



PrimeWest Health

2022 Access to Care Survey



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Introduction

PrimeWest Health contacts our contracted behavioral health care providers and primary care clinics annually to assess wait times for appointments. In accordance with PrimeWest Health Policy and Procedure CC05: Access to Care, PrimeWest Health requires providers to provide appointment times appropriate for the needs of the member and in accordance with the State's generally accepted community standards.

Contracted behavioral health care providers (both prescribing and non-prescribing) and behavioral health facilities were asked to provide details on how they determine whether a call requesting an appointment is urgent or emergent. They were also asked what their current wait times are for routine, urgent, and non-life threatening emergency appointments.

Contracted primary care clinics were asked questions related to current appointment wait times for routine/preventive exams, urgent/acute visits, and emergency visits. Follow-up calls were made to facilities that indicated wait times outside the community standards. Clarification was provided to the facilities about emergency care and referrals to the nearest emergency room (ER) as an option for immediate access. If the service was limited for a certain facility due to a provider shortage for routine office visits, additional provider sites were contacted in the same service area as those reporting longer than community standard wait times. The information on facilities with longer than acceptable wait times and a list of alternate choices was provided to PrimeWest Health's Member & Provider Services department in the event a member called to request health services in those service areas.

High-volume specialty care providers (obstetricians/gynecologists [OB/GYN], orthopedic surgeons, and podiatrists) and high-impact specialty care providers (oncologists, neurosurgery providers, and neonatal care providers) were contacted to determine average wait times for appointments.

In this report, the community standard is indicated with a red line in the data tables. Times below that line are considered longer than acceptable.

Objectives

In compliance with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Minnesota Senior Health Options/Minnesota Senior Care Plus (MHSO/MSO+) contract (section 6.8), Families and Children contract (section 6.13), Special Needs BasicCare (SNBC) contract (section 6.13), and PrimeWest Health Policy and Procedure CC05: Access to Care, the wait time survey is performed to ensure members are offered acceptable appointment wait times by behavioral health, specialty, and primary care providers based on acceptable community standards.

Performance Goals

PrimeWest Health's Quality Workgroup has defined performance goals that are expected of contracted primary care, specialty care, and behavioral health care providers. Goals for this survey include the following:

- Behavioral Health Care Providers
 - Appointments within 6 hours for members with non-life threatening emergencies (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers) – 100 percent

- Appointments within 48 hours for members with urgent needs (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers) – 100 percent
- Appointments within 10 days for members with routine needs (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers) – 85 percent
- Primary Care Providers
 - Appointments within 28 business days for members with routine care needs – 85 percent
 - Appointments within 24 hours for members with urgent care needs – 100 percent
- Specialty Care Providers
 - Appointments within 6 weeks for high-volume specialists – 85 percent
 - Appointments within 2 weeks for high-impact specialists – 95 percent
- After-Hours Care
 - Facilities have a live person or recording that directs members to call **911** if they are calling regarding an emergency – 85 percent

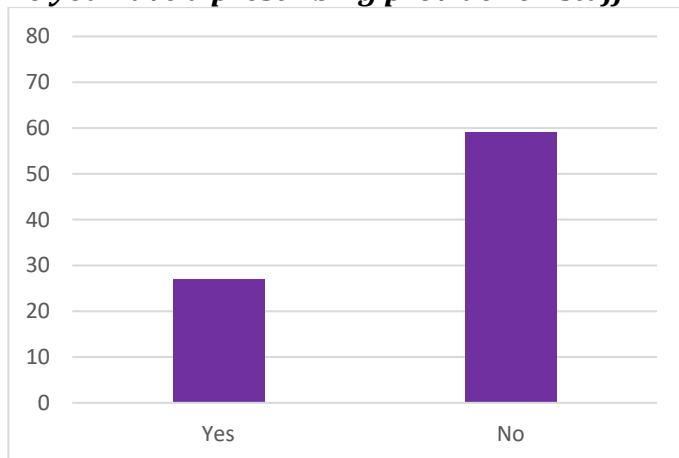
Methodology and Survey Design

The survey's wording, content, and design elements were developed by PrimeWest Health. PrimeWest Health staff called the facilities and administered the survey over the phone in September 2022. The survey includes demographic and wait time questions.

Part 1: Wait Time Survey for Behavioral Health Care Providers

Behavioral health care providers, including prescribing and non-prescribing behavioral health care providers, and behavioral health facilities were surveyed to determine the average wait time for appointments. The survey asked providers to give details on how they determine whether a call requesting an appointment is urgent or emergent and what the current wait times are for routine, urgent, and non-life threatening emergency appointments. PrimeWest Health contacted over 100 contracted behavioral health care providers, and 86 responded to the survey.

Do you have a prescribing provider on staff?

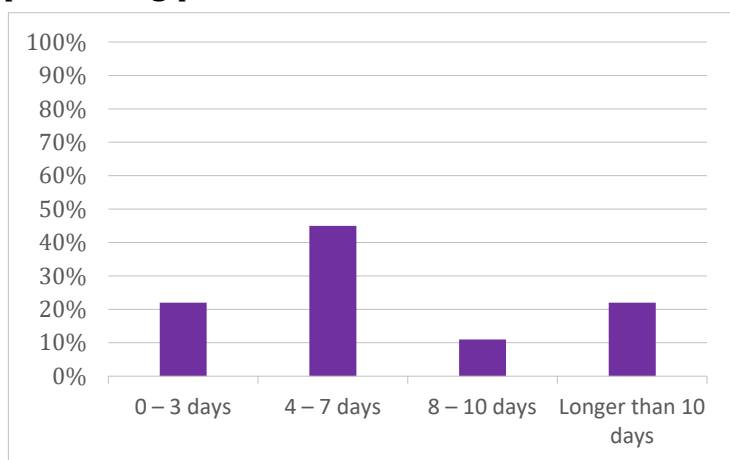


Prescribing provider on staff

Yes	27
No	59
Total	86

Of the 86 facilities that responded to this question, 27 had a prescribing provider on staff and 59 did not.

What is the average wait time for an appointment for a routine office visit with a prescribing provider?

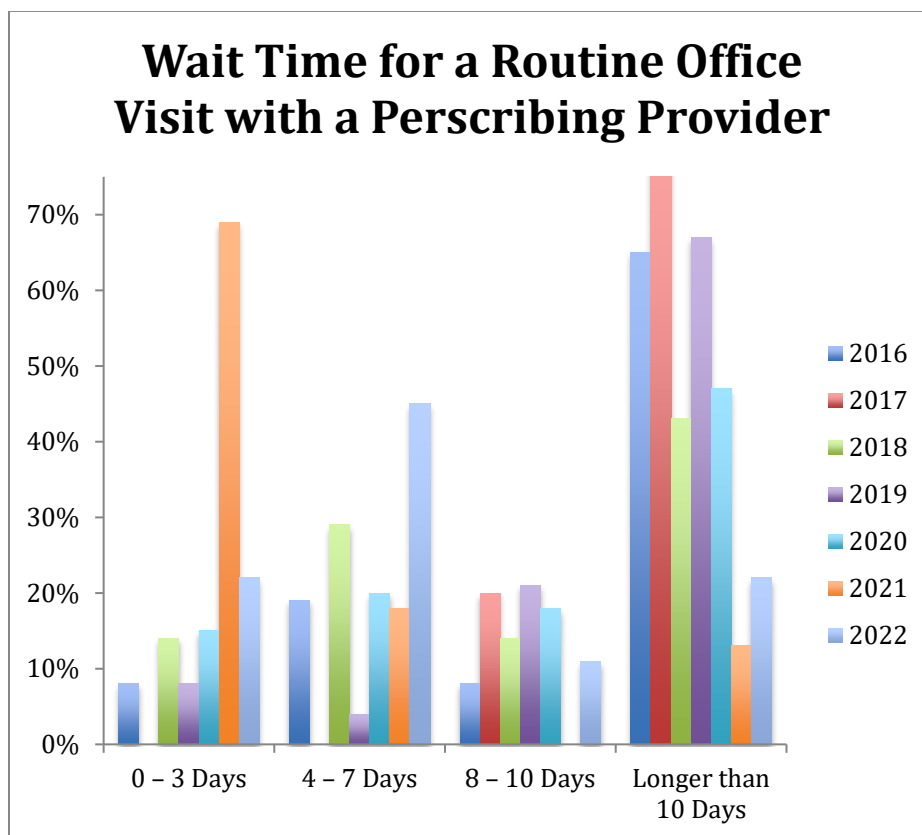


Wait time	Count	Percent
0 – 3 days	6	22%
4 – 7 days	12	45%
8 – 10 days	3	11%
Longer than 10 days	6	22%
Total	27	

The acceptable wait time to schedule a routine office visit is less than 10 days, as indicated by the red line.

Of the 27 providers that responded to this question, 78 percent had wait times of 0 – 10 days and 22 percent had wait times of more than 10 days. The most common reason for a wait time of over 10 days was “staff shortage.” Some facilities only had a prescribing provider visit once or twice per month; therefore, their wait time was out of the acceptable range. In these cases, most facilities refer patients to another facility location in a neighboring town.

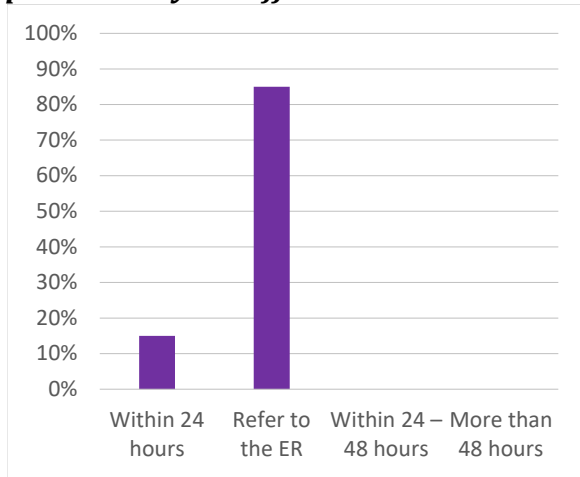
Wait Time for Routine Office Visit with a Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0 – 3 days	8%	0%	14%	8%	15%	69%	22%
4 – 7 days	19%	0%	29%	4%	20%	18%	45%
8 – 10 days	8%	20%	14%	21%	18%	0%	11%
More than 10 days	65%	80%	43%	67%	47%	13%	22%



Findings

- On average, wait times for a routine office visit with a prescribing provider increased from 2021 to 2022.
- From 2021 to 2022, wait times of more than 10 days increased by 9 percentage points.

What is the wait time for an appointment for urgent care services with the prescribing provider in your office?

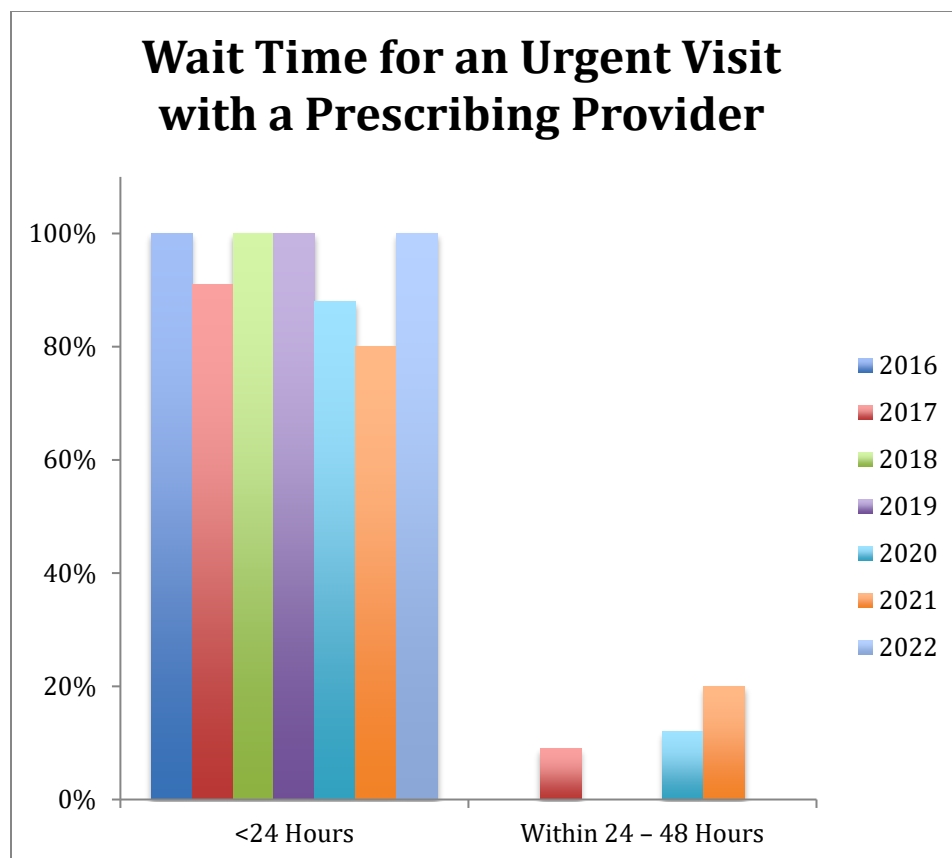


Wait time	Count	Percent
Within 24 hours	4	15%
Refer to the ER	23	85%
Within 24 – 48 hours	0	0%
More than 48 hours	0	0%
Total	27	

The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment if the need is determined to be urgent is less than 48 hours, as indicated by the red line.

Urgent care is defined as an acute episode that is the result of an unforeseen illness, injury, or condition that is medically necessary and requires immediate attention. Of the 27 facilities that answered this question, 100 percent reported an acceptable wait time of less than 48 hours, which included immediate referral to the ER.

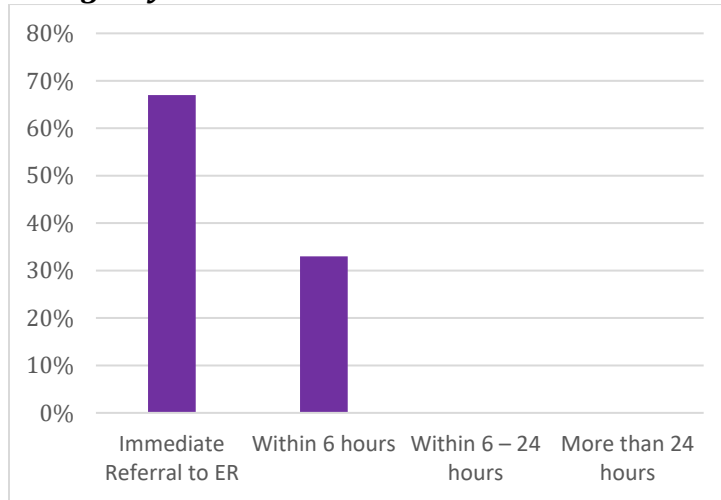
Wait Time for an Urgent Visit with a Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<24 hours or referral to the ER	100%	91%	100%	100%	88%	80%	100%
Within 24 – 48 hours	0%	9%	0%	0%	12%	20%	0%



Findings

- In 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2022, 100 percent of urgent appointments had a wait time of less than 24 hours.
- In 2017, 9 percent of urgent appointments had a wait time of 24 – 48 hours.
- In 2020, 12 percent of urgent appointments had a wait time of 24 – 48 hours.
- In 2021, 20 percent of urgent appointments had a wait time of 24 – 48 hours.

What is the wait time for care with a prescribing provider for a non-life threatening emergency?

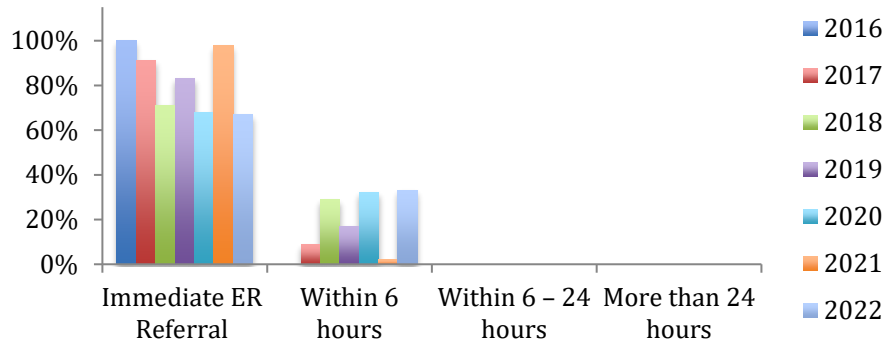


Wait time	Count	Percent
Immediate referral to ER or crisis center	18	67%
Within 6 hours	9	33%
Within 6 – 24 hours	0	0%
More than 24 hours	0	0%
Total	27	
The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment if the need is determined to be urgent is less than 6 hours, as indicated by the red line.		

Of the 27 facilities that answered this question, 100 percent reported an acceptable wait time of less than 6 hours, which included immediate referral to the ER or closest crisis center. Providers are willing to accommodate any patient who needs to be seen for a non-life threatening emergency.

Wait Time for a Non-Life Threatening Emergency Visit with a Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Immediate ER referral	100%	91%	71%	83%	68%	98%	67%
Within 6 hours	0%	9%	29%	17%	32%	2%	33%
Within 6 – 24 hours	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
More than 24 hours	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

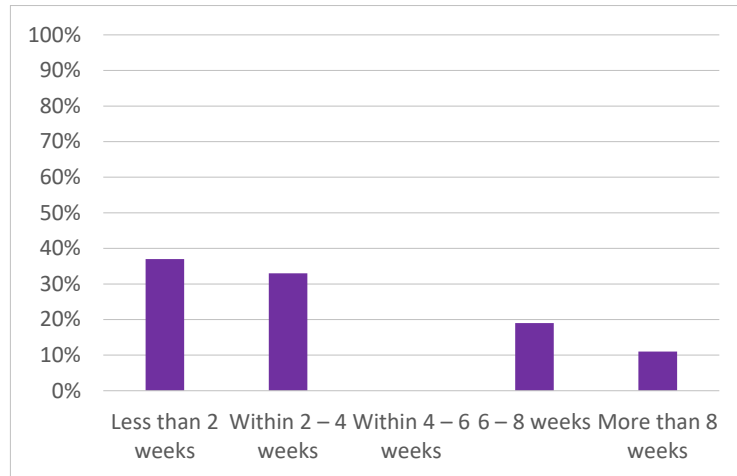
Wait Time for an Non-Life Threatening Emergency Visit with a Prescribing Provider



Findings

- In 2022, 100 percent of facilities contacted were able to accommodate a member within 6 hours or immediately refer them to the ER.
- From 2016 – 2022, all facilities reported acceptable wait times.

What is the wait time for follow-up appointments with a prescribing provider to evaluate patient progress and other changes that have taken place since a previous visit?

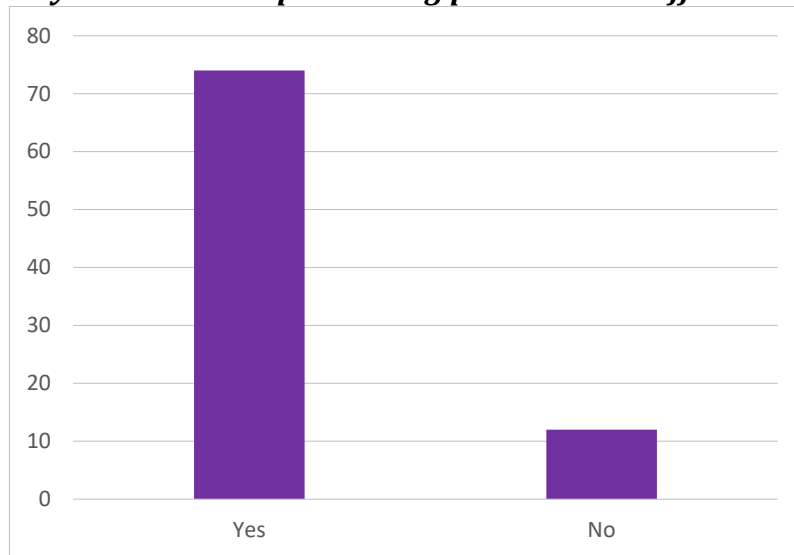


Wait time	Count	Percent
Less than 2 weeks	10	37%
Within 2 – 4 weeks	9	33%
Within 4 – 6 weeks	0	0%
6 – 8 weeks	5	19%
More than 8 weeks	3	11%
Total	27	

The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment is less than 8 weeks, as indicated by the red line

Of the 27 facilities that answered this question, 89 percent reported they are able to accommodate a patient for follow-up in less than 8 weeks.

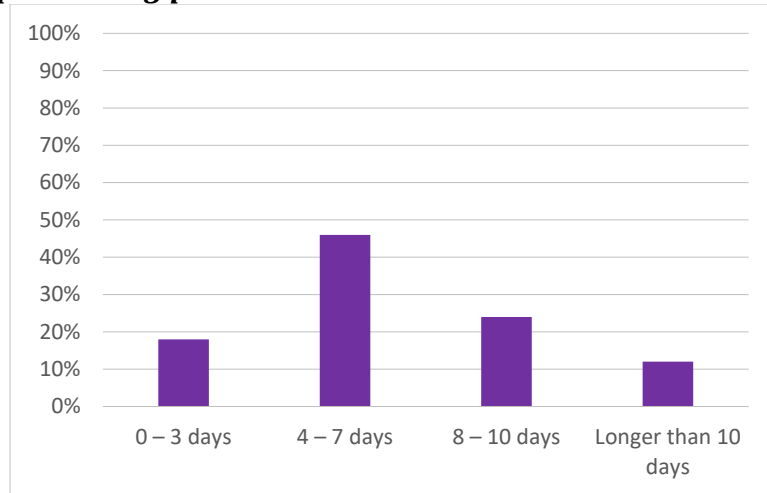
Do you have a non-prescribing provider on staff?



Non-prescribing provider on staff	
Yes	74
No	12
Total	86

Of the 86 facilities that responded to this question, 74 reported having had a non-prescribing provider on staff.

What is the wait time for an appointment for a routine office visit with a non-prescribing provider?

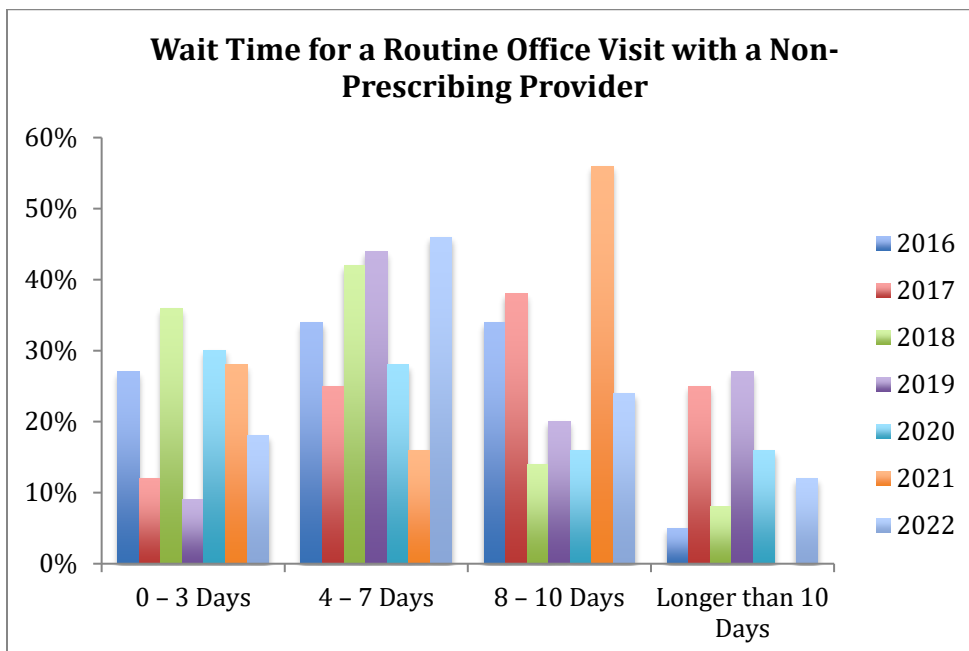


Wait time	Count	Percent
0 – 3 days	13	18%
4 – 7 days	34	46%
8 – 10 days	18	24%
Longer than 10 days	9	12%
Total	74	

The acceptable wait time to schedule a routine office visit is less than 10 days, as indicated by the red line.

Of the 74 facilities that responded, 18 percent reported a wait time of 0 – 3 days, 46 percent reported a wait time of 4 – 7 days, and 24 percent reported a wait time of 8 – 10 days. 12 percent of the respondents reported a wait time of more than 10 days.

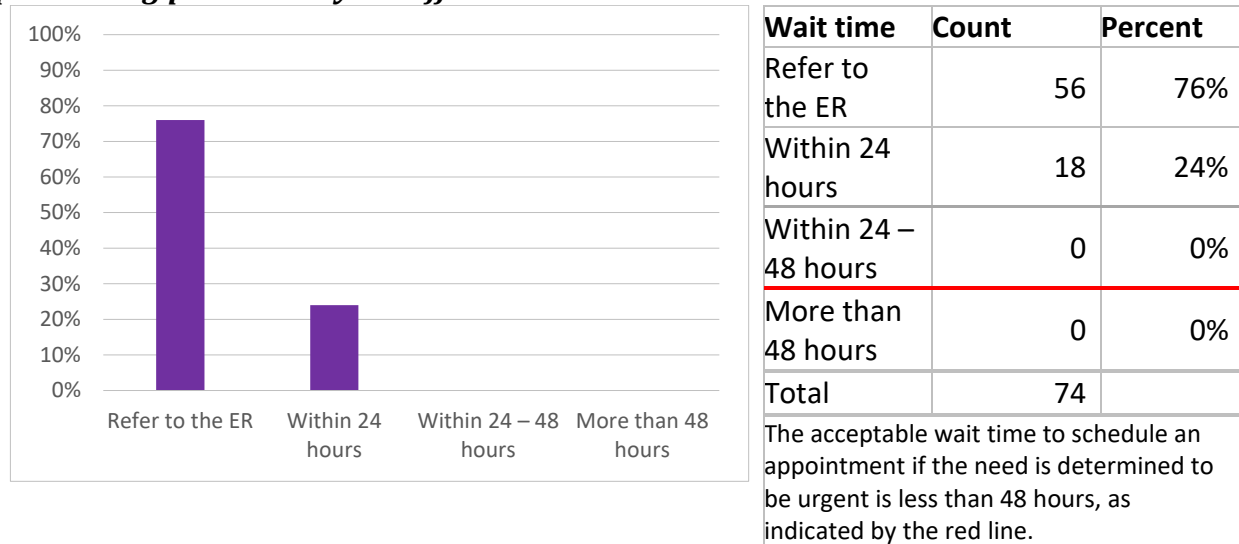
Wait Time for Routine Office Visit with a Non-Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0 – 3 days	27%	12%	36%	9%	30%	28%	18%
4 – 7 days	34%	25%	42%	44%	28%	16%	46%
8 – 10 days	34%	38%	14%	20%	16%	55%	24%
More than 10 days	5%	25%	8%	27%	16%	0%	12%



Findings

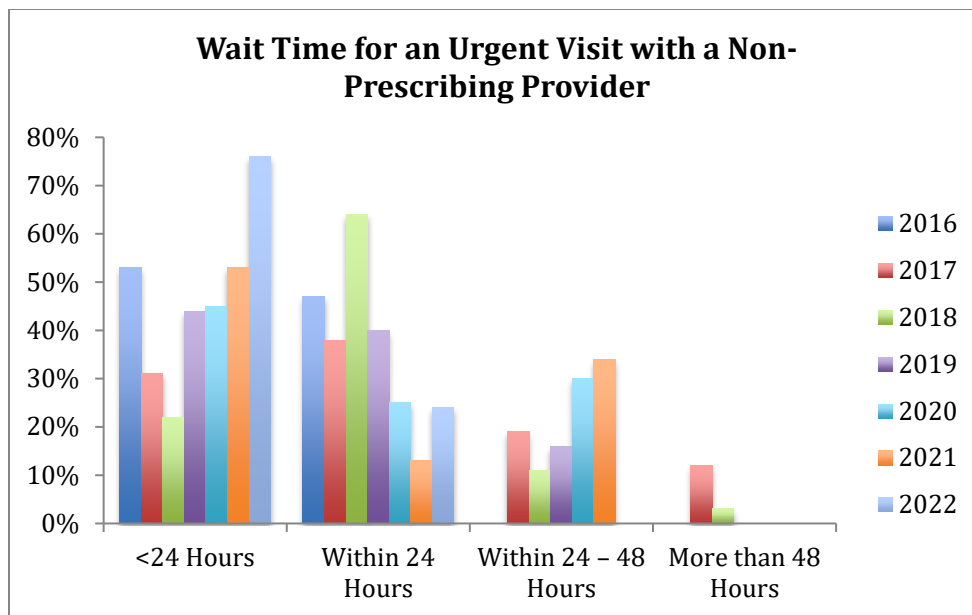
- In 2022, wait times longer than 10 days increased 12 percentage points from 2021.
- In 2022, wait times between 0 – 3 days decreased 10 percentage points from 2021.

What is the wait time for an appointment for urgent care services with a non-prescribing provider in your office?



Urgent care is defined as an acute episode that is the result of an unforeseen illness, injury, or condition that is medically necessary and requires immediate attention. Of the 74 facilities that answered this question, 100 percent reported an acceptable wait time of less than 48 hours or immediate referral to the ER.

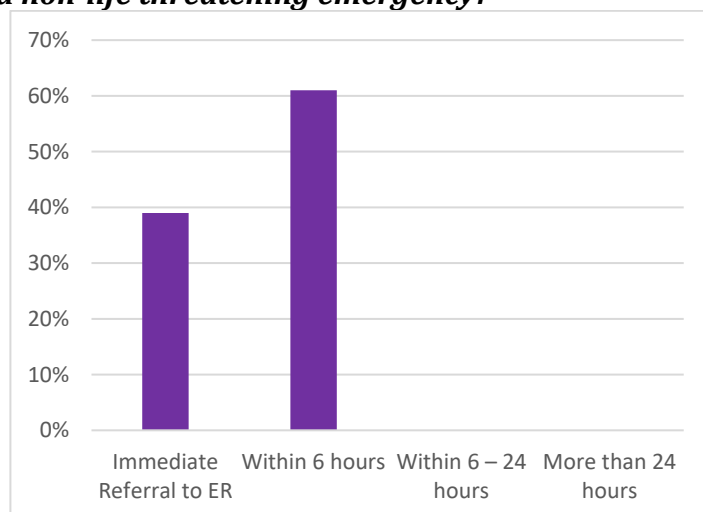
Wait Time for an Urgent Visit with a Non-Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Immediate referral to the ER	53%	31%	22%	44%	45%	53%	76%
Within 24 hours	47%	38%	64%	40%	25%	13%	24%
Within 24 – 48 hours	0%	19%	11%	16%	30%	34%	0%
More than 48 hours	0%	12%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%



Findings

- In 2020, 70 percent of providers could be seen within 24 hours for an urgent visit with a non-prescribing provider, including immediate referral to the ER.
- In 2021, 66 percent of providers could be seen within 24 hours for an urgent visit with a non-prescribing provider, including immediate referral to the ER.
- In 2022, 100 percent of providers could be seen within 24 hours for an urgent visit with a non-prescribing provider, including immediate referral to the ER.

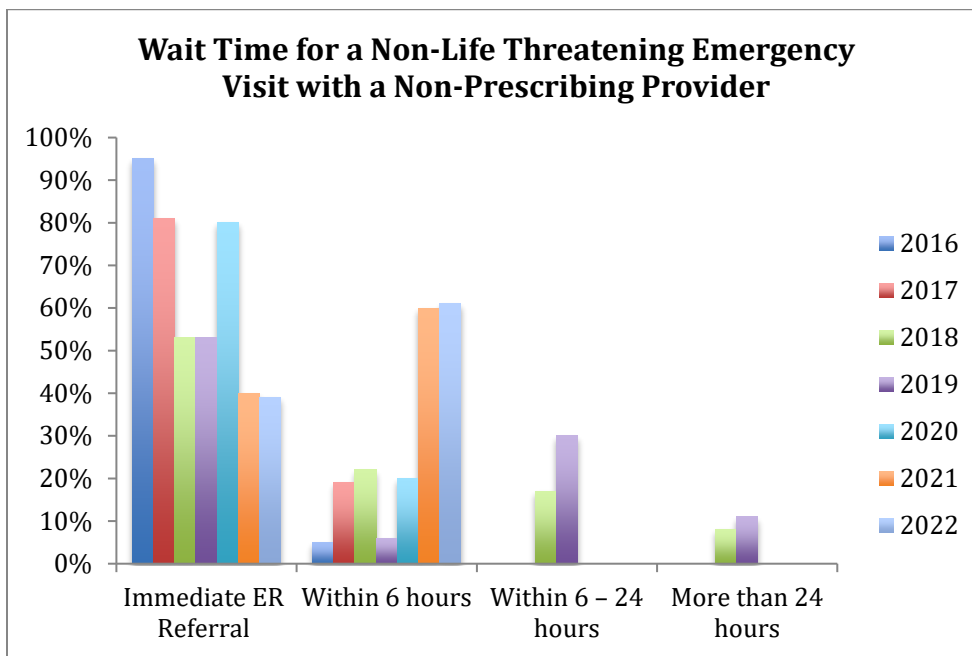
What is the wait time for an appointment for care with a non-prescribing provider for a non-life threatening emergency?



Wait time	Count	Percent
Immediate referral to ER	29	39%
Within 6 hours	45	61%
Within 6 – 24 hours	0	0%
More than 24 hours	0	0%
Total	74	
The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment if the need is determined to be urgent is less than 6 hours, as indicated by the red line.		

Of the 74 facilities that answered this question, 100 percent reported an acceptable wait time of less than 6 hours or immediate referral to the ER.

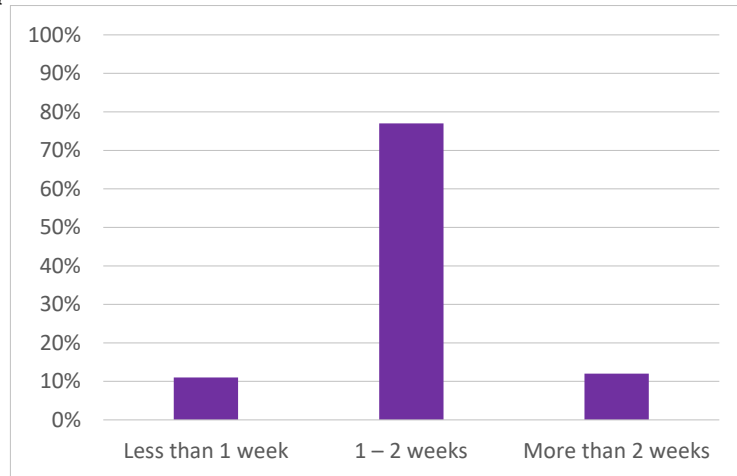
Wait Time for Non-Life Threatening Emergency Visit with a Non-Prescribing Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Immediate ER referral	95%	81%	53%	53%	80%	40%	39%
Within 6 hours	5%	19%	22%	6%	20%	60%	61%
Within 6 – 24 hours	0%	0%	17%	30%	0%	0%	0%
More than 24 hours	0%	0%	8%	11%	0%	0%	0%



Findings

- In 2022, wait times for a non-life threatening emergency visit with a non-prescribing provider increased compared to 2021.
- In 2022, immediate ER referrals for this type of visit was 39 percent (down from 40 percent in 2021).
- In 2022, non-acceptable wait times of more than 6 hours was 0 percent (same as in 2021).

What is the wait time for follow-up appointments to evaluate patient progress and other changes that have taken place since a previous visit for a non-prescribing provider?



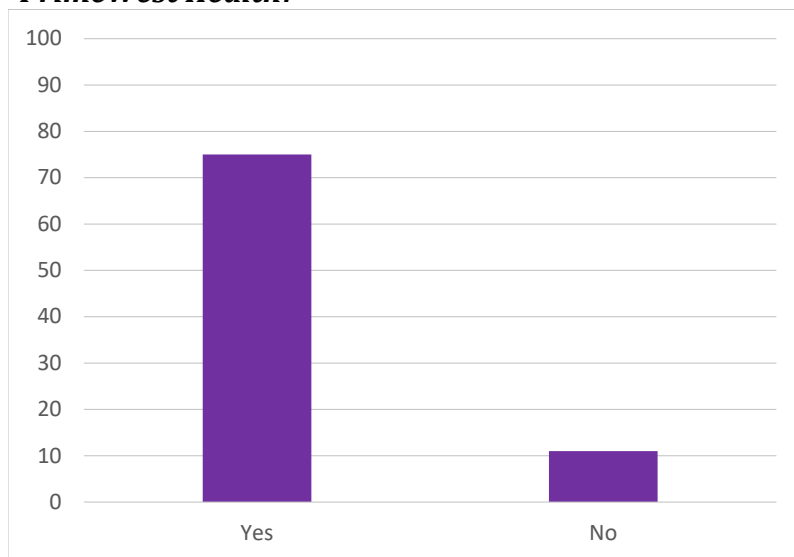
Wait time	Count	Percent
Less than 1 week	8	11%
1 – 2 weeks	57	77%
More than 2 weeks	9	12%
Total	74	

The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment is less than 2 weeks, as indicated by the red line.

Of the 74 facilities that answered this question, 88 percent said they are able to see patients for follow-up in less than 2 weeks.

- 12 percent of respondents said they see patients for follow-up in more than two weeks, with the most common reason being “staff shortage.”

Are you aware that the practitioner(s) in your office is a participating provider with PrimeWest Health?



Yes	75
No	11
Total	86

Of the 86 facilities that responded, 75 providers were aware that the practitioners in their office are participating providers with PrimeWest Health and 11 were not.

Quantitative Analysis

The results of the survey indicate that two out of three performance goals were met.

- Goal: 85 percent of providers can accommodate appointments within 10 business days for behavioral health members with routine needs (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers).
 - 78 percent of prescribing and 88 percent of non-prescribing behavioral health providers could accommodate a patient within 10 business days for a routine appointment. This does not meet the performance goal of 85 percent.
- Goal: 100 percent of providers can accommodate patients within 6 hours for members with non-life threatening emergencies (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers).
 - 100 percent of prescribing and 100 percent of non-prescribing providers were able to accommodate a patient within 6 hours for a non-life threatening emergency. This goal was met.
- Goal: 100 percent of providers can accommodate appointments within 48 hours for behavioral health members with urgent needs (for both prescribing and non-prescribing providers).
 - 100 percent of prescribing and 100 percent of non-prescribing behavioral health providers could accommodate a patient with urgent care needs within 48 hours. This goal was met.

In 2020, 2021, and 2022, 100 percent of prescribing and non-prescribing providers could accommodate appointments within 6 hours for behavioral health members with non-life threatening emergencies

In 2020 2021, and 2022, 100 percent of prescribing and non-prescribing providers could accommodate appointments within 48 hours for behavioral health members with urgent needs.

Qualitative Analysis

The results of the survey indicate that two of the three performance goals were met to ensure that PrimeWest Health members have adequate access to behavioral health care services in a timely manner.

However, a few providers had wait times that fell outside of the “acceptable” wait time. PrimeWest Health conducted a barrier analysis to identify why.

PrimeWest Health found that several providers are indicating that wait times are different for new patients versus established patients.

- Wait times are still longer for new patients due to longer appointment times needed with the provider.
- Wait times may be longer because clinics need to time to process the new patient in the system, which can take a few days.
- Established patients may book their appointments far ahead of time, thereby taking up many of the available appointment times.
- Established patients may have a relationship already developed with their provider, making the provider more willing to fit them into the schedule.

In addition, PrimeWest Health members continue to have more chronic diseases, which may require more in-depth behavioral health services. This takes more time for the provider to provide services, thus taking up more appointment times and further increasing wait times.

The PrimeWest Health service area still includes very rural regions of Minnesota. Because of this, although PrimeWest Health contracts with every available psychiatrist in our service area, the number of psychiatrists continues to be limited.

- There is still a provider shortage in rural Minnesota for psychologists and psychiatrists. Because of the geographic location, it is difficult to recruit new providers to the area. Many providers are unwilling to relocate to rural areas due to the lack of resources and facilities.
- Facilities in rural areas may not have the resources to support an increased patient load. Even if there are enough providers, some facilities may not have the room to see more than a few patients at one time.
- PrimeWest Health is still seeing that existing providers are retiring or will be retiring and are not taking new patients.
- In 2016, PrimeWest Health provided grant dollars to a county in our service area to add telehealth technology. In addition, PrimeWest Health contracts with additional behavioral health providers that are able to provide telehealth services to improve access.

Analysis of Member Complaints/Grievances

PrimeWest Health's Quality & Utilization Management department tracks all member Grievances throughout the year. An analysis of 2021 Grievances showed there were no Grievances reported regarding access to behavioral health care services in terms of appointment times for routine, urgent care, or emergency services.

Interventions

New behavioral health providers that can be contracted with PrimeWest Health will continue to be identified. To do this, PrimeWest Health will continue to reach out to non-contracted providers that see patients in rural counties where there is a low concentration of behavioral health providers and a high concentration of members. Attempts will continue to be made to secure contracts with behavioral health providers, including providers that can provide telehealth services.

PrimeWest Health will continue to coordinate with and offer transportation to members in rural areas with few providers to help them access care in a timely manner.

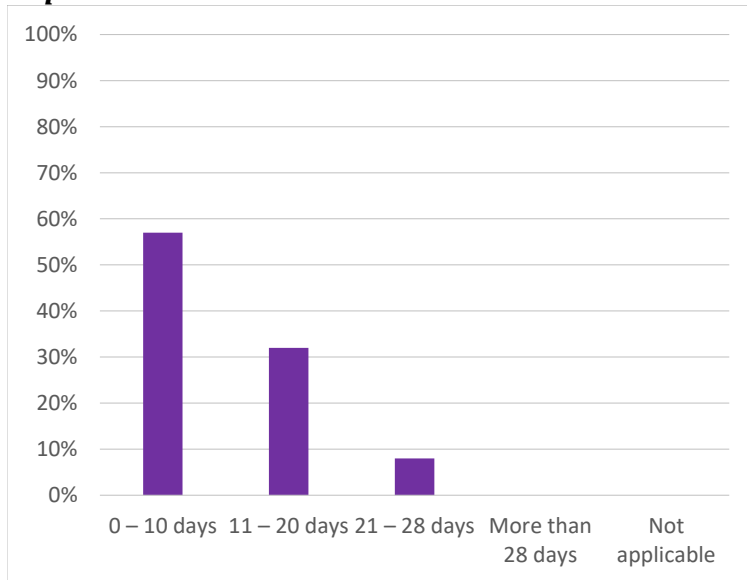
PrimeWest Health will continue to educate providers about the requirements related to appointment access so providers can best determine how to provide coverage for urgent and routine appointments.

PrimeWest Health found that more providers were utilizing telehealth during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). PrimeWest Health continues to allow telehealth services as an option for members, especially in the more remote parts of Minnesota, and is increasing our network of behavioral health providers that provide telehealth services. In 2022, we added 14 behavioral health providers that can provide telehealth services.

Part 2: Wait Time Survey for Primary Care Providers

Primary care providers were surveyed about their current appointment wait times for routine/preventive exams, urgent/acute visits, and emergency visits. We contacted over 150 contracted primary care providers, and 99 responded to the survey.

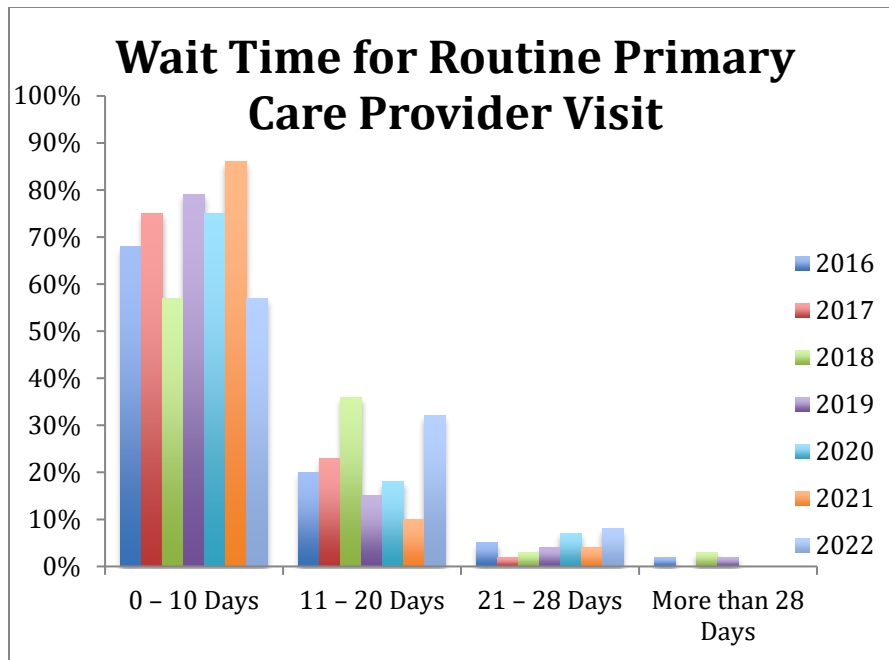
What is the wait time for a patient to schedule an appointment for a routine physical or preventive exam?



Wait time	Count	Percent
0 – 10 days	56	57%
11 – 20 days	32	32%
21 – 28 days	8	8%
More than 28 days	0	0%
Total	99	
The acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment for a routine exam is less than 28 days, as indicated by the red line.		

Of the 99 providers that answered this question, 100 percent reported an acceptable wait time of less than 28 days. The majority of providers, 57 percent, reported a wait time of 0 – 10 days, 32 percent of providers reported a wait time of 11 – 20 days, and 8 percent reported a wait time of 21 – 28 days. No facilities reported wait times of over 28 days.

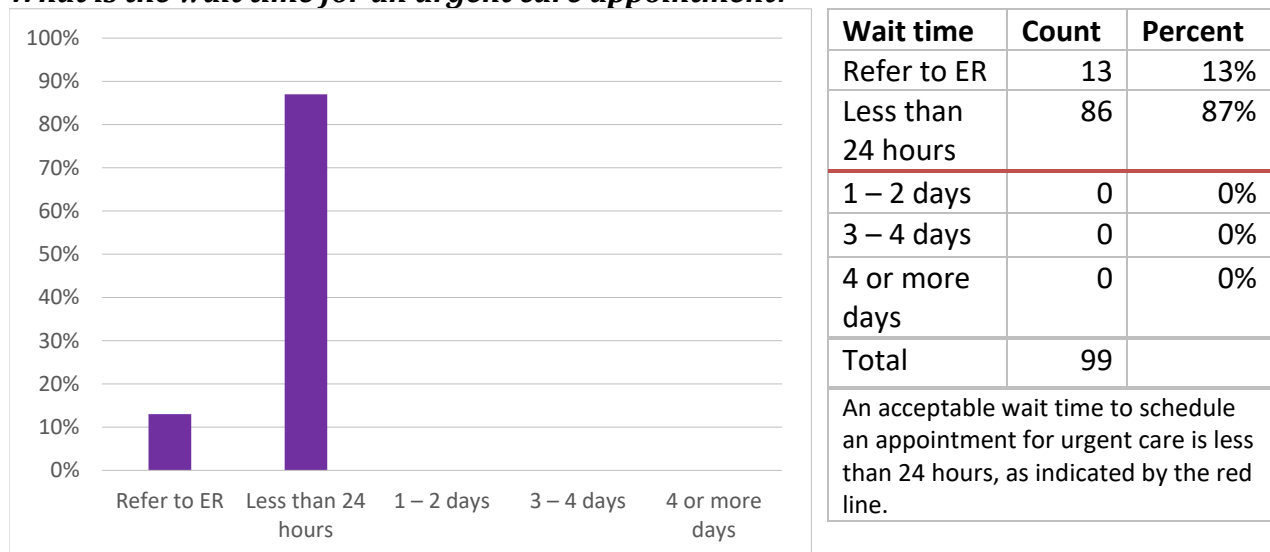
Wait Time for Routine Primary Care Provider Visit Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
0 – 10 days	68%	75%	57%	79%	75%	86%	57%
11 – 20 days	20%	23%	36%	15%	18%	10%	32%
21 – 28 days	5%	2%	3%	4%	7%	4%	8%
More than 28 days	2%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%



Findings

- No wait times of more than 28 days were reported in 2021 or 2022.
- In 2022, 57 percent of respondents reported wait times of 0 – 10 days (down 29 percentage points from 2021 [86 percent]).
- In 2021 and 2022, 100 percent of respondents reported acceptable wait times for primary care provider routine visits.

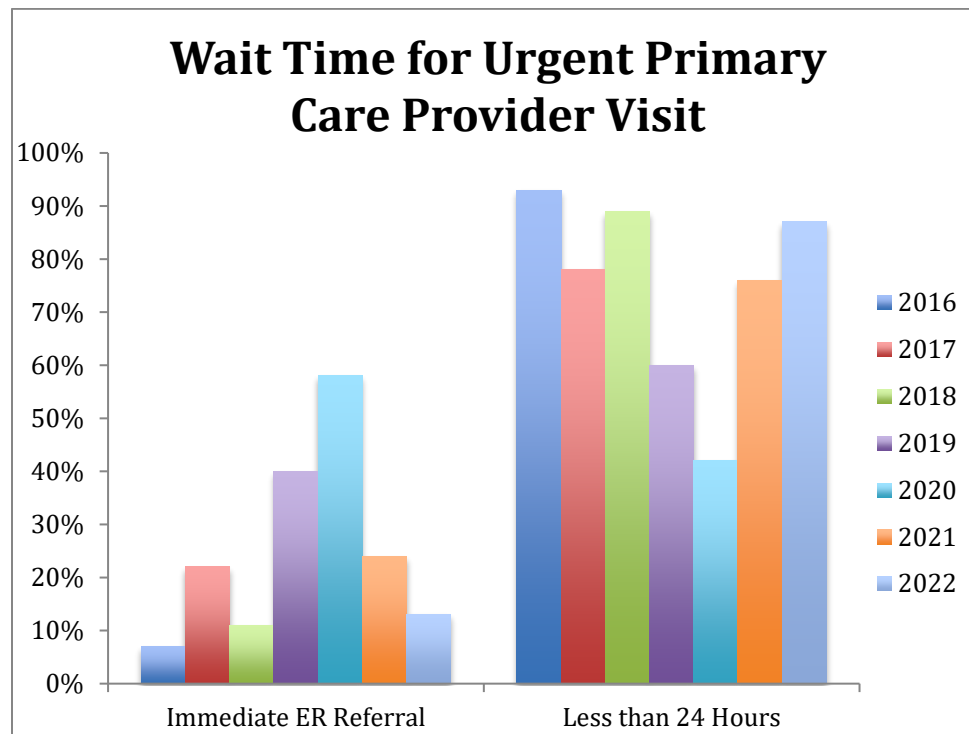
What is the wait time for an urgent care appointment?



Urgent care is defined as an acute episode that is the result of an unforeseen illness, injury, or condition that is medically necessary and requires immediate attention. Of the 99 providers that

answered this question, 100 percent reported they see the patient in less than 24 hours or refer the patient to the ER..

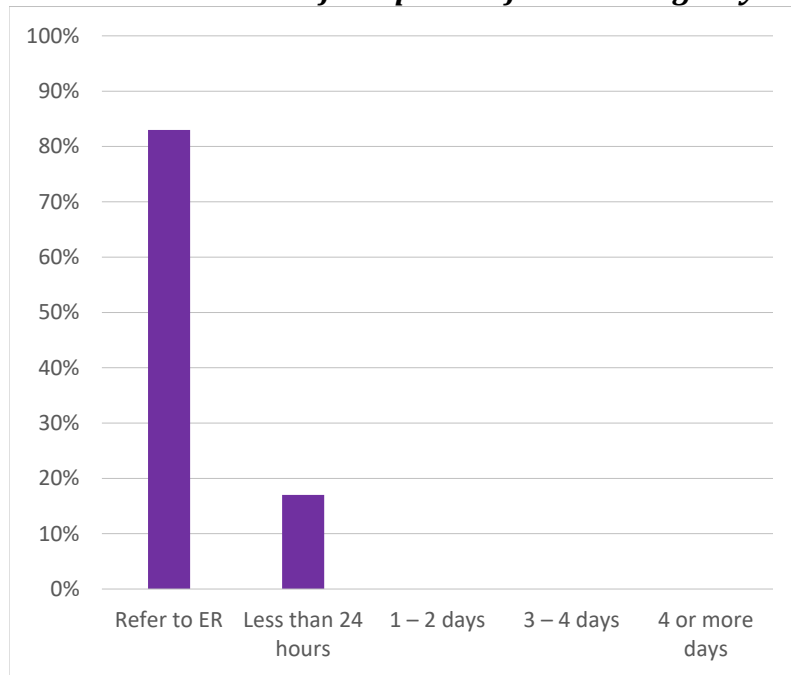
Wait Time for Urgent Primary Care Provider Visit Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Immediate ER referral	7%	22%	11%	40%	58%	24%	13%
Less than 24 hours	93%	78%	89%	60%	42%	76%	87%



Findings

- In 2022, wait times for an urgent primary care provider visit increased slightly from 2021 due to a decrease in the number of immediate ER referrals.
- In 2022, the rate of immediate ER referrals was 13 percent (down 11 percentage points from 2021 [24 percent]).

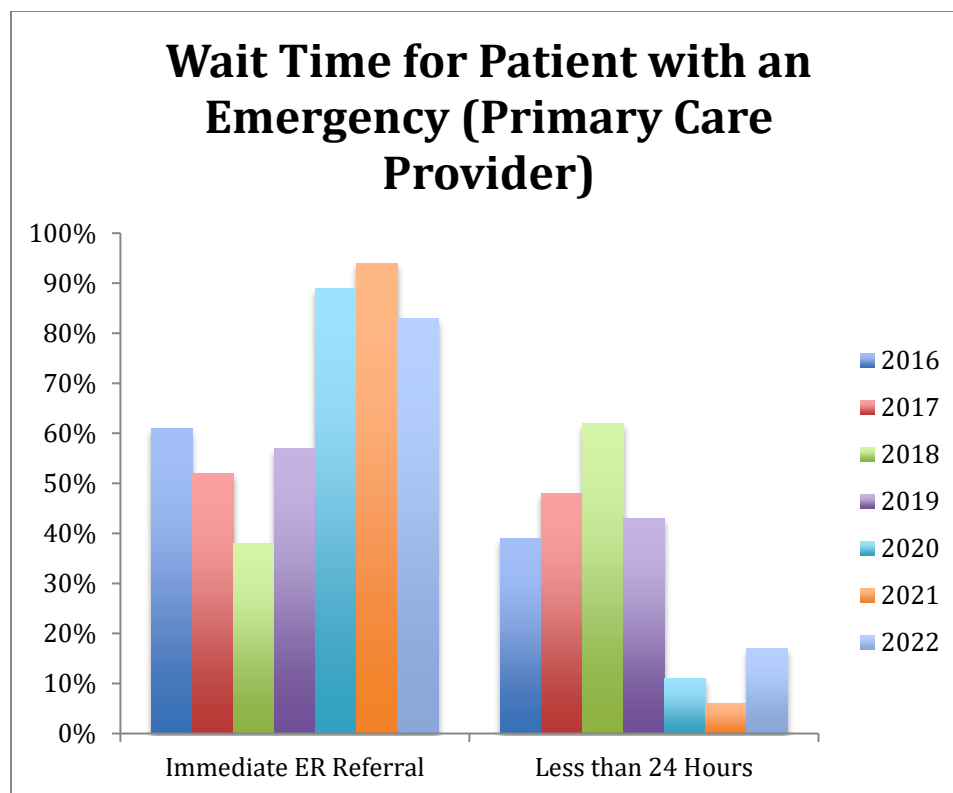
What is the wait time for a patient for an emergency?



Wait time	Count	Percent
Refer to ER	82	83%
Less than 24 hours	17	17%
1 – 2 days	0	0%
3 – 4 days	0	0%
4 or more days	0	0%
Total	99	
An acceptable wait time to schedule an appointment for urgent care is less than 24 hours, as indicated by the red line.		

One hundred percent of providers will either refer the patient to the ER or see the patient in less than 24 hours in the event of an emergency.

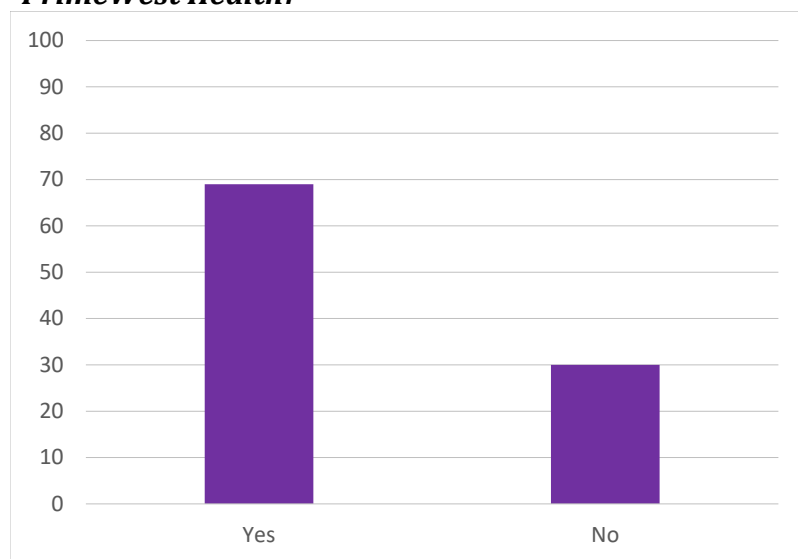
Wait Time for Patient with an Emergency (Primary Care Provider) Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Immediate ER referral	61%	52%	38%	57%	89%	94%	83%
Less than 24 hours	39%	48%	62%	43%	11%	6%	17%



Findings

- In 2022, the rate of immediate ER referrals for patients with an emergency was 83 percent (down 11 percentage points from 2021 [94 percent]).
- Wait times for patients with an emergency have remained in the acceptable range from 2016 to 2022.

Are you aware that the practitioner(s) in your office are participating providers with PrimeWest Health?



Yes	69
No/Unsure	30
Total	99

Of the 99 facilities that responded, 69 were aware that the practitioners in their office are participating providers with PrimeWest Health; 30 providers that answered were unsure.

Quantitative Analysis

The results of the survey indicate that both performance goals were met to ensure that PrimeWest Health members have adequate access to primary care services in a timely manner.

- Goal: 85 percent of providers can accommodate appointments within 28 business days for members with routine care needs.
 - One hundred percent of primary care providers could accommodate a patient within 28 days for a routine physical or preventive exam. This exceeds the performance goal of 85 percent.
- Goal: 100 percent of providers can accommodate appointments within 24 hours for members with urgent care needs.
 - One hundred percent of providers could accommodate a patient within 24 hours or refer them to an ER. This goal was met.

Qualitative Analysis

Because all measures (routine and urgent) meet pre-established goals, a robust barrier analysis was not conducted and interventions did not need to be developed to improve this measure. However, we will continue to monitor primary care provider wait times to ensure access to primary care appointments is available for members.

Analysis of Member Complaints/Grievances

PrimeWest Health's Quality & Utilization Management department tracks all member Grievances throughout the year. An analysis of 2021 Grievances showed there were zero Grievances reported regarding access to primary care services in terms of appointment times for routine, urgent care, or emergency services.

Interventions

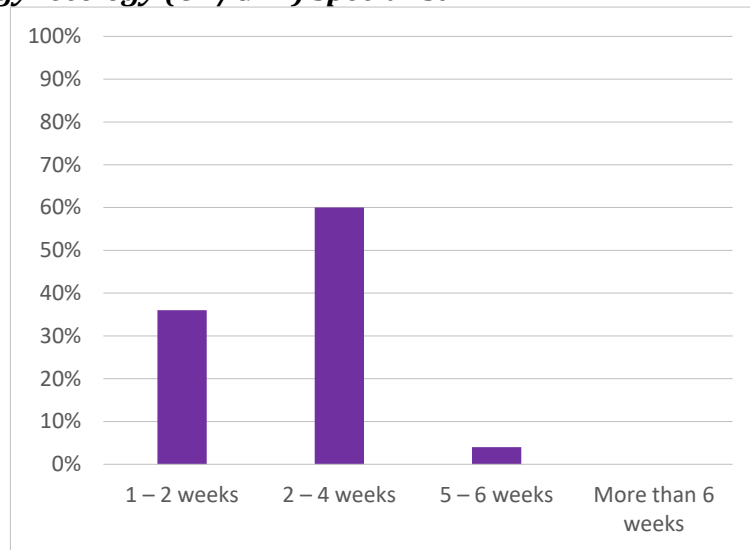
PrimeWest Health will continue to monitor member Grievances regarding access and address them individually to meet members' needs. In addition, the number of member Grievances will be monitored and compared in relation to our total membership. PrimeWest Health continues to expand our provider network to ensure members have timely access to practitioners. New providers are credentialed and existing providers are recertified on the standard cycle.

Part 3: Specialty Services

In addition to behavioral health and primary care providers, PrimeWest Health contacted high-volume specialty care providers and high-impact specialty care providers to determine average wait times for appointments. High-volume specialty care providers include obstetricians/gynecologists (OB/GYN), orthopedic surgeons, and podiatrists. High-impact specialty care providers include oncologists, neurosurgery providers, and neonatal care providers.

High-Volume Specialty Care

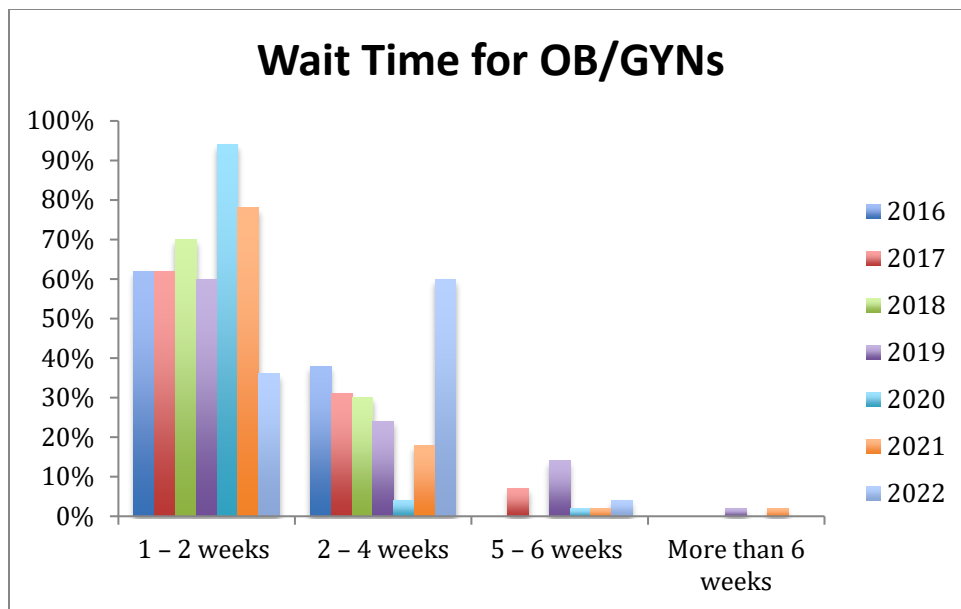
What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment with an obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) specialist?



Wait time	Count	Percent
1 – 2 weeks	18	36%
2 – 4 weeks	30	60%
5 – 6 weeks	2	4%
More than 6 weeks	0	0%
Total	50	
The acceptable wait time to obtain an appointment with an OB/GYN specialist is 6 weeks or less, as indicated by the red line.		

Of the 50 providers who responded, 100 percent reported acceptable wait times for accommodating a patient scheduling an appointment with an OB/GYN specialist.

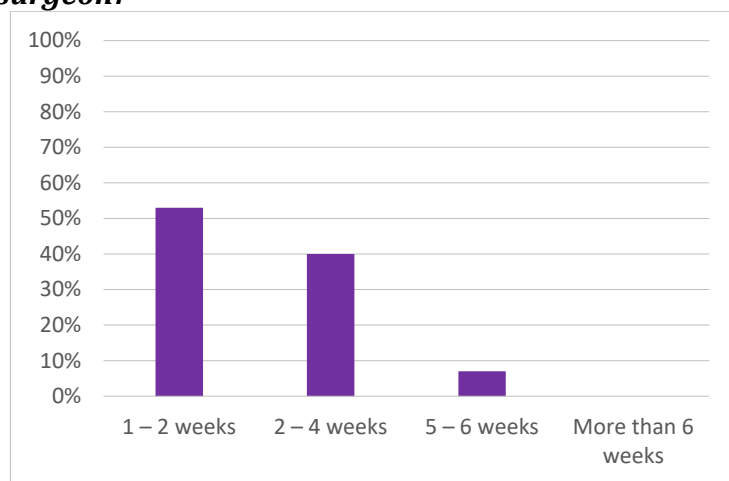
Wait Time for an Appointment with an OB/GYN Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 2 weeks	62%	62%	70%	60%	94%	78%	36%
2 – 4 weeks	38%	31%	30%	24%	4%	18%	60%
5 – 6 weeks	0%	7%	0%	14%	2%	2%	4%
More than 6 weeks	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	2%	0%



Findings

- Wait times for an appointment with an OB/GYN have remained in the acceptable range from 2016 through 2022.

What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon?

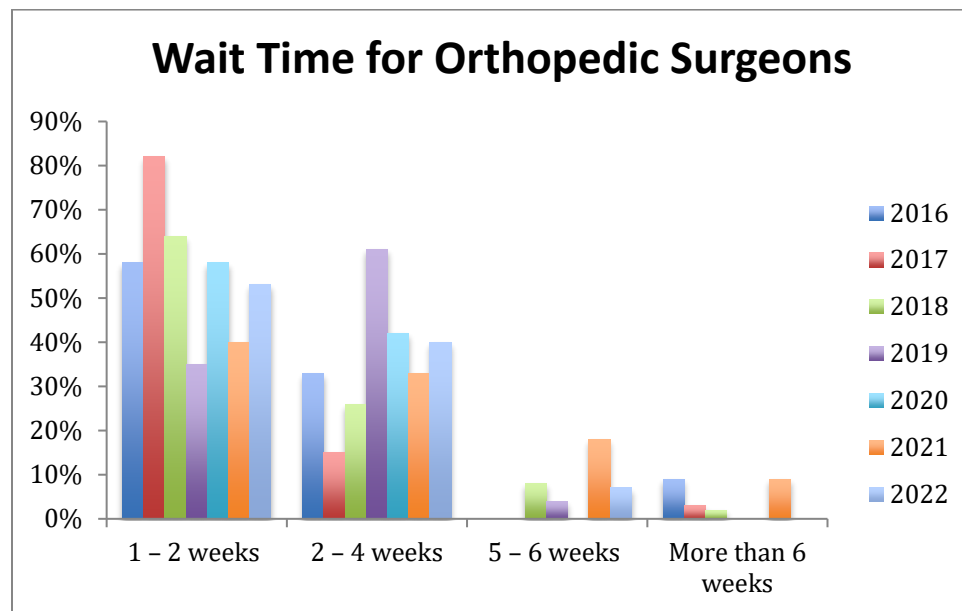


Wait time	Count	Percent
1 – 2 weeks	24	53%
2 – 4 weeks	18	40%
5 – 6 weeks	3	7%
More than 6 weeks	0	0%
Total	45	

The acceptable wait time to obtain an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon is 6 weeks or less, as indicated by the red line.

100 percent of providers reported acceptable wait times for patients obtaining appointments with an orthopedic surgeon.

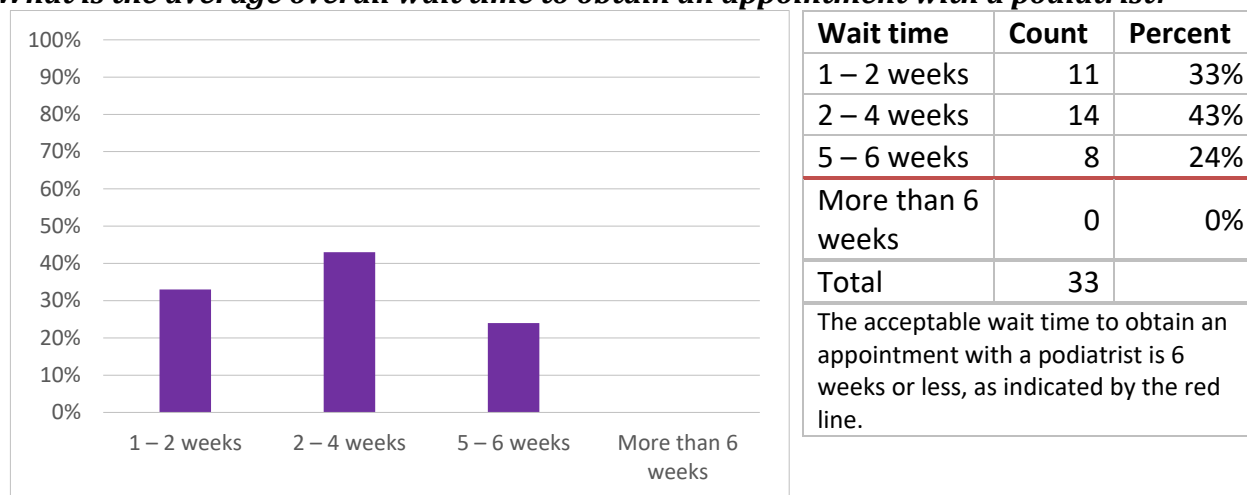
Wait Time for an Appointment with an Orthopedic Surgeon Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 2 weeks	58%	82%	64%	35%	58%	40%	53%
2 – 4 weeks	33%	15%	26%	61%	42%	33%	40%
5 – 6 weeks	0%	0%	8%	4%	0%	18%	7%
More than 6 weeks	9%	3%	2%	0%	0%	9%	0%



Findings

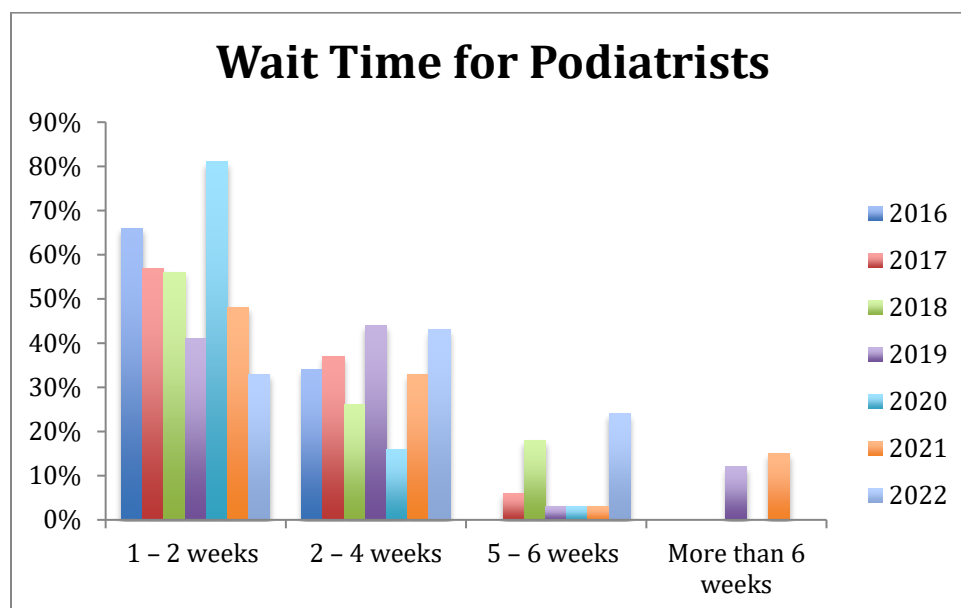
- In 2022, wait times for an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon decreased slightly compared to 2021.
- In 2022, wait times of 1 – 2 weeks increased 13 percentage points to 53 percent (up from 40 percent in 2021).
- In 2022, wait times of 2 – 4 weeks increased 7 percentage points from 2021.
- In 2022, wait times of 5 – 6 weeks decreased 11 percentage points from 2021.

What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment with a podiatrist?



100 percent of providers reported acceptable wait times for patients obtaining appointments with a podiatrist.

Wait Time for an Appointment with a Podiatrist Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 2 weeks	66%	57%	56%	41%	81%	48%	33%
2 – 4 weeks	34%	37%	26%	44%	16%	33%	43%
5 – 6 weeks	0%	6%	18%	3%	3%	3%	24%
More than 6 weeks	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	15%	0%



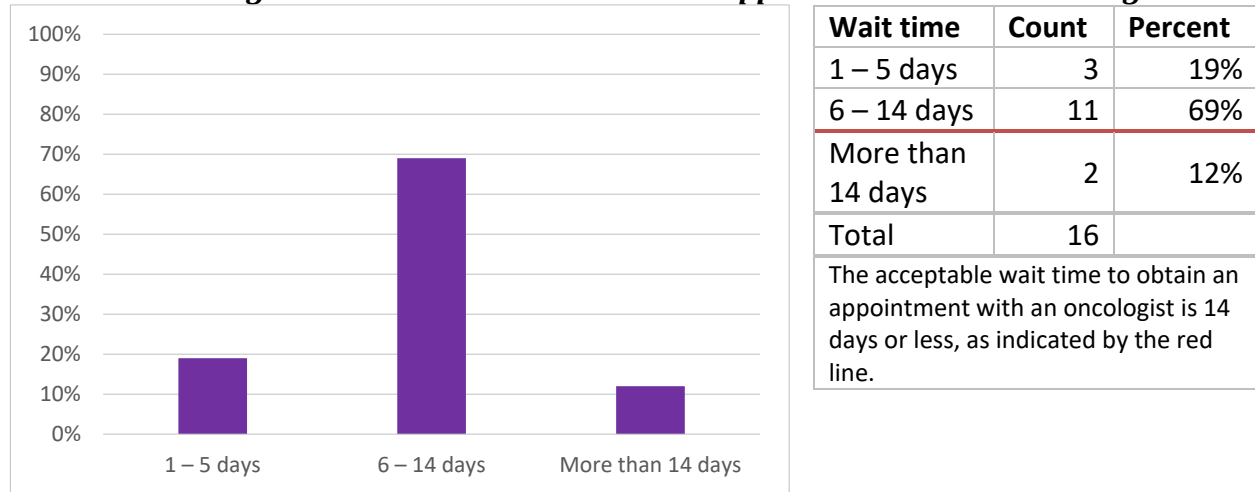
Findings

- In 2022, wait times for an appointment with a podiatrist decreased from 2021.
- Wait times of 5 – 6 weeks increased 21 percentage points from 2021 to 2022.

- In 2022, wait times of 1 – 2 weeks were at 33 percent (down from 48 percent in 2021).
- Throughout 2016 – 2018, 100 percent of podiatrists reported acceptable wait times.

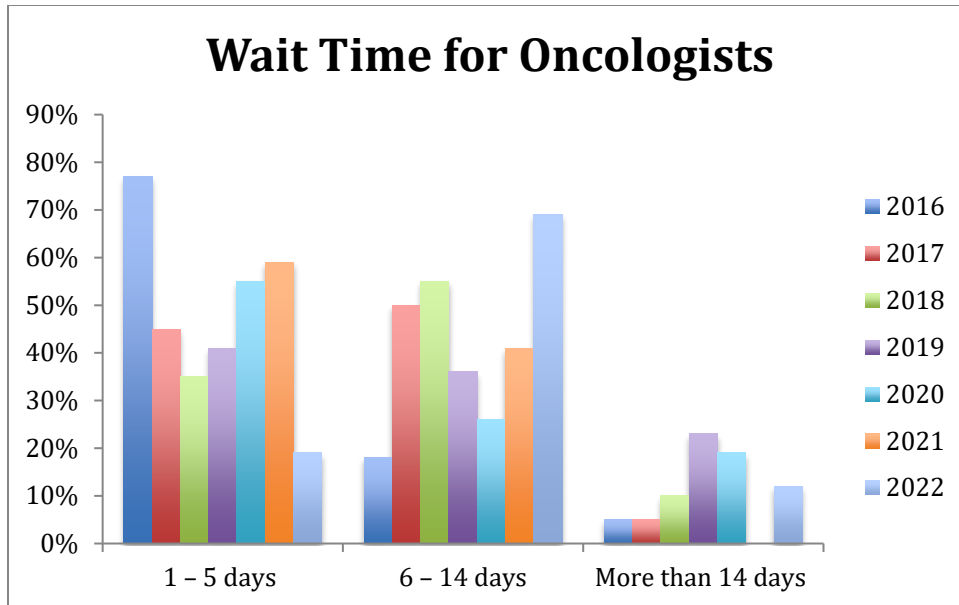
High-Impact Specialty Care

What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment with an oncologist?



88 percent of providers reported acceptable wait times for accommodating a patient scheduling an appointment with an oncologist.

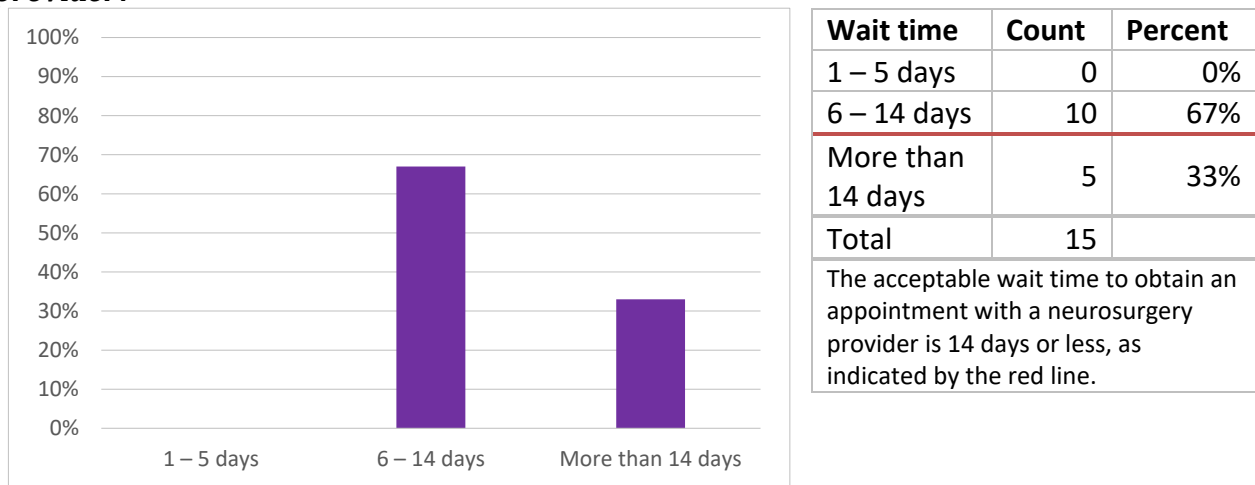
Wait Time for an Appointment with an Oncologist Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 5 days	77%	45%	35%	41%	55%	59%	19%
6 – 14 days	18%	50%	55%	36%	26%	41%	69%
More than 14 days	5%	5%	10%	23%	19%	0%	12%



Findings

- In 2022, acceptable wait times for an appointment with an oncologist were at 88 percent (down from 100 percent in 2021).
- In 2022, wait times of 1 – 5 days were at 19 percent (down 40 percentage points from 2021 [59 percent]).

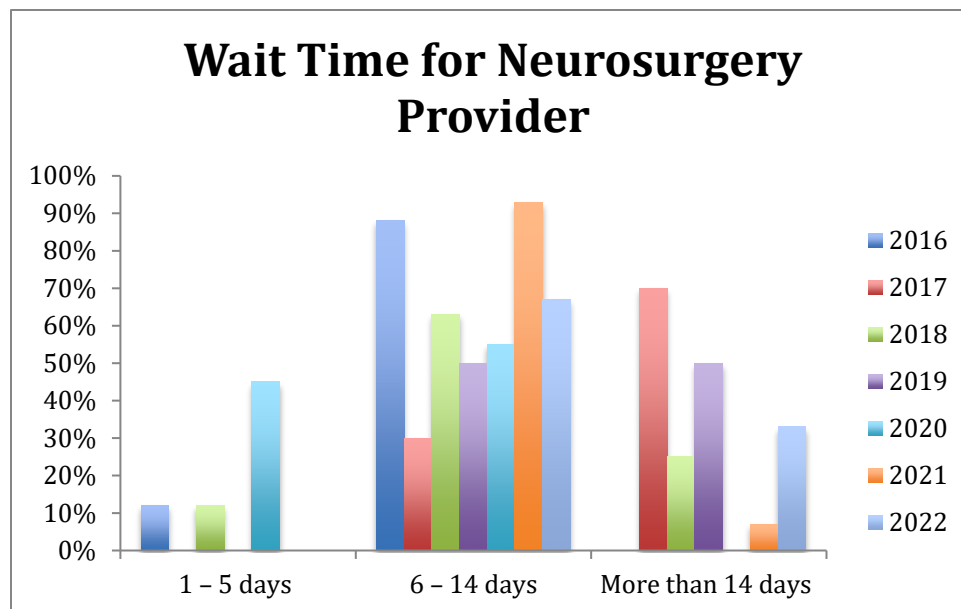
What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment with a neurosurgery provider?



67 percent of providers who answered this question reported acceptable wait times for accommodating a patient scheduling an appointment with a neurosurgery provider.

- Five providers were booked out past 14 days, which is standard scheduling practice for those providers; however, all said they triage appointments and if the need is urgent, the provider is likely able to see the member sooner.

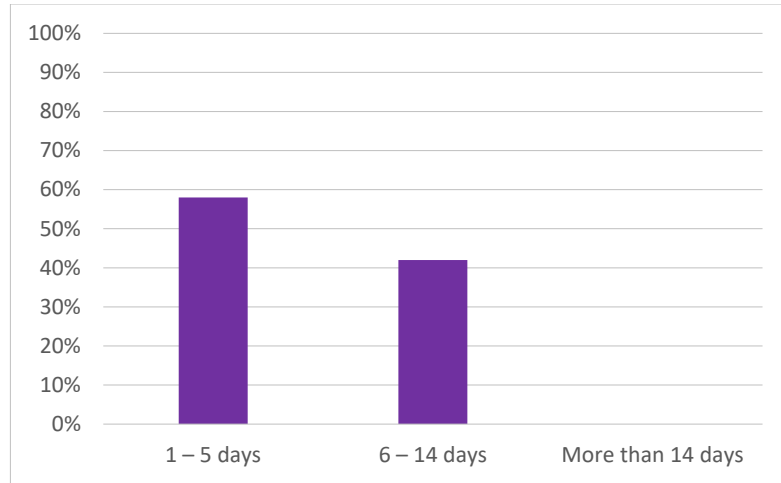
Wait Time for an Appointment with a Neurosurgery Provider Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 5 days	12%	0%	12%	0%	45%	0%	0%
6 – 14 days	88%	30%	63%	50%	55%	93%	67%
More than 14 days	0%	70%	25%	50%	0%	7%	33%



Findings

- In 2022, wait times for an appointment with a neurosurgery provider increased from 2021.
- In 2022, unacceptable wait times of more than 14 days was at 33 percent (up 26 percentage points from 2021 [7 percent]).
- Wait times of 1 – 5 days remained at 0 percent from 2021 to 2022.

What is the average overall wait time to obtain an appointment for follow-up neonatal care?

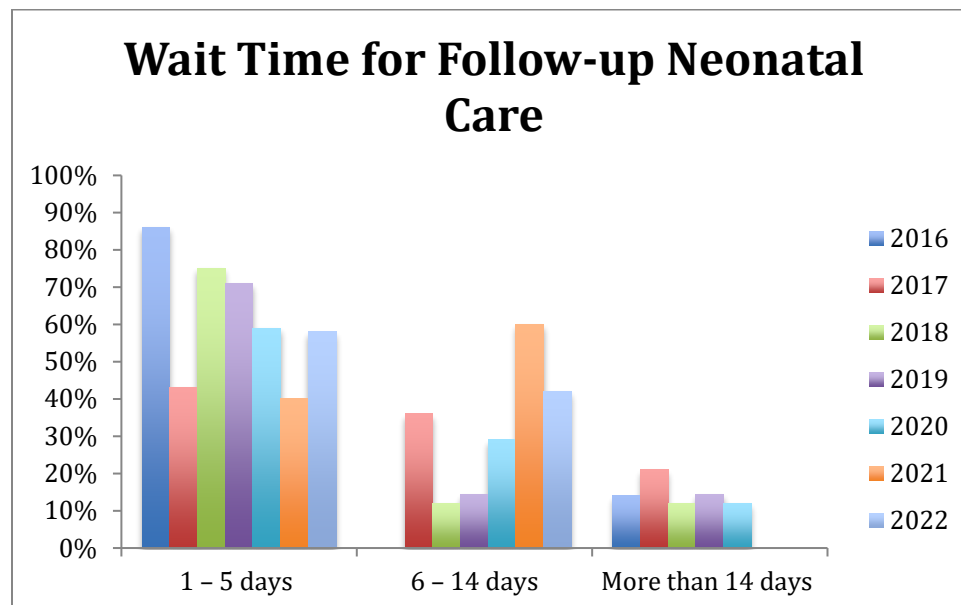


Wait time	Count	Percent
1 – 5 days	7	58%
6 – 14 days	5	42%
More than 14 days	0	0%
Total	12	

The acceptable wait time to obtain an appointment for a follow-up neonatal care is 14 days or less, as indicated by the red line.

100 percent of providers who answered this question reported acceptable wait times for accommodating a patient scheduling an appointment for follow-up neonatal care.

Wait Time for a Follow-Up Neonatal Care Appointment Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 – 5 days	86%	43%	75%	71%	59%	40%	58%
6 – 14 days	0%	36%	12.5%	14.5%	29%	60%	42%
More than 14 days	14%	21%	12.5%	14.5%	12%	0%	0%



Findings

- In 2021 and 2022, no providers reported wait times outside the acceptable range.

- In 2022, wait times of 1 – 5 days was at 58 percent (up from 40 percent in 2021).
- In 2021 and 2022, no providers reported wait times of more than 14 days.

Quantitative Analysis

The results of the survey indicate that most performance goals were met to ensure that PrimeWest Health members have adequate access to specialty care services in a timely manner.

- Goal: Specialty care providers – Appointments within 6 weeks for high-volume specialists – 85 percent.
 - Obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) specialists: 100 percent of patients can be seen within 6 weeks. This goal was met.
 - Orthopedic surgeons: 100 percent of patients can be seen within 6 weeks. This goal was met.
 - Podiatrists: 100 percent of patients can be seen within 6 weeks. This goal was met.
- Goal: Specialty care providers – Appointments within 2 weeks for high-impact specialists – 95 percent.
 - Oncologists: 88 percent of patients can be seen within 2 weeks. This goal was not met.
 - Neurosurgery providers: 67 percent of patients can be seen within 2 weeks. This goal was not met.
 - Follow-up neonatal: 100 percent of patients can be seen within 2 weeks. This goal was met.
- Specialty care providers – high-volume specialists
 - In 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022, 100 percent of OB/GYN providers could see a patient within the acceptable wait time. In 2019 and 2021, that rate was 98 percent.
 - In 2019, 2020, and 2022, 100 percent of orthopedic surgeons could see a patient within 6 weeks. This was a slight improvement from 2017 and 2018, when the rate was 97 and 98 percent, respectively. In 2021, this rate was 91 percent.
 - In 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022, 100 percent of podiatrists could see a patient within 6 weeks. In 2019, this was 88 percent, and in 2021, it was 85 percent.
- Specialty care providers – high-impact specialists
 - In 2022, 88 percent of patients could see an oncologist within 2 weeks. In 2021, 100 percent of patients could see an oncologist within 2 weeks. In 2020, 81 percent of patients could see an oncologist within 2 weeks. This was an increase from 2019, when the lowest rate of 77 percent was reported. The rate remained steady at 95 percent in 2016 and 2017, decreased to 90 percent in 2018, and decreased again in 2019.
 - In 2022, 67 percent of neurosurgery patients could see a provider within 2 weeks. In 2021, that number was 93 percent. In 2020, 100 percent of patients could see a neurosurgery provider within 2 weeks. In 2019, only 50 percent of patients could see a neurosurgery provider within 2 weeks. In 2018, 75 percent of patients were able to see a neurosurgery provider within 2 weeks, compared to 30 percent in 2017.
 - The ability to get follow-up neonatal care within 2 weeks remained the same from 2021 to 2022 (100 percent). In 2020, 88 percent of providers could accommodate a patient within 2 weeks. In 2019, 85.5 percent of providers could accommodate a patient within 2 weeks. In 2018, 87.5 percent of providers could accommodate a

patient within 2 weeks. In 2017, 79 percent of patients could be seen within 2 weeks, and in 2016, 86 percent of providers could see a patient within 2 weeks.

Qualitative Analysis

PrimeWest Health's Provider Relations and Contracting team conducted a robust barrier analysis to identify the reasons high-impact specialists did not meet their appointment wait time goals.

- Five neurosurgery providers (out of fifteen respondents) reported an unacceptable wait time; however they indicated this was their standard scheduling process and said they triage all appointments and make arrangements to see members sooner who have urgent needs.
- Two oncology providers indicated that their wait time was longer than two weeks. Their reasons included "Oncologist only comes two times a month" and "depends what type of cancer for an appointment time, but could be a month." Both providers said they triage appointments and make arrangements to see members sooner who have urgent needs.
- Due to PrimeWest Health's rural service area, facilities may not be able to find and relocate the necessary specialists to work full time. Because of the lack of resources needed to hire new specialists, patients are often directed to their primary care providers for follow-up neonatal care.
- Many specialists may be unwilling to relocate from urban areas to work in rural areas.

Due to the nature of high-impact specialists' work, they are often unable to see large numbers of new patients at once and, instead, work regularly with established patients.

- With the increase in the number of PrimeWest Health members and the limited number of specialists available, there are fewer and fewer available appointments for new patients.
- PrimeWest Health has had a higher number of patients with chronic conditions over the last few years and high-impact specialists may be kept extremely busy with just a few members who need very in-depth care.

Analysis of Member Complaints/Grievances

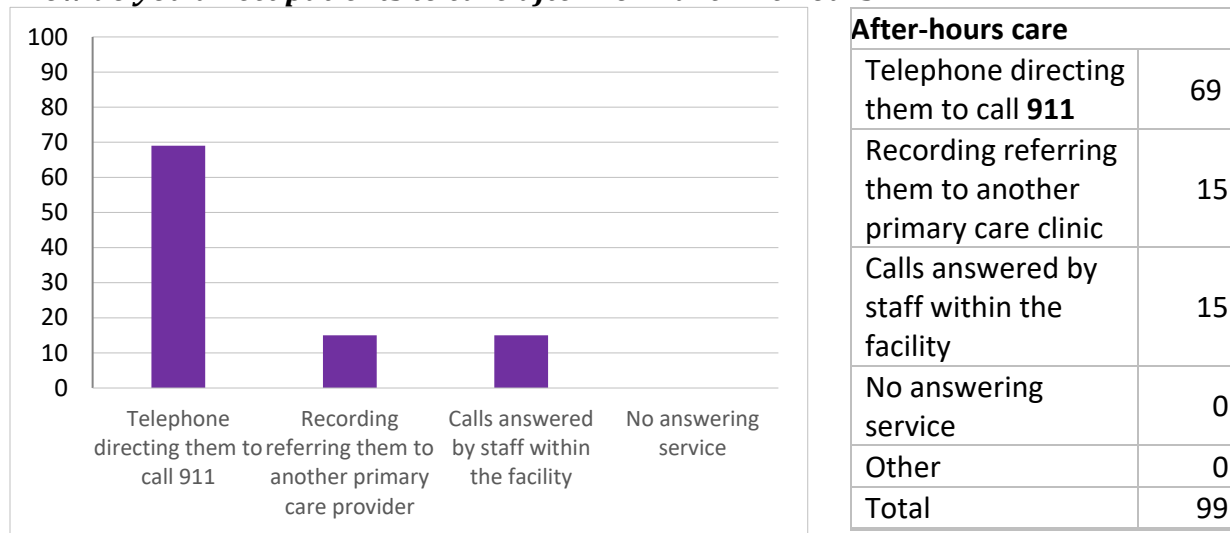
PrimeWest Health's Quality & Utilization Management department tracks all member Grievances throughout the year. An analysis of 2021 Grievances showed there were no Grievances reported regarding access to high-volume specialty care providers or high-impact specialty care providers in terms of appointment times.

Interventions

PrimeWest Health will continue to monitor member complaints to ensure there are no Grievances about access to specialty care appointment times. PrimeWest Health will also continue to contract with specialists in rural areas, focusing attention on areas with a high density of members and low number of specialists. PrimeWest Health is working to develop incentives for providers who want to provide telehealth services in their clinics in the coming years.

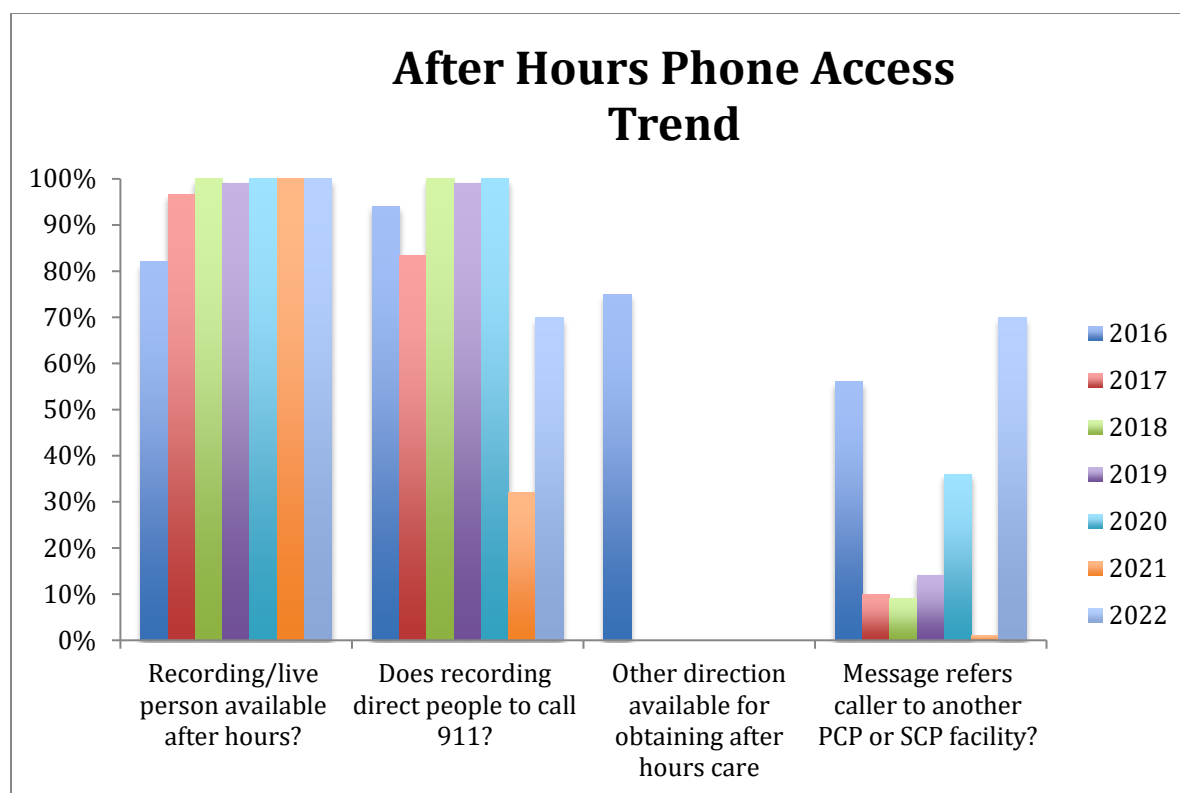
Part 4: After-Hours Care

How do you direct patients to care after normal clinic hours?



99 providers responded to this survey, and all providers reported that they have either a live person who answers the phone after business hours (15 providers), have a telephone recording that directs patients to call **911** (69 providers), or have a recording referring patients to another primary care clinic (15 providers).

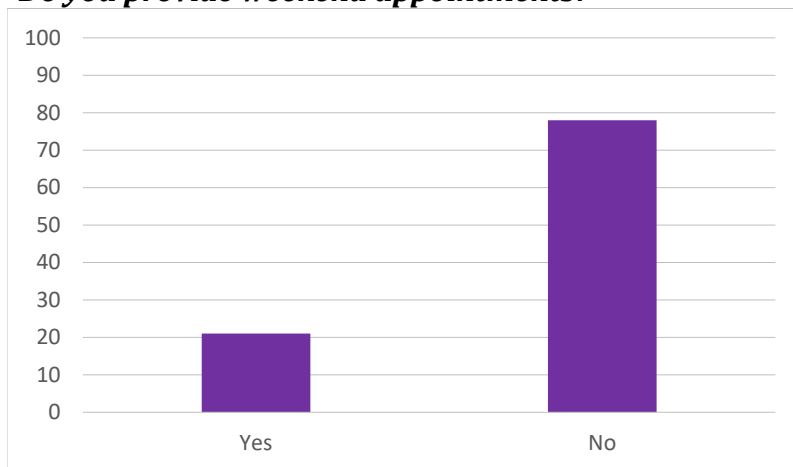
After-Hours Phone Access Trend	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Recording/live person available after hours?	82%	96.67%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Does the recording direct people to call 911 ?	94%	83.33%	100%	99%	100%	32%	70%
Other direction available for obtaining after-hours care	75%	0.00%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Message refers caller to another primary care provider or specialty care provider facility?	56%	10.00%	9%	14%	36%	1%	70%
Live person answered phone (number)	11	2	22	24	35	67	15



Findings

- The rate of clinics having a recording or a live person available after clinic hours increased 14.67 percentage points from 82 percent in 2016 to 96.67 percent in 2017. With the exception of 2019, which saw a rate of 99 percent, rates have been stable at 100 percent since 2018.
- In 2017, two clinics reported having a live person who answers the phone after business hours. This number continued to increase through 2021 (22 in 2018, 24 in 2019, 35 in 2020, and 67 in 2021), but decreased to 15 clinics in 2022.
- The goal of 85 percent of providers having a live person or recording directing members to call **911** for emergencies was met in 2022. 100 percent of providers either have a live person who answers the phone after hours, have a recording that directs the caller to call **911** if they are calling regarding an emergency, or have a recording that directs callers to another local clinic.

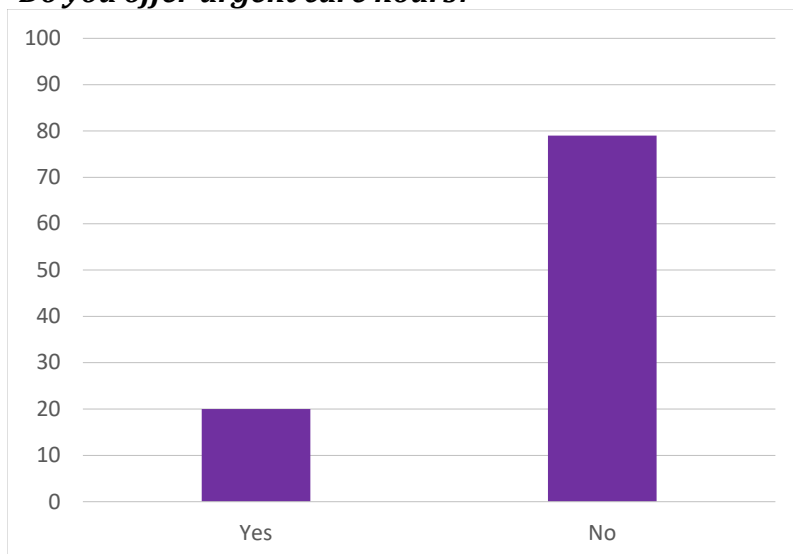
Do you provide weekend appointments?



Weekend appointments	
Yes	21
No	78
Total	99

Of the 99 facilities that responded, 21 provided some type of weekend appointments, most of which are Saturday appointments. Some facilities offered additional weekend appointments before the COVID-19 pandemic, but that has since changed.

Do you offer urgent care hours?



Urgent care hours	
Yes	20
No	79
Total	99

Of the 99 facilities that responded to this question, 20 offered urgent care hours, most of which are extended hours in the evening or weekend appointments, most commonly Saturday mornings. Some facilities offered additional weekend urgent care appointments before the COVID-19 pandemic, but that has since changed.

PrimeWest Health has been promoting weekend access for our members and we hope to continue to see improvement in weekend access.

Quantitative Analysis

- After-Hours Care – 85 percent of facilities have a live person or a recording that directs the member to call **911** if they are calling regarding an emergency. This goal was met.
 - 100 percent of providers have a recording that directs the caller to call **911** if they are calling regarding an emergency, refers the member to another local clinic, or have a live person answering the telephone.

Qualitative Analysis

As the measure for after-hours communication meets the pre-established goal, PrimeWest Health did not need to perform a barrier analysis or develop interventions to improve this measure. We will continue to monitor after-hours care to ensure access continues to be available for members.

Part 5: 2023 Recommendations

Going forward, PrimeWest Health will continue to educate members about the importance of staying with an established provider. This will help with wait times due to the greater ease of appointment access for established patients. Wait times tend to be longer when a patient is new due to the length of appointment times. PrimeWest Health will also educate members about the importance of setting up follow-up appointments at the time of the initial visit to alleviate follow-up care access issues.

PrimeWest Health will continue to assess if extra funds are available to provide potential grant dollars to providers to implement telehealth services where needed. PrimeWest Health will continue to expand our network to include more providers that provide telehealth services. Due to PrimeWest Health's very rural service area, this may help to improve access to behavioral health services.

PrimeWest Health will continue to perform the Access to Care Survey as part of our network adequacy verification in 2023. The Access to Care Survey provides a good overview of access to services for PrimeWest Health members. The Member & Provider Services department will continue to reach out to and recruit any new behavioral health providers that can provide service to PrimeWest Health members. This will help to improve access to routine care appointments and overall access to this very necessary service.

The 2023 survey will continue to include analysis of member Grievances regarding access to services in terms of appointment wait times. This will help to provide a clear picture of any access issues members may encounter.