

PATIENT SCHEDULING AND TRIAGE

Triage can be identified as one of the most important aspects of medicine. The screening and classification of a patient is necessary and important.

*Highmark requires an acceptable process in place to respond 24 hours per day, 7 days a week to member issues.

- Refer to the Provider Manual Chapter 1, Unit 4, Section 1.4 Member Access to Physicians and Facilities for information specific to your provider type and region.

Call Types and Performance Standard

- **Emergency/life-threatening:**
 - Sudden, life-threatening symptom(s) or condition requiring immediate medical treatment (e.g., chest pain, shortness of breath)
 - Patient requires immediate response, direct to call 911 or go to nearest emergency room.
- **Urgent Care:**
 - An urgently needed service is a medical condition that requires rapid clinical intervention due to an unforeseen illness, injury, or condition (e.g., high fever, persistent vomiting/diarrhea)
 - Patient should receive care within one (1) day or 24 hours.
- **Regular and Routine Office Visit:**
 - Non-urgent but in need of attention appointment (e.g., headache, cold, cough, rash, joint/muscle pain)
 - Routine wellness appointments (e.g., asymptomatic/preventive care, well child/patient exams, physical exams)
 - **PA and WV:** Within 2-7 days (Non-urgent); Within 30 days (Routine wellness)
 - **Delaware:** Office visit within 3 weeks of member request

*Practitioners are encouraged to see patients with scheduled appointments within 15 minutes of their scheduled appointment time. A reasonable attempt should be made to notify patients of delays.

**If there is any question as to when a patient needs to be seen, the patient will be referred to the nurse or medical assistant. If the nurse cannot make the determination, then the patient will be referred to the physician.