

## Policy and Procedure

<b>Supersedes:</b>			<b>Policy Number:</b>	
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Prioritizing of Incoming Patient Calls</b>			
<b>Department(s)</b>	Practice		<b>Current Effective Date:</b>	
			<b>Last Review Date:</b>	
			<b>Original Effective Date:</b>	
			<b>Next Review Due Date:</b>	

### **PURPOSE:**

To provide access to safe, effective, appropriate medical care.

### **POLICY:**

All incoming calls from patients seeking medical care will be prioritized and handled according to this policy.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Patients who call seeking medical care during office hours will receive an appropriate appointment or a referral to nursing personnel for triage based on acceptable standards of practice.
2. Patients who call seeking medical care after hours will be directed to the hospital if in need of medical attention.
3. Office personnel taking calls from patients seeking medical care will:
  - Refer to nursing personnel immediately if there is any question about the severity of the patients symptoms
4. All clinic personnel with telephone call handling responsibilities will receive training upon employment:
  - Recognition of emergent, urgent and routine symptoms
  - Recognition of life-threatening situations (chest pain, anaphylaxis, stroke) or symptoms with potentially serious complications (meningitis, dehydration of infant, appendicitis)
  - Appropriate message taking
5. All patient symptom call messages taken by the nursing personnel will contain the following:
  - Date and time of call
  - Patient name and chart number
  - Chief complaint- in patients own words
  - History of illness
  - Where patient can be reached for call-back
  - Advice given
6. Messages will be forwarded to providers. Providers will document calls they personally return.
7. All calls for medication refills will be directed to the nursing staff who will take a message to take to provider.
8. Calls nurses are to follow-up on will be returned to the nursing pool.

