

After Hours Care Program (AHCP)



Things to think about when using the service

This document shares considerations for getting ready to use the AHCP service. It is intended to support you in setting up for a successful pilot for both you and your patients.

In addition to community longitudinal patients does your group cover unattached patients as well as additional services (such as maternity, long term care, palliative care, in-patient care or emergency medicine)?

Yes, my group covers more than just attached, longitudinal patients

During the pilot, coverage for patients beyond attached longitudinal patients is considered out of scope. While the service may attempt to handle a call from an attached longitudinal patient regarding first trimester bleeding (for example), those staffing the service may not have the expertise of someone who regularly works in maternity care.

Steps to take:

- Existing after-hours coverage for these patients will need to continue. In communities without an existing after-hours group for these services, the involved clinicians will need to identify an appropriate solution, which may include actually creating such a group.
- If a new care group gets established, please let the AHCP service know (email AHCP@doctorsofbc.ca) so that appropriate calls can be directed their way.

Are you currently part of an after hours call group? If yes, will your entire group sign up to participate in the pilot?

Yes, my entire group is signing up	No, only I am signing up
<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure everyone is aware of new after hours care program and has reviewed the instructions on how to update their individual phone system. 	<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let your group know you are participating in the service and discuss whether you will continue to honour your previously scheduled shifts in the group, or whether they will need to find a replacement. Of course, if you sign up for the new service, your previous call group will no-longer get calls from your patients, so it won't be quite as busy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow the provided instructions to update your phone system to point to the After Hours Care service. - Encourage your peers to also participate in the pilot!
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Will all of the FPs/NPs in your clinic sign up to use the service?

Yes, my entire clinic is signing up	No, only I am signing up
<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow the provided instructions to update your clinic’s phone system to point to the After Hours Care service. 	<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow the provided instructions to update your phone system to point to the After Hours Care service. - Any patient-facing communications will need to differentiate patients of FPs/NPs using the After Hours Care service vs those continuing to use some other method of after hours coverage.

Are you closed during the week between 9 am and 5 pm?

Yes, I close during the week
<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the pilot, the service only operates from 5 pm through 9 am the next day, and 24 hours on weekends and statutory holidays. - If you are closed outside of these hours, i.e., between 9 am and 5 pm on a weekday—this includes closures over lunchtime—the service is unable to provide coverage. You will need to make alternative arrangements to cover calls from patients. - If patients call the number outside of operating hours, they will receive a message directing them back to their FP/NP clinic.

Have you arranged coverage for vacations/leaves?

The service can’t cover vacations/leave
<p>Steps to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure you arrange cover during these periods. The pilot is unable to provide cover outside operating hours and is meant as an extension of your longitudinal practice, not a replacement.

How can my unattached patients get care?

Steps you can take:

During the pilot, only **attached** patients can access the service. If an unattached patient calls, they will be asked to call back to your clinic or transferred to 8-1-1 (which is an option that does not meet the CPSBC practice standard for after-hours care).

- If your entire clinic hasn't signed up to be part of the pilot, you will need to determine how best to communicate the existence of the service to patients who's FP/NP is part of the pilot.
- This may mean modifying your phone system to ask patients of Doctors A, B and C (who are participating) to press one number, while other patients press another number to access your existing after hours care pathway.

How will I reasonably see patients who need follow-up in the suggested timeframes?

Steps you can take:

If the physician working the service determines a patient needs semi-urgent follow-up (i.e., within the next 72 hours), then you will receive a warm hand-over between 8 and 9 am on the next business day.

- **Ensure you are reasonably able to see patients who need semi-urgent follow-up:** While the method should be whatever works best for you, part of using the service is that you will do your best to see patients quickly when semi-urgent follow-up is recommended by the physician staffing the service. This could mean making a couple of rapid-access slots available each week for follow-ups on after hours encounters.