



**DIVISION POLICY  
CLINICAL MANUAL**

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Title: **PN 1.01 Nurse Advice Line - Planned and  
Unplanned Closures**  
Owner: **Clinical Support Programs**  
Approval By: **Senior Director, Care Continuum**  
Effective Date: **09/01/2017**  
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**Applicability**

Participants enrolled in the Nurse Advice Line (NAL).

**Purpose**

To ensure effective operations of the NAL and participants of the nurse advice service.

**Definitions**

- A. **Practice** - defined as a physician office enrolled in the Nurse Advice Line service.
- B. **Holiday(s)** - defined as a legally established national holiday.
- C. **Floating Business Day Closure** - defined as practice closures during normal business hours not related to holidays covered by the Nurse Advice Line.
- D. **Business Hours** - defined as the normal working hours of practice. Business hours includes weekend and extended hours established by the practice.
- E. **Planned Closure** - defined as an interruption of normal business hours for planned events such as vacations, office meetings, conferences, or training.
- F. **Unplanned Closure** - defined as an interruption of normal business hours due to acts of nature, technology failure, or other unforeseen causes.

## Policy

### A. Holidays

1. The Nurse Advise Line (NAL) will handle, without notification, closures for the holidays listed below. NAL holiday coverage begins at the end of normal business hours on the day preceding the holiday and ends at normal business hour opening the day after the holiday.
  - New Year's Day
  - Independence Day
  - Thanksgiving Day
  - Memorial Day
  - Labor Day
  - Christmas Day

### B. Other Planned Closure(s)

1. The NAL does not cover daily closures for lunch.
2. The NAL will cover four floating business day closures for occasions such as days before or after holidays, holidays not listed, vacations, office meetings, training, or conference coverage during regular business hours. The following rules apply to the four floating business day closures:
  - a. Planned floating closures around the above holidays must be listed on the practice enrollment/re-enrollment form.
  - b. By September 30th of each calendar year, practices must submit requests for floating business day closures not listed on the enrollment form and occurring in November or December.
  - c. Other requests for floating business day closures not related to holidays or listed on the enrollment form require a 14-day advanced notice sent via e-mail to [callschedules@childrens.com](mailto:callschedules@childrens.com). The NAL leadership or designee must approve requests in advance. The NAL will notify medical practices of the request status within five business days of receipt of the request.

### C. Examples of Floating Business Day Closure(s)

1. Closing a half-day early before Thanksgiving, a full day on the Friday after Thanksgiving, and the Saturday after Thanksgiving counts as three floating business day closures.
2. Half-day closures count as one floating business day closure.
3. Practices with extended hours who close after 4:30 pm do not count towards floating business day closures

## D. Unplanned Closures(s)

1. Inclement Weather
  - The NAL follows school district closures in the enrolled medical practice area. Notification is not required.
2. Utility Failure, unforeseen Acts of Nature
  - The enrolled medical practice notifies the NAL immediately by phone
    - NAL Back Line: 214-456-8145. Practice administrators and other key staff should keep this phone number on cell phones, in case the enrolled medical practice phones are down, the staff is offsite, etc.

## E. Process for handling calls during unplanned closures

1. Practice will notify NAL of:
  - Practice's contact person name and phone number
  - Options available for the patient's requiring care during office hours
  - On-call provider for the duration of the closure
    - Communication preferences (page, phone call, etc.)
2. The NAL must know who is on call during this time.
3. Calls will be handled accordingly by the NAL
  - Non-clinical issues – callers will be told to call back the next business day
  - Clinical issues requiring escalation – the NAL will contact the on-call provider

## Procedure

### A. Procedure for Non-compliance

1. 1<sup>st</sup> warning – a verbal warning from NAL leadership.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> warning – information forwarded to the NAL leadership team for review and written notice sent from NAL medical director stating necessary corrective actions for compliance.
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> and final warning – non-compliance information reviewed by the NAL leadership team and determination made regarding eligibility for further participation. The medical director will notify the medical practice and applicable network affiliates of eligibility determination after the ruling. The final written notice provided to practice and network affiliations via certified mail within ten business days of the determination.

## Related Policies

None

## Joint Commission Manual

None

**Medicare Conditions of Participation**

None

**State or Federal Statute or Regulation**

None

**Other References**

None