



## Availability Standards for Blue Cross Providers

Blue Cross is committed to providing access to high quality healthcare for all members, promoting healthier lifestyles and ensuring member satisfaction with the delivery of care. To support these commitments, network providers are responsible for meeting the following availability standards:

Provider Availability Standards			
TYPE	DEFINITION	AVAILABILITY STANDARD	EXAMPLES
Emergency	Medical situations in which a member reasonably believes his/her life to be in danger or that permanent disability might result if the condition is not treated.	Immediate access, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of consciousness</li> <li>Seizures</li> <li>Chest pain</li> <li>Severe bleeding</li> <li>Trauma</li> </ul>
Urgent Care	Medical conditions that could result in serious injury or disability if medical attention is not received.	30 hours or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe or acute pain</li> <li>High fever in relation to age and condition</li> </ul>
Routine Primary Care	Conditions that could be problematic if untreated but do not substantially restrict a member's normal activity.	5 to 14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backache</li> <li>Suspicious mole</li> </ul>
Preventive Care	Routine exams.	6 weeks or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine physical</li> <li>Well baby exam</li> <li>Annual Pap smear</li> </ul>

### Additional Availability Standards

- Physicians are responsible for ensuring access of services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year other than in an emergency room for non-emergent conditions. This includes arrangements to ensure patient awareness and access after hours to another participating physician.
- All providers must offer services during normal working hours, typically between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- Average office waiting times should be no more than 30 minutes for patients who arrive on time for a scheduled appointment.
- The physician's office should return a patient's call within four to six hours for an urgent/acute medical question and within 24 hours for a non-urgent issue.

### Acute Care Hospital Availability Standards

- Acute care hospitals are responsible for ensuring access to services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- All contracted hospitals must maintain emergency or urgent care services on a 24-hour basis and must offer outpatient services during regular business hours, if applicable.

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