

PRIMEWEST HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE

Title: Access to Care	Policy Number: CC05
Effective Date: 10/99	Revised:

POLICY

PrimeWest Health will assure member access to health care services in compliance with Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts, Article 6 requirements. PrimeWest Health will assure that health services identified in Article 6 of the Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP), Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO), and Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) contracts will be available to enrollees during normal business hours to the same extent available to the general public. PrimeWest Health will assure access to all covered services will be within the timelines established in stated Articles and contracts.

Any additional regulatory requirements regarding access to care will apply. Pursuant to 42 CFR 438.114, Medical Emergency, Post-Stabilization Care, and Urgent Care services will be available twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven days per week, including a twenty-four (24) hour per day phone number for enrollees to call in case of a medical emergency.

Originally Approved by: Joint Powers Board C. McKinzie, MD, Medical Director K. Rau, Director, Care Coordination C. McKinzie, MD, Medical Director K. Rau, Director, Care Coordination QCCC C. McKinzie, MD, Medical Director K. Rau, Director, Care Coordination QCCC C. McKinzie, MD, Medical Director K. Rau, Director, Care Coordination QCCC C. McKinzie, MD, Medical Director K. Rau, Director, Care Coordination QCCC	Date: 10/99 Reviewed by: 07/02, 01/03, 12/04 Reviewed/Revised: 04/05 Reviewed/Updated 01/06 Reviewed/Updated: 03/06 Reviewed/Revised: 02/07
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3/6/08

PrimeWest Health Medical Director, Dr. Charles McKinzie, M.D./Date



3/6/08

PrimeWest Health Joint Powers Board of Directors/Date

PRIMEWEST HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE

Procedure for CC05 Access to Care

Definitions:

Emergency: The services related to a medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that a prudent layperson, who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine, could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in: placing the physical or mental health of the individual, (or with respect to a pregnant woman the health of the woman or her unborn child) in serious jeopardy, continuation of severe pain, serious impairment of bodily functions, serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part, or death.

Urgent: Acute, episodic medical service available on a 24-hour basis that is required in order to prevent a serious deterioration of the health of an enrollee.

Non-Urgent: Medical services that are not emergencies or urgent in nature, i.e., preventive services, well-visits, or regular follow-up care.

PrimeWest Health will assure access to health care including that emergency care, mental health, and chemical dependency services are available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to its enrollees. Contractual relationships with all PrimeWest Health providers, including behavioral health and medical care, require the provision of 24 hour, 7 days a week telephone availability for access to care. Each participating primary care clinic shall have an on-call physician as a back-up to the member's primary care physician. This on-call physician or an alternative provider shall be available to members whenever the primary physician is not available. PrimeWest Health will utilize county partners and hospital emergency rooms to provide mental health crisis interventions. Mobile crisis services will be a benefit as the service becomes available. In addition, PrimeWest Health contracts for a nurse information telephone service to provide member access to medical information at no cost to the member during times when primary care clinics and behavioral health services are traditionally not open (after hours). Effective January 1, 2008, this service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Access Standards

Primary Care: PrimeWest will assure that all members have access to a primary care clinic located within thirty (30) miles or thirty (30) minutes travel distance.

Specialty Care: PrimeWest will contract with all willing available specialists in the PrimeWest geographic area in an attempt to guarantee that members have access to specialty care providers within sixty (60) minutes travel time, or the State's generally accepted community standards.

If a member has been referred for specialty care, and PrimeWest does not have at least two contracted like specialists within the 60 minute travel distance, PrimeWest will authorize the member to seek specialty care from a specialist of the member's choice.

PRIMEWEST HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE

After Hours Care

For life-threatening emergencies, members should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Members presenting for care with life-threatening illness or accident should be treated according to medical need without any Service Authorization requirements. If emergency services are received at a hospital that is not part of PrimeWest Health's network, the member or a representative should call PrimeWest Health at 1-866-431-0801 as soon as possible afterwards. The purpose of this notification is to allow for coordination of care that may be required after the emergency room visit. PrimeWest Health does not require a member to receive medical emergency or post-stabilization care within the PrimeWest Health network. For medical emergency services, PrimeWest Health shall not do the following:

- Require Service Authorization as a condition of providing a medical emergency service
- Limit what constitutes a medical emergency condition based upon lists of diagnoses or symptoms
- Refuse to cover medical emergency services based upon the emergency room provider, hospital, or fiscal agent not notifying PrimeWest Health of a member's screening and treatment within 10 calendar days of the member requiring emergency services
- Hold the member liable for payment concerning the screening and treatment necessary to diagnose and stabilize the condition
- Prohibit the treating provider from determining when the member is sufficiently stabilized for transfer or discharge. The determination of the treating provider is binding on PrimeWest Health for coverage and payment purposes

Except for Critical Access Hospitals, visits to a hospital emergency room that are not an emergency, post-stabilization care, or urgent care, may not be reimbursed as emergency or urgent care services. PrimeWest Health will reimburse such services as outpatient clinic services and may reimburse for a triage at a triage rate when only triage services are provided.

PrimeWest Health network providers shall have instructions for after-hours care posted so members can see the instructions from the outside of the clinic. The notice is to include office hours and phone numbers for after-hour service. The clinic should also have a recorded message after clinic hours instructing members how to access after-hours care.

Member information provided upon enrollment tells members how to access care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including toll free telephone numbers for the nurse information telephone service. Primary Care Clinic information is also provided upon enrollment. The nurse telephone service contact information is provided to PrimeWest Health members in the *Certificate of Coverage, Member Handbook/Provider Directory*, and member newsletters (*PrimeLines*) and other member information from time to time.

PRIMEWEST HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE

PrimeWest Health network providers shall be provided information about and have access to the medical information telephone service to assist with medical care issues through nurses using a computerized triage system to suggest self-care treatments, schedule next day clinic appointments, or refer members to an urgent care center or emergency room, when appropriate.

General Standards for Acceptable Wait Times for Scheduled Appointments

Emergency – immediate access to practitioner upon presenting for care at a clinic or hospital

Urgent or acute – same day access or an appointment within 24 hours or a physician's determination that a longer wait is acceptable

Non-urgent or non-acute – 1 to 2 weeks or a physician's determination that a longer wait is acceptable

Physicals or health maintenance exams – 4 weeks or a physician's determination that a longer wait is acceptable

Prenatal Care Visits – 3-4 weeks for first prenatal visit, following visits to be scheduled according to expected visit schedule based on community standards for prenatal care. If member indicates she is past the first trimester of her pregnancy, provider should try to schedule the first visit sooner than the expected 3-4 weeks. If the member is calling for the first prenatal visit and indicates she may be in the last trimester, the visit should be scheduled as soon as possible.

Access Survey

PrimeWest Health will monitor access and wait times for scheduling appointments with our primary care and mental health providers. This may be accomplished by the PrimeWest Health Provider Relations representative contacting a sample of network providers to inquire about appointment availability. In addition, PrimeWest Health complaint reports will be assessed for member dissatisfaction with access to care. Results of the Access Survey and complaint reports are reported to the Quality and Care Coordination Committee. If an access deficiency is noted or suspected, the PrimeWest Health Medical Director and Care Coordination department will investigate further and/or develop an improvement plan which may include new contracting strategies or individual provider interventions.

Provider Refusal

In order for PrimeWest Health to be in compliance with Minnesota Rules, part 4685.1010, subpart 2, H, if a provider refuses to continue care to a specific enrollee, PrimeWest Health will furnish the enrollee with the name, address, and telephone number of other participating providers in the same area of medical specialty. Examples of reasons for refusal to continue to provide care to a member are: unpaid bills incurred by that individual before enrollment in PrimeWest Health; unpaid co-payments incurred by the enrollee after enrollment in PrimeWest Health; a member who is uncooperative or abusive toward the provider; and the inability of the provider and the member to agree on a course of treatment.

PRIMEWEST HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURE

If the provider refuses to continue care to a specific enrollee, the provider must notify PrimeWest Health and the member in writing with the effective date and reason.

Emergency Services

PrimeWest Health pays all claims for emergency services based on service location, not by diagnosis or presenting symptoms. PrimeWest Health does not utilize diagnoses-based screening criteria to determine if a condition was emergent as a part of the claims payment process. Payment for emergency screening and treatment services is not dependent upon timely notification to PrimeWest Health. PrimeWest Health utilization staff are not involved in emergency service claims payments.