

After-Hours Telephone Accessibility



Primary Care Providers

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Uniform Managed Care Contract requires Primary Care Providers (PCPs) to be accessible to members 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Superior conducts after-hours audits of PCP offices to assess compliance with these requirements. The following telephone arrangements are considered acceptable and unacceptable for contacting PCPs outside their normal business hours.

What meets the standards?

- The office telephone is answered after-hours by an answering service that meets language requirements of the Major Population Groups and that can contact the PCP or another designated medical practitioner. All calls answered by an answering service must be returned within 30 minutes.
- The office telephone is answered after normal business hours by a recording in the language of each of the Major Population Groups served, directing the member to call another number to reach the PCP or another provider designated by the PCP. Someone must be available to answer the designated provider's telephone. Another recording is not acceptable.
- The office telephone is transferred after office hours to another location where someone will answer the telephone and be able to contact the PCP, or another designated medical provider, who can return the call within 30 minutes.

What doesn't meet the standards?

- The office telephone is only answered during office hours.
- The office does not meet the language requirements of the Major Population Groups.
- The office telephone is answered after-hours by a recording that tells members to leave a message.
- The office telephone is answered after-hours by a recording that directs members to go to an Emergency Room for any services needed.
- Returning after-hours calls outside of 30 minutes.

Behavioral Health Providers

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) establishes standards requiring Behavioral Health Providers (BHPs) to ensure Members have access to appropriate resources outside normal business hours. Superior conducts after-hours audits of behavioral health offices to assess compliance with these standards. The following telephone arrangements are considered acceptable and unacceptable for contacting BHPs outside their normal business hours.

What meets the standards?

- Refers to 988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline.
- Refers to a behavioral health urgent care.
- Refers to a psychiatric emergency department.
- Utilizes a crisis intervention team or mobile response team.

What doesn't meet the standards?

- The office telephone is not answered after office hours.
- The answering machine message tells patients to leave a message or provides no after-hours instructions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Superior Provider Representative. To access their information, visit [Find My Provider Representative](#).