

# Access and Availability

## South Country Guidelines for Providers

South Country, through its participating providers, shall ensure that primary care services are available and accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, within the Plan's service area. South Country shall partially fulfill this requirement through appointment scheduling guidelines with its participating providers, based on the type of health care service.

ACCESS – Type of Service	Guideline
Life Threatening	Seen immediately or told to call 911
Emergency Health Services	Seen immediately or sent to ER
Urgent Care	Seen within 24 hours
Non-urgent/Routine Care	Seen within one week
Periodic Health Assessment	Seen within six weeks

AVAILABILITY – Type of Service	Guideline
Office Wait Time	Between 20-45 minutes; if more than 45 minutes, provide options to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See another provider within group</li><li>• Re-schedule appointment</li><li>• Continue to wait</li></ul>
Telephone Care – during normal business hours	Assessment by physician or designee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediately if emergency</li><li>• 30 minutes for urgent care</li><li>• Within 6 hours for routine care</li></ul>
Telephone Care – after hours on-call coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide 24 hours a day and 7 days a week on-call coverage</li><li>• Provide emergency care instructions at beginning of message/recording</li></ul>
Policy exists for answering and returning enrollee/patient calls	Compliance with answering and returning phone calls is monitored