

MEDSTAR HEALTH POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title:	Late Arrivals Definition and Procedure	Section:	Patient Arrival
Purpose:	To communicate to associate guidelines for patients arriving late to their appointment.	Effective Date of this Version:	8/1/2024

POLICY:

It is the policy of MedStar Health that ambulatory sites will seek to accommodate all patients who arrive for scheduled appointments while minimizing disruption to normal patient flow. All efforts will be made to ensure the patient arriving late sees the provider with whom they were initially scheduled. Care teams should rely on strong communication to identify options and communicate plans widely to minimize the provider's clinic flow.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all ambulatory MedStar Health associates.

DEFINITIONS:

Late Arrival refers to a patient who presents in line for check-in more than twenty (20) minutes later than the scheduled appointment time. There is a 20-minute grace period for late arrivals. The grace period will allow for any unforeseen delays a patient may encounter while traveling to the practice location. It is MedStar Health's priority to provide timely and appropriate access to care for our patients, with a service excellence focus.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Department Leaders are responsible for orienting associates to the registration and check-in process, auditing compliance and implementing training or corrective action when necessary.

EXCEPTIONS:

None

WHAT CONSTITUTES NON-COMPLIANCE:

Non-compliance with the policy occurs when any item outlined in the policy is not followed.

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE:

Non-compliance will be monitored by Department Leaders. Non-compliance will require the individual to undergo additional training and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including termination.

EXPLANATION AND DETAILS/EXAMPLES:

N/A

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REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY:

None

RELATED POLICIES:

None

PROCEDURE:

If a scheduled patient arrives for an appointment and it's determined the nature of their visit or circumstances surrounding their arrival (late; scheduled with incorrect specialist; incorrect paperwork; no authorization) are out of "ordinary operations":

- I. All patients should be treated with empathy, respect, and dignity. Every attempt should be made to see the patient as soon as possible.
- II. MedStar Health seeks **to accommodate all patients who arrive late for scheduled appointments** while minimizing disruption to normal patient flow. If a patient arrives within 20 minutes of the scheduled appointment time, the patient should be seen by the scheduled provider as close to the original appointment time as possible.
- III. Beyond 20 minutes past the scheduled appointment time, **all efforts should be made to ensure the patient arriving sees the provider with whom they were initially scheduled or another appropriate provider on the same day**, or on a reasonable alternative date if the patient does not want to be seen by a different provider or does not want to be seen later in the day.
- IV. Front desk staff should calmly and compassionately escalate to practice leadership/providers for triage/intake support, particularly for patients who have waited for appointments. Have the patient complete all required paperwork at the time of arrival, so that if an appointment does become available the patient can be pulled back immediately.
- V. If all options have been exhausted, the practice should rely on the principles of the MedStar Health SPIRIT values and accommodate the patient as soon as possible. (See scripting suggestions below)
- VI. **Only practice leadership** can cancel or reschedule patients who have arrived late for scheduled appointments or who arrive without prior authorizations completed.

Patient scripting suggestions include:

1. **Front Desk Associate to Patient:** "Dr. Saggar has a very busy schedule today. It looks like your appointment was scheduled for 9:30AM, but it is now 9:55AM. Please have a seat and allow me a moment to see what I can do so that we may still accommodate you today."
2. **Able to Accommodate, working patient into schedule:** "Thank you for waiting. It looks like we might be able to squeeze you in before [Provider Lunch Break Time or End

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of Day Time]. Would you like to wait until then, or can I offer you an appointment for another day?"

3. **Able to Accommodate, offering later appointment same day:** "Thank you for waiting. We have an available appointment [Time]. Would you like to wait until then, or can I offer you an appointment for another day?"
4. **Able to Accommodate, offering same day with alternative provider:** "Thank you for waiting. Unfortunately, Dr. Saggar is already seeing the next patient, and has no additional openings today. However, we have an available appointment with Dr. Saggar's partner, Dr. Lee at [Time]. Would you like to wait until then, or can I offer you an appointment with Dr. Saggar for another day?"
5. **Last Resort – Unable to Accommodate:** "Thank you for waiting. Unfortunately, we will need to reschedule your appointment since the doctor is already seeing the next patient and has no additional openings today. Let me help you with re-scheduling right now.

LEGAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

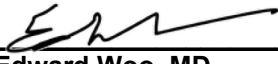

N/A

REFERENCES TO LAWS OR REGULATIONS OF OUTSIDE BODIES:

N/A

RIGHT TO CHANGE OR TERMINATE POLICY:

Changes in policy must be reviewed and approved by the leadership of the disciplines affected, as well as any applicable committees responsible for oversight of the site practice prior to final sign off by the President, MedStar Medical Group.

Reference:	
Approved By:	 Edward Woo, MD President MedStar Medical Group  Raleigh Heard Chief Operating Officer, MedStar Medical Group
Additional Signature Information:	

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