



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. Ensuring 24/7 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)

Appointment Type	Medicaid Standard ¹
Regular/Routine Care	6 weeks
Non-Urgent Sick Primary Care	3 calendar days
Urgent Needs	4 hours
Emergency Needs	Seen immediately

Non-PCP (Specialists) Providers

Appointment Type	Medicaid Standard ¹
Regular/Routine Care	6 weeks
Urgent Care	48 hours
Emergency Care	Seen immediately

Dental Providers

Appointment Type	Medicaid Standard ¹
Regular Care	6 weeks
Urgent Needs	Within 48 clock hours

Obstetrics

Appointment Type	Medicaid Standard ¹
First Visit of Second Trimester	7 calendar days
Second Trimester Follow-Up	14 calendar days
Third Trimester or High-Risk	3 calendar days

Behavioral Health (BH) Providers, Prescribing & Non-Prescribing

Appointment Type	Medicaid Standard ¹
Initial Visit for Routine Care	10 business days
Follow-Up Routine Care	30 calendar days
Urgent Needs	48 hours
Non-Life-Threatening Emergency	Not to exceed 6 hours
ASAM residential/inpatient services - 3:3, 1,3,5,3,7 (unique to Community Health Centers [SUD] and residential facilities)	Initial screening, assessment, and referral to treatment within 48 clock hours of request
ASAM medically managed intensive inpatient services - 4 (unique to Community Health Centers [SUD] and residential facilities)	24 hours, 7 days/week
Emergency Needs	Seen immediately

¹ Providers 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 1-833-687-7302 (TTY: 711) 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 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 1-866-206-0554 and a nurse will help them make the decision. Members can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no cost.

Thank you for partnering
with CareSource!



Questions?

Please contact Provider Services at 1-800-488-0134, Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time (ET).