

**PMGSJ Quality Management Committee Recommendations  
for Increasing Satisfaction with After Hours Care**

The following items are recommended for increasing satisfaction for after hours care. The Committee Acknowledges that not all doctors have 24/7 coverage and that such coverage is critical to the IPA'S success.

1. The committee advises that each MD implement a system to answer all medical-issue calls at least within one hour, and urgent/emergent calls within 30 minutes.
2. **For coverage during long absences**, the telephone message should refer the caller to the covering physician and state the covering MD's telephone number.
3. If the office is closed during the day (e.g. during lunch breaks, or other periods lasting more than one hour), coverage should be treated in the same manner as after-hours in terms of the physician answering message and call-back responsiveness for urgent issues.
4. Those offices that can have the staff answer the telephone one hour out of the two-hours closed would see increased member satisfaction with access to care.
5. **Ask members about their symptoms.** Continue to train office staff to be responsive when members are making requests to be seen. Have them ask the members what their symptoms are so that you can ascertain when the member needs to be seen. This lack of evaluation has resulted in a few after-hours visits.
6. **FOR PEDIATRICS:** Remember to refer to and Urgent Care Center (Example: **South Bay Children's Urgent Care**) instead of **the Emergency Room** whenever possible.

## **Additional Potential Issues**

Additional potential issues with the telephone include the phone system, as well as how calls are handled

### **Phone System**

Symptoms of an office needing an upgraded phone system may include the following:

- The phone line is busy, continuously with no pick-up/answer
- The caller is put on hold, and waits an unreasonable length of time (or no one gets back to them).
- The phone rings and there is no pick-up whatsoever.

Please evaluate the phone system and make upgrades whenever possible. Many low-cost solutions are now available.