

Children's Behavioral Health

Access & Availability Standards






We follow the children's behavioral health access and appointment availability standards established by the New York State Department of Health. We conduct an annual audit to ensure compliance with these standards, which apply to all lines of business and are used to improve behavioral health care for children/youth under the age of 21.

Please review the next two pages of this tip sheet for appointment availability standards by service type.






Behavioral health providers are required to provide necessary telephonic services to patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week in cases involving telephone calls from established patients or patients' family members concerning clinical behavioral health or mental health and substance use **life-threatening emergencies**. This is critical for coordinating care when the patient has presented to the emergency room with an urgent/emergent or life-threatening crisis. Providers must also arrange for complete backup coverage with other participating clinician(s) who can provide the same level of care in the event the practitioner is unable to provide covered services to established patients.

A patient and/or the patient's parent or legal guardian must be able to:

-  Reach the practitioner or a person with the ability to put the call through to the practitioner (e.g., answering service, pager); or
-  Reach an answering machine or voicemail with instructions on how to contact the practitioner or his/her backup (e.g., message with number for home, cell phone or beeper) in case of a clinical urgent/emergent situation. Call forwarding may also be used, but the message must state that the call is being forwarded to the practitioner's contact number.
-  The practitioner's answering machine messages are automatically forwarded to a phone (e.g., practitioner's cell phone, pager) where the practitioner retrieves and responds to those messages for life-threatening emergencies, after-hours, as soon as possible.



Unacceptable Answering Options

-  Reaching an answering machine that instructs the active patient to go to the nearest emergency room, crisis center hotline, lifeline and/or call 911.
-  Reaching an answering machine recommending the patient call during business hours.
-  Reaching an answering machine with no instructions.
-  No answer.
-  A busy signal three times, within 30 minutes.



New York State Department of Health Children's Behavioral Health Appointment Availability Standards

Service	Emergency	Urgent Visit	Non-Urgent Visit	Follow-Up to Emergency or Hospital Discharge	Follow-Up to Residential Services, Detention Discharge or Discharge from Justice System Placement
Mental Health Outpatient Clinic		Within 24 hours	Within 1 week	Within 5 business days of request	Within 5 business days of request
Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treatment			2-4 weeks	Within 24 hours	
Partial Hospitalization				Within 5 business days of request	
Inpatient Psychiatric Services	Upon presentation				
Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program	Upon presentation				
OASAS Outpatient Clinic		Within 24 hours	Within 1 week of request	Within 5 business days of request	Within 5 business days of request
Detoxification	Upon presentation				
Substance Use Disorder Inpatient Rehabilitation	Upon presentation	Within 24 hours			
OASAS Opioid Treatment Services		Within 24 hours	Within 1 week of request	Within 5 business days of request	Within 5 business days of request
Crisis Intervention	Within 1 hour			Within 24 hours of mobile crisis intervention response	
Community Psychiatric Supportive Treatment		Within 24 hours (for intensive in-home & crisis response services under definition)	Within 1 week of request	Within 72 hours of discharge	Within 72 hours
Other Licensed Professional		Within 24 hours of request	Within 1 week of request	Within 72 hours of request	Within 72 hours of request
Family Peer Support Services		Within 24 hours of request	Within 1 week of request	Within 72 hours of request	Within 72 hours of request

OASAS = Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

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Service	Emergency	Urgent	Non-Urgent Visit	Follow-Up to Emergency or Hospital Discharge	Follow-Up to Residential Services, Detention Discharge or Justice System Placement
Youth Peer Support & Training			Within 1 week of request	Within 72 hours of request	Within 72 hours of request
Psychosocial Rehabilitation		Within 72 hours of request	Within 5 business days of request	Within 72 hours of request	Within 72 hours of request
Caregiver/Family Supports & Services			Within 5 business days of request	Within 5 business days of request	Within 5 business days of request
Crisis Respite	Within 24 hours of request	Within 24 hours of request		Within 24 hours of request	
Planned Respite			Within 1 week of request	Within 1 week of request	
Prevocational Services			Within 2 weeks of request		Within 2 weeks of request
Supported Employment			Within 2 weeks of request		Within 2 weeks of request
Community Self-Advocacy Training & Support			Within 5 business days of request		Within 5 business days of request
Habilitation			Within 2 weeks of request		
Adaptive & Assistive Equipment		Within 24 hours of request	Within 2 weeks of request	Within 24 hours of request	Within 24 hours of request
Accessibility Modifications		Within 24 hours of request	Within 2 weeks of request	Within 24 hours of request	Within 24 hours of request
Palliative Care			Within 2 weeks of request	Within 24 hours of request	