



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved February 2020

Retail-Based Clinics

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Reaffirmed April 2014

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The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) recognizes the increasing prevalence of retail-based clinics, and believes the following attributes are important to patient care:

- **Scope of Service:** Retail-based clinics should have a well-defined and limited scope of clinical services. Prior to services being rendered, retail-based clinics should provide a clear and concise summary of their scope of services, as well as indicate the qualifications of the on-site health care personnel. Marketing materials should also reflect the qualifications of the on-site health care personnel.
- **Staffing:** Allied health personnel at retail-based clinics, such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants, should operate under appropriate physician supervision and in accordance with local and state regulations, and licensure requirements.
- **Coordination of Care:** Retail-based clinics should establish and maintain collaborative relationships with other area physician practices, clinics, hospitals, and emergency departments in order to maximize effective resource utilization and information exchange within the community. Retail-based clinics should encourage all patients to have a primary care physician and provide information leading to appropriate referrals to local medical practices for ongoing care.
- **Patient Health Records:** Retail-based clinics must maintain a system of medical records that are accurate, complete, easily accessible, and retrievable. Information from the clinical encounter should be made readily available to the patient's primary care physician.
- **Referrals:** The retail-based clinic must have a well-defined referral system for patients who present with symptoms beyond the clinic's defined scope of clinical services. These guidelines should include: indications for transfer, transfer agreements, detailed protocols for effective communication and transfer of information, and consideration of appropriate methods of transportation.
- **Patient Protection:** Retail-based clinics should be regularly inspected and subject to well-defined state and local standards and regulations. Policies and procedures must be in place to ensure adequate protection of patients and families with regard to HIPAA requirements, patient confidentiality, appropriate transfer of medical information, and infection

control. Retail-based clinics should have formal plans and protocols to handle emergency complications of the care that is provided.

- **Quality of Care:** Clinical services must be evidence-based and quality improvement oriented.