

Appointments: Filling Short Notice Appointments

Purpose

This procedure provides Medical Imaging (MI) Departments with a process for tracking and filling [short notice appointments](#) with appropriate replacements to minimize unused appointments and improve patient access.

Site Applicability

This procedure is applicable to Medical Imaging (MI) departments within Fraser Health (FH), Providence Health Care (PHC), Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

Practice Level

Profession:	Responsibilities:
Clerical staff, modality technologists/sonographers /echocardiographers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and report short notice appointments Make every reasonable attempt to fill short notice appointments Make every reasonable attempt to ensure the replacement patients are confirmed and have received exam specific instructions before their arrival
Clerical supervisors, modality supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily monitor short notice appointments scheduling activities Provide mitigation direction to scheduling personnel

Need to Know

To ensure patient access to medical imaging (MI) exams, the Ministry of Health (MOH) requires health authorities in British Columbia to have a documented process to fill [short-notice appointments](#) in MRI and CT.

MI has expanded the documented process to fill [short-notice appointments](#) to include **all modalities**.

Procedure

Sites are advised to keep a [Short-notice list](#) for patients available to come in on short notice.

Assessment

- [All responsible personnel](#) will review the patient scheduling system regularly throughout the day and identify unfilled appointments that occur within the next 7 days.
- Prioritize same day unfilled appointments followed by subsequent days moving forward
- Determine:
 - Time(s) of all unfilled appointments
 - Designated appointment type(s) in scheduling system (e.g: contrast/non contrast exams)
 - Appointment duration
 - Required patient preparation instructions if maintaining the same appointment type

Steps to Fill Short Notice Appointments

- Exam appointment times that become available with less than 24 hours notice are filled at the discretion of the technologist or sonographer / echocardiographer. Clerical staff may be asked to assist with scheduling the short notice appointments.

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- a. Unfillable short notice appointments that occur within 24 hours are to be escalated to the clerical and modality supervisors during each shift and scheduled patients may be pulled forward in the schedule
2. Exam appointment times that become available in more than 24 hours and up to 7 days notice, are to be filled by clerical staff with:
 - a. [Similar or “like” exam](#)
 - b. If a similar or “like exam cannot be scheduled, the appointment time is to be maximized by splitting it into smaller booking appointment slots
3. For the imaging modality **using** priority guidelines, the short notice appointments are filled based on the following priorities:
 - a. In-patient and emergency patient
 - b. Priority 2 patient
 - c. Patient available on short notice
 - d. Patient that lives in close proximity
 - e. Priority 3 and 4 patient
 - f. Pull forward already scheduled patient(s)
4. For the imaging modality **not using** priority guidelines, the short notice appointments are filled based on the following priorities:
 - a. In-patient and emergency patient
 - b. Urgent out patient
 - c. Patient available on short notice
 - d. Patient that lives in close proximity
 - e. Pull forward already scheduled patient(s)
5. When scheduling short notice appointments, ensure the following:

Patient Type	Inpatient and Emergency Patient	Outpatient
Responsibility	Technologist, sonographer, echocardiographer, clerical staff	Clerical staff
Tasks	Confirm applicable pre-exam requirements such as blood work is completed	Gather list of suitable patients to call to fill short notice appointments
	Provide exam preparation instructions	Confirm applicable pre-exam requirements such as blood work is completed
	Confirm appointment date and time	Provide exam preparation instructions
	Schedule patient transport	Confirm appointment date and time
	If there is not enough time for the patient to prepare for the exam, fill with an alternate patient	If there is not enough time for the patient to prepare for the exam, fill with an alternate patient

References

College of Physicians & Surgeons of BC, Diagnostic Accreditation Program.

<https://www.cpsbc.ca/accredited-facilities/dap/accreditation-standards-DI>

Definitions

“All Responsible Personnel” means clerical booking team, senior clerks, clerical supervisors, all modality technologists and sonographers / echocardiographers (ER/IP), and modality supervisors

“Every Reasonable Attempt” means when staffing permits, all responsible personnel shall make continuous efforts to fill the appointment up to a site-specific pre-determined time

“Short-notice Appointment” means any exam appointment becomes available within the next seven days

“Short notice List” means patients that are available on short notice and/or who live close to the facility

“Similar or ‘like’ exam” means examinations that require the same preparation instructions and/or booking instructions and duration

PROCEDURE

ABCD-21-12-90145

First Released Date:	24-NOV-2021			
Posted Date:	22-FEB-2024			
Last Revised:	08-JAN-2024			
Last Reviewed:	14-FEB-2024			
Approved By: <i>(committee or position)</i>	Medical Imaging Executive Committee		Director of Special Projects & Clerical	
	10-NOV-2021		14-FEB-2024	
Owners:	Special Projects Director, MI			
Revision History:	Version	Date	Description/ Key Changes	Revised By (Name and Position)
	1.0	24-NOV-2021	Initial release	Short notice appt project team
	2.0	14-FEB-2024	Rewrite into SHOP format Addition of echocardiographers Insert practice table, reorder some procedure content, insert table in procedure Revise statement “fill with alternate exam” to “fill with alternate patient”	Kyle Eckhardt, Special Projects Director

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