

# HEALTHCARE FACILITY

## APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING POLICY

**Policy Number:** OP-001

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2024

**Review Date:** January 1, 2025

### 1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes standardized procedures for scheduling patient appointments to ensure efficient operations, optimal patient care, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff members involved in patient appointment scheduling, including front desk personnel, medical assistants, and clinical coordinators.

### 3. GENERAL SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS

#### ***3.1 Advance Notice***

- All routine appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance
- Specialist appointments require 48-72 hours advance notice
- Surgery scheduling requires minimum 7 days advance notice

#### ***3.2 Patient Arrival***

- Patients must arrive 15 minutes before scheduled appointment time
- New patients must arrive 30 minutes early for registration
- Late arrivals (>15 minutes) may need to reschedule

### 4. INSURANCE VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

#### ***4.1 Mandatory Verification***

- Insurance verification is mandatory before scheduling any appointment
- Verification must be completed within 48 hours of appointment request
- Expired insurance cards require immediate re-verification

#### ***4.2 Pre-Authorization***

- Pre-authorization required for all specialist visits
- Diagnostic procedures require prior authorization
- Authorization numbers must be documented in patient record

### ***4.3 Copay Collection***

- Copay information must be collected at time of scheduling
- Copays are due at time of service
- Payment plans available for amounts over \$200

## **5. EMERGENCY APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES**

### ***5.1 Emergency Criteria***

- Life-threatening conditions require immediate attention
- Severe pain or distress qualifies for emergency scheduling
- Physician discretion applies for urgent cases

### ***5.2 Emergency Scheduling Process***

- Emergency appointments bypass normal advance notice requirements
- Supervisor approval required for same-day emergency slots
- Emergency appointments must be documented with reason

## **6. CANCELLATION AND NO-SHOW POLICY**

### ***6.1 Cancellation Requirements***

- Appointments can be cancelled up to 2 hours before scheduled time
- Cancellations must be documented in patient record
- Same-day cancellations require supervisor notification

### ***6.2 No-Show Policy***

- No-show patients will be charged a \$25 administrative fee
- Three consecutive no-shows result in dismissal from practice
- No-show fees must be paid before scheduling future appointments

## **7. SPECIAL POPULATION CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***7.1 Established Patients***

- Established patients may have reduced advance notice (12 hours)
- Priority scheduling available for chronic condition management

### ***7.2 Medicare Patients***

- Medicare patients have different authorization requirements
- Medicare Advantage plans require separate verification process
- Annual wellness visits have special scheduling protocols

## **8. COMPLIANCE AND DOCUMENTATION**

### ***8.1 HIPAA Compliance***

- All scheduling activities must comply with HIPAA regulations
- Patient information confidentiality must be maintained
- Scheduling discussions must occur in private areas

### ***8.2 Documentation Requirements***

- All scheduling decisions must be documented in patient record
- Insurance verification documentation required
- Audit trail must be maintained for 7 years

## **9. POLICY APPROVAL**

**Approved by:** Dr. Sarah Johnson, Chief Medical Officer

**Date:** January 1, 2024

**Next Review:** January 1, 2025