

January 28, 2010



To: Illinois Health Connect (IHC) medical homes

From: Margaret Kirkegaard, MD, MPH, IHC Medical Director

RE: IHC Referral System Urgent Care Policy

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) issued an HFS Provider Release that clarifies the urgent care billing requirements for Illinois Health Connect (IHC) Primary Care Providers (PCP) during Phase I of the IHC Referral System.

The HFS Provider Release is available online at <http://www.hfs.illinois.gov/all/012810n.html>.

Urgent care is defined as a location distinct from a hospital emergency room, office or clinic whose purpose is to treat and diagnose illness for unscheduled, ambulatory patients seeking immediate attention. IHC PCPs may provide services to an IHC client at an urgent care facility without an IHC referral *if the provider meets the following three conditions*.

1. The IHC PCP must be salaried or contracted by the urgent care facility to provide medical services.
2. The urgent care facility is not the IHC PCPs enrolled location of service or affiliation under the IHC program.
3. The IHC PCP is providing services outside regular practice hours for IHC clients not enrolled on their IHC panel.

Providers who meet the above conditions can bill using Place of Service Code 20 (urgent care facility). It is expected that providers educate the clients on the importance of contacting their assigned PCP prior to obtaining urgent care services. IHC medical homes are required to provide 24/7 access to their clients via an answering service or other approved methods. It is also requested that urgent care facilities notify the assigned PCP and inform them that the client was treated at the urgent care facility.

Providers are encouraged to use the HFS MEDI System (<http://www.myhfs.illinois.gov>) to verify HFS client eligibility and IHC PCP assignment prior to each visit. Providers can enter or verify IHC referrals using the IHC Provider Portal via the HFS MEDI System. IHC Provider Services Representatives and Quality Assurance Nurses are available to assist offices with MEDI registration and training.

The IHC Provider Services Help Desk is available at 1-877-912-1999, extension 3, to answer questions about the IHC Referral System, verify PCP assignment and assist offices with entering or verifying IHC referrals. IHC cannot verify client eligibility. If online eligibility verification is not possible, providers should call the HFS Automated Voice Response System at 1-800-842-1461.