

CHA Lateness Guidelines

To ensure timely, high-quality care for all patients, our primary care clinics have established clear guidelines for managing late arrivals to scheduled appointments with primary care providers. These guidelines help us stay on schedule and respect the time of all patients and care teams. Please note that this policy applies only to appointments with primary care providers and does not include visits with extended care team members such as behavioral health, pharmacy, chronic care management, or PRC.

Summary

- If a patient is 10 minutes late for an appointment, the appointment may need to be rescheduled. This is to ensure that the patients who arrive on time do not wait longer than necessary to see the provider. Patients may be given the option to wait for another appointment time on the same day with the same or different provider if one is available.
- We will try to accommodate late-comers in the best manner possible, but cannot compromise on the quality and timely care provided to our other patients.

Definitions

- A. On time patient: Patient who is noted as present within 10 minutes of appointment start time.
- B. Late patient: Patient who is noted as present 10 minutes or after of appointment start time.

Guidelines

- A. If a patient is noted as present within 10 minutes of scheduled appointment start time, they will be roomed and seen per usual practice.
- CHA staff will remind patients of late patient policy that patients are recommended to arrive 15 minutes early to appointments for registration activities and that arrivals 10 minutes or later from the scheduled time could be subject to rebooking, waiting, or limited scope visits.

- B. If a patient arrives 10 minutes or after the start time of their appointment and is scheduled with a primary care provider
- If the provider has indicated they will see the late patient, proceed with check in.
 - » Remind the patient that late arrivals may be subject to cancelation
 - » Inform patient they will need to wait for previously scheduled on time patients to be seen first and provider may not be able to address all concerns.
 - If provider has indicated they will not see the late patient
 - » Practice medical receptionist or CPA will check all providers schedule for later available appointment including late cancelation offer the later appointment.
 - » If patient declines the same day but later appointment, rebook to future date.
 - » If patient has immediate needs or acute concerns that needed to be addressed during the visit today, page nursing and schedule a walk in appt type visits for nursing.
 - » Nurses will need to come to directly discuss with the patient, assess urgent or immediate clinical needs that were to be addressed during the visit, and develop a plan for the patient for rebooking.
 - » If a provider refuses to see a patient who has arrived within the 10 minute late patient policy, the provider will come to triage the patient and discuss refusal with the patient.
- C. If a patient arrives 10 minutes or after the start time of their appointment and is scheduled with a BH provider, Pharmacotherapy provider, Nutrition provider, please page the provider they are scheduled to see with further instruction if they can be seen or if they need to be rescheduled.
- D. Due to contractual restrictions from the state of Massachusetts, CHA cannot charge patients for late arrival or no-shows.