

McLean, Koehler, Sparks & Hammond

Certified Public Accountants/Business Consultants

Physician Services

Are 'minute clinics' impacting your practice?

While the country waits to see what happens to universal health care, surprising medical alternatives are popping up all over the place.

If "minute clinics" have opened in your area, your practice may be feeling the pinch of competition.

The main draw of minute clinics for patients is that they're quick, with most visits lasting 15 minutes or less.

These clinics hold costs down by locating inside large drug stores, like CVS, and staffing with nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

But the main draw for patients is that they're quick, with most visits lasting 15 minutes or less.

Until recently, many of these clinics have not accepted health insurance. But surveys show that higher income patients will pay for visits themselves for the tradeoff of saving time. And uninsured patients prefer the clinics to the alternative of spending hours in an emergency room for a minor problem.

As these clinics become more established, many are beginning to accept health insurance. And some insurers are encouraging patients to use them by lowering the copay.



What should your response be?

The American Academy of Family Physicians is offering advice to doctors who need to compete, such as:

- Make same-day appointments available.
- Allow patients to set up appointments online.
- Establish noon-hour clinics that guarantee 30-minute or less visits at prices competitive with the minute clinics.
- Leave a lot of time each day available for walk-ins.

On the upside for you, minute clinics may relieve some of the pressure from busy physician offices, especially after hours. And, since they must refer serious conditions to physicians, you have opportunities to establish relationships with the clinics for referral purposes.

Contact our firm with any medical practice management issues.

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