

Policy: **Alternate Practice Sites**

Date of Implementation: **October 29, 2010**

Product: **Specialty**

Alternate practice sites as described in this policy must adhere to the same standards as stand-alone office-based practices (see the *Office Facility Standards (QM 20 – S)* policy and its affiliated specialty-specific addenda). Furthermore, additional standards apply to an office located in a residential structure or in a facility other than a stand-alone office.

Mobile Services are not to be provided in any type of vehicle. American Specialty Health – Specialty (ASH) does not consider a vehicle to be an alternate practice site.

All office locations must adhere to ASH standards for site appearance, office policies, emergency procedures, access to treatment/services, safety, privacy, confidentiality, medical record components and storage, and ability to meet expectations for the delivery of quality treatment/services and care as defined in the *Office Facility Standards (QM 20 – S)* policy and the affiliated specialty-specific policy addenda, as well as the applicable standards below. Non-compliance with alternate site standards can preclude an office location from being a part of the network.

PRACTITIONER/PROVIDER OFFICE LOCATED IN A FACILITY OTHER THAN A STAND-ALONE OFFICE

A practitioner/provider's office located in a facility other than a stand-alone practitioner/provider office (e.g., health club, rehabilitation center, gym, natural foods store, herbal apothecary, etc.) is held to the same standards as stand-alone office-based practices.

In addition to the stand-alone office-based practice standards, an office located in a facility other than a stand-alone office is also subject to the following standards:

- The facility location and the entrance to the facility is easy to locate, including either a visible sign noting the practitioner/provider's name, clinic name, and/or specialty, or the address numbers on the building are clearly visible from the street and the appropriate entrance is easily identified and accessible.
- Services are to be accessible to the general public, and there are no financial implications to the member (i.e., member must pay health club dues or visitation fees to access the practitioner/provider's office).

- Although the practitioner/provider's office and the facility may share a common entrance, upon entering the facility, members should have unobstructed access to the office without the need to walk through other areas of the facility (exercise area, weights area, health food store, etc.).
- Members accessing the practitioner/provider's office will not pass by or through areas that may pose a safety hazard to the member.
- There should be a designated waiting area providing adequate space and privacy to members.
- The practitioner/provider's office, including the telephone, fax, medical records, and electronic records, must be independently secured from the facility to maintain patient confidentiality.
- The consultation, exam, and treatment areas are dedicated solely to clinical services.
- The facility must provide for physical and audible privacy during consultation and exam, including but not limited to a minimum of one room within the dedicated office space that contains a solid door.
- The telephone and fax lines must be secured and accessible only to the practitioners/providers and staff in order to maintain confidentiality.
- Medical records, including any electronic records, must be secured to maintain confidentiality.
- The practitioner/provider must have after-hours access to the office portion of the facility to access records and/or care for a member in an urgent situation.

PRACTITIONER/PROVIDER OFFICE LOCATED IN A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE

In addition to the stand-alone office-based practice standards, an office located in or adjacent to a home is also subject to the following standards.

General Requirements

- There must be adequate parking within a reasonable distance to the office (e.g., close to the office; handicap accessible; well lit; safe, flat surface; sufficient number of parking spaces; etc.).
- The facility location and the entrance to the facility is easy to locate, including either a visible sign noting the practitioner/provider's name, clinic name, and/or specialty, or the address numbers on the building are clearly visible from the street and the appropriate entrance is easily located.
- If the entrance to the facility is not separate from the entrance to the practitioner/provider's home, members must have immediate access to the office once inside the home, without having to pass through any portion of the living quarters.

- The office must be separate from the living quarters.
- Members accessing the practitioner/provider's office will not pass by or through areas that may pose a safety hazard to the member.
- The facility must provide adequate space (i.e., width of a wheelchair, walker) in all areas of the facility, including but not limited to doorways, hallways, reception area, and consultation/treatment area.
- The consultation, exam, and treatment areas must be dedicated only to the services being rendered (i.e., not shared with home activities).
- The reception/waiting area may not be shared with the home in which the office is located; the reception/waiting area must be dedicated to the practitioner/provider's office.
- The facility must provide for physical and audible privacy during consultation and exam, including but not limited to a minimum of one room within the dedicated office space that contains a solid door.
- The telephone and fax lines must be secured and accessible only to the practitioners/providers and staff in order to maintain confidentiality. The home telephone number is different than the office telephone number.
- Medical records, including any electronic records, must be secured to maintain confidentiality.
- The practitioner/provider is aware of state and local regulations regarding the requirements for a business license or certificate of occupancy and is in compliance with these regulations.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- There is a minimum of two (2) patient/client areas, including an area for consultation/treatment and an area for reception/waiting.
- The facility must provide for physical and audible privacy during consultation and exam, including but not limited to a minimum of one room within the dedicated office space that contains a solid door.
- The telephone and fax lines must be secured and accessible only to the practitioners/providers and staff in order to maintain confidentiality.
- Medical records, including any electronic records, must be secured to maintain confidentiality.