



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
POLICY ANALYSIS
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Contact: Catherine Daniell at (972) 308-6479 or (817) 991-1041
catherine.daniell@ncpa.org

EXPLOSIVE RETAIL HEALTH CLINIC GROWTH EXPECTED
More Patients Seeking Affordable After-Hours Care, According to NCPA Scholar

DALLAS, TX (January 14, 2010) – The number of walk-in clinics is expected to nearly triple in the next four years in response to increased patient demand, according to a new report from the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA).

“These retail health care clinics offer evening and weekend care solutions at a fraction of the cost of emergency rooms and often charge less than a physician office visit,” said NCPA Senior Fellow Devon Herrick. He points that emergency room care is among the most expensive type of patient care, and said “of the 119 million annual visits to hospital ERs, 55% are for non-emergencies.”

Herrick said that the current 1,100 to 1,200 walk-in clinics are expected to increase to 3,200 by 2014. “They are well-suited to patients wanting affordable, convenient care, especially after-hours and on weekends,” he said. “And, these clinics are an easy option for some people without coverage or a primary care physician to get routine medical care without cost surprises. The prices are competitive and posted.”

Full retail clinic analysis: <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba686>

Urgent care clinics are another emergency room alternative for more serious injuries and illness, requiring stitches, x-rays or more than a nurse practitioner’s care. Also increasing in numbers, urgent care centers are usually stand-alone operations.

“Use of health information technology has helped clinics streamline operations and costs,” said Herrick. “These operations could serve as models for hospitals and physicians’ offices, which have been slower to switch over to electronic medical records.”

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Editors Note: Contact Catherine Daniell to schedule an interview with Devon Herrick

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