination of care between medical care providers, as well as between physical and behavioral health providers.

Talking to Patients

CareSource regularly provides education to our members about appropriate use of services. Partnering with you gives us the opportunity to educate members about how to access the right care to meet their needs and remind them to:

- Contact their PCP/BH provider first for non-emergency situations.
- Visit an urgent care to be seen quickly when a PCP cannot be reached.
- Consider visiting retail health clinics or convenience care clinics that are open late and on weekends.
- Visit a PCP for routine care, not the emergency department.

Nurse Advice Line

CareSource helps members decide where to go for care when they are unsure. Your patients can call our 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line at 1-833-687-7365 (TTY: 711 or 1-800-326-6868) and a nurse will help them make the decision. Members can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no cost.



Questions? Please contact Provider Services at 1-833-230-2112, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Pacific Time (PT).

Thank you for partnering with CareSource!