



AmeriHealth Caritas[™]
District of Columbia

To: AmeriHealth Caritas DC Primary Care Providers

Date: May 19, 2021

Subject: Standards for Accessing Primary and Specialty Care

AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia (DC) is committed to providing our enrollees with access to quality health care and customer service. We promise our enrollees that they will have **timely** access to best in class primary care and specialty providers to help them get the care they need to get healthy, stay healthy and/or effectively manage an existing health condition.

We know that we cannot fulfill this promise without you and your staff. ***Over the last sixty (60) days, we have received an increasing number of enrollee complaints (grievances) related to provider access, which we are contractually required to track, address and respond to by the DC Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF).*** While each of the specific complaints below ***may not apply to your particular practice***, we are sharing them to proactively highlight the challenges that many enrollees/patients are now facing at some provider practices – especially as the demand for medical and behavioral health services seems to be quickly rebounding to pre-pandemic levels.

Our enrollees tell us:

- When they call to get an appointment, they are unable to reach someone by telephone.
- When they reach someone and request an appointment, they are asked to call back. When they do so, they are often not given an appointment for months.
- When they call some offices, they are told to leave their name and contact information for a return call. No one returns their call.
- When they try to schedule an appointment with an in-network provider, they are given appointments that are beyond sixty (60) days in the future.

DHCF Time Standard Access Requirements

DHCF requires AmeriHealth Caritas DC and its providers to offer new enrollees who are age twenty-one (21) and older an initial primary care appointment within forty-five (45) days of their date of enrollment or within thirty (30) days of request, whichever is sooner. Additionally, AmeriHealth Caritas DC and its providers are required to ensure that non-urgent specialty appointments occur within thirty (30) days of enrollee request. And finally, for enrollees under the age of two, required EPSDT appointments are contractually required to take place within 30 days of their due date; for those age two and older, appointments are required to take place within 60 days of their due date. Finally, periodic EPSDT examinations are required to take place within 30 days of the request by an enrollee or guardian.

We understand and empathize with the challenges faced by many provider practices and how the corresponding safety and workflow adjustments during the public health emergency may have impacted capacity. We are asking you to be extra vigilant regarding obstacles to patient access and responsive

communications and for you and your teams to proactively make adjustments as appropriate in this area. We look forward to working closely with you to help our enrollees get into care as quickly as possible – certainly within the contractually required timeframes referenced above.

If you have any questions about this communication or if there is anything we can do to assist with challenges you may be facing in this area, please contact your Provider Account Executive or the Provider Services department at 202-408-2237.