

**POLICY NO: A - 35**

**DEPARTMENT: Administration**

**SUBJECT: No Show Appointment Suspension**

**PURPOSE:**

To facilitate continuity of care by encouraging patient compliance by the establishment of a process that ensures available appointment times for compliant patients; encourages patients to keep appointments and provides a process for notification of possible suspension from the practice for those patients who consistently fail to keep scheduled appointments without providing Neighborhood Health Care (NHC) with adequate notice.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of Neighborhood Health Care, Inc. (NHC) that if a patient does not keep an appointment, does not cancel a scheduled appointment at least twenty four (24) hours before the appointment time or is more than fifteen (15) minutes late for a primary care (including podiatry) appointment or ten (10) minutes late for a dental appointment without extenuating circumstances a NS (No Show) appointment will be recorded in the patient's chart and in the registration system. For purposes of this policy Podiatry is included as primary care. Any patient who accumulates three (3) NS primary care appointments within a twelve (12) month period or two (2) NS dental clinic appointments within a six (6) month period without prior notification will be suspended from services offered by NHC until after attendance at a No Show Appointment Reinstatement Class which will be offered twice a month. Suspensions will be effective as of the date of the third primary care or second dental appointments within the designated time period.

Realistic extenuating circumstances include death in the family; medical emergency; believable transportation problems or other explanations judged to be realistic by NHC.

Any appointments already scheduled for a time period after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dental or 3<sup>rd</sup> primary care appointment will be canceled if a suspension is put into effect. Upon completion of the Reinstatement Class it will be the patient's responsibility to reschedule any such appointments.

Emergency care will be available during suspensions. Services in the primary care centers will be available for the first thirty (30) days of suspension. Patients who obtain medication from our MedShare Pharmacy may continue to receive the medication while on suspension up to the time the prescription expires.

Patients who receive a suspension letter (Attachments A, A<sub>2</sub>) will be offered an opportunity to appeal the suspension.

Appointment cancellations left with the answering service after business hours are acceptable notification.

EXCEPTION: This policy does not apply to Obstetrical patients, patients seen at the School Based Health sites or to "nurse only" and "lab only" appointments.

## **PROCEDURE:**

Patients will be informed of this policy by a handout (Attachment B) at registration and asked to sign an Appointment Agreement form (Attachments C, C<sub>2</sub>) which will be placed in the patient's chart. The Outreach Worker will review the No Show Appointment Suspension policy with new patients at the time of the new patient orientation.

Suspension from the primary care clinics is at the discretion of the Medical Director in conjunction with the attending physician.

Suspension from the dental clinic is at the discretion of the Dental Director.

If a possible suspension involves a patient under both medical and dental care at NHC the respective directors will discuss the circumstances before taking action for suspension.

## **PRIMARY CARE CLINICS**

Nursing personnel are responsible for noting the no show appointments in the patient's medical record using the No Show Appointment log. (Attachment D) Nursing personnel will return charts of NS appointment patients to the front desk where front desk personnel will enter the NS appointment date into Medical Manager and return the chart to Medical Records.

Front desk personnel will remind patients of any existing first or second no show appointments and the NHC policy when patients schedule an appointment following those previous no show appointments within the designated time frame.

## **SECOND MISSED MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC OR PODIATRY APPOINTMENT**

Front desk personnel will inform the Outreach Worker of patients that have missed their 2<sup>nd</sup> primary care appointment. (Attachment E) The Outreach Worker will contact the patient or guardian to re enforce the No Show Appointment Suspension policy and the need to be compliant with appointments.

The Outreach Worker is to document all actions in the patient's medical record and is to maintain the tracking log for a period of one (1) year after the date of the last entry.

## **THIRD MISSED MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC OR PODIATRY APPOINTMENT**

Front desk personnel will inform the Outreach Worker of patients that have missed their 3<sup>rd</sup> primary care appointment. (Attachment F) The Outreach Worker will inform the Medical Director of the patient's no show status and with Medical Director approval will send a suspension letter with reinstatement class information and an appeal form (Attachments G, G<sub>2</sub>) to the patient or guardian informing him/her of the suspension. An authorization for Release of Protected Health Information (PHI) will also be included for use by the patient if they choose to transfer their care.

Suspension letters for primary care clinics are to be signed by the President/CEO. The Outreach Worker will send the suspension letter by both regular and certified mail.

The Outreach Worker will inform the front desk when the suspension letter has been mailed and place a copy of the letter in the patient's chart. The Outreach Worker is to document all actions in the patient's medical record.

Front desk personnel will flag the suspension in the appointment system. The date of suspension is to be entered as the date of the third no show appointment within the designated time period. Any appointments already scheduled for a time period after the 3<sup>rd</sup> missed primary care appointment will be canceled when a suspension is put into effect. Upon completion of the Reinstatement Class it will be the patient's responsibility to reschedule any such appointments.

The Outreach Worker will give a monthly report of suspended patients to the Medical Director. (Attachment H) A copy of the report will be maintained for tracking purposes by the Outreach Worker for two (2) years past the date of the last entry.

### **DENTAL CLINIC**

Dental no show appointments will be entered into the electronic medical record by dental personnel.

### **SECOND DENTAL CLINIC MISSED APPOINTMENT**

Dental department front desk personnel will inform the Dental Director of the 2<sup>nd</sup> no show dental appointment and send the suspension letter with reinstatement class information and an appeal form to the dental patient or guardian. An authorization for Release of Protected Health Information (PHI) will also be included for use by the patient if they choose to transfer their care. Dental clinic suspension letters are to be signed by the Dental Director. The suspension letter will be sent by both regular and certified mail.

Dental department personnel will enter all dental suspension information into the patient's electronic record and keep a tracking log of suspended patients. The suspension date is the second of the two no show appointments within the designated six month period.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

An appeal form will be included in each suspension letter that is sent. (Attachments G G2) Patients will be able to appeal the suspension if the form is returned to the Outreach Worker or Dental Director within 14 days from the date the suspension letter was mailed to them.

Patients who file an appeal to a suspension may continue to receive care at NHC sites during the appeal process.

### **PRIMARY CARE APPEAL**

Upon receipt of an appeal form the Outreach Worker will take the form and the patient's chart to the Medical Director for a decision on reinstatement.

The Outreach Worker will inform the patient of the results of the appeal within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.

If the suspension is not rescinded the Outreach Worker is to also remind the patient that attendance at the No Show Appointment Reinstatement Class is mandatory before reinstatement into the practice.

If the suspension is rescinded the Outreach Worker will also inform the front desk to remove the suspension notation in the registration system.

### **DENTAL APPEAL**

The Dental Director will make a decision on appeals received within 14 days of receipt of the appeal.

The Dental Director, or designee, will inform the patient of the results of the appeal and have the suspension notation removed from the registration system if the suspension is rescinded.

If the suspension is not rescinded the patient is to be reminded that attendance at the No Show Appointment Reinstatement Class is mandatory before reinstatement into the practice.