Smith Health

Office Policies and Procedures
Enhance Access and Continuity

Smith Health provides patient access to culturally and linguistically appropriate routine care and urgent team-based care during office hours. Patients have access to appointments based on medical necessity as well as convenience and/or perceived need.

1. If the patient needs or wants a same-day appointment, this will be accommodated whenever possible.

Policy:
Smith Health reserves time for same-day appointments based on patient requests and clinical needs. Based on the person's assessment, patients who need to be seen the same day will be inserted into the schedule in slots set aside for that purpose or as instructed by a clinician. If the patient or family member requests a same-day appointment for a non-urgent matter, this request will be honored whenever possible, although patients with a more urgent clinical need to be seen will get priority appointments.

Procedure:
To determine how much time is needed for different types of patient visits, follow these steps:

1. Periodically, review (e.g. winter season) patient visit schedules over a period of weeks. List the major types of clinical problems and procedural visits the practice is seeing; note their frequency. This information will help to allocate the scheduling patients with different conditions, different levels of complexity, and therefore different time requirements.

2. Determine the mix of patients needing to be seen in a given week and day, including patients who need same-day appointments. Consider the required number of annual physicals, preoperative and postoperative patients, consultations, special procedures, and other types of appointments. Determine the mix to include in each full day, and in each half-day when the office is open.

3. Use the list of basic types of patient problems and visits to estimate the time each one requires. Discuss the actual visit times with staff and clinicians. Refine the data by tracking actual "in" and "out" times for some of the most frequent visits for a few days. Revise the list periodically according to profile of visits.