

Tips to Increase Well-Care Visits for Children of All Ages

This list of tips is compiled from parent comments in focus groups hosted by the Washington State Department of Health in fall 2017 and from clinics participating in the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO) Collaborative PIP's Empanelment and Well-Care Visit (WCV) Projects 2018-2022. Send additional suggestions to Kate.Cross@doh.wa.gov.

In 2020 registered nurses (RNs) are authorized to perform EPSDT visits under the supervision of a primary care provider (MD, DO, ND, ARNP) in Washington State.

Telemedicine well-care visits can be billed as EPSDT appointments. For ages needing in person services, an in-person follow-up appointment may also be submitted. See HCA website for details here (see Part 6 for EPSDT):

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/billers-and-providers/Clinical-policy-and-billing-for-COVID-19-FAQ.pdf>.

Well-Child Visit Educational Flyers

Washington State Department of Health developed 8.5x11" flyers to communicate to parents and caretakers of children the importance and benefits of the annual well-care visit. Each flyer has been translated into Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese and are tailored for different age groups and seasons.

Spring

Age Group	Language	Title	Short URL
0 to 4	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Spring	https://bit.ly/babyflyersspringEN
0 to 4	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Spring	https://bit.ly/babyflyersspringRU
0 to 4	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Spring	https://bit.ly/babyflyersspringES
0 to 4	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Spring	https://bit.ly/babyflyersspringVI
5 to 10	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Spring	https://bit.ly/childflyersspringEN
5 to 10	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Spring	https://bit.ly/childflyersspringRU
5 to 10	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Spring	https://bit.ly/childflyersspringES
5 to 10	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Spring	https://bit.ly/childflyersspringVI
11 to 14	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Spring	https://bit.ly/adolescentflyersspringEN
11 to 14	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Spring	https://bit.ly/adolescentflyersspringRU
11 to 14	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Spring	https://bit.ly/adolescentflyersspringES
11 to 14	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Spring	https://bit.ly/adolescentflyersspringVI
15 to 21	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Spring	https://bit.ly/yaflyersspringEN
15 to 21	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Spring	https://bit.ly/yaflyersspringRU
15 to 21	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Spring	https://bit.ly/yaflyersspringES
15 to 21	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Spring	https://bit.ly/yaflyersspringVI

Fall

Age Group	Language	Title	Short URL
0 to 4	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Fall	https://bit.ly/babyflyerfallEN
0 to 4	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Fall	https://bit.ly/babyflyerfallRU
0 to 4	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Fall	https://bit.ly/babyflyerfallES
0 to 4	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Infant) - Fall	https://bit.ly/babyflyerfallVI
5 to 10	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Fall	https://bit.ly/childflyerfallEN
5 to 10	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Fall	https://bit.ly/childflyerfallRU
5 to 10	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Fall	https://bit.ly/childflyerfallES
5 to 10	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Child) - Fall	https://bit.ly/childflyerfallVI
11 to 14	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Fall	https://bit.ly/teenflyerfallEN
11 to 14	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Fall	https://bit.ly/teenflyerfallRU

11 to 14	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Fall	https://bit.ly/teenflyerfallES
11 to 14	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Adolescent) - Fall	https://bit.ly/teenflyerfallVI
15 to 21	English	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Fall	https://bit.ly/yaflyerfallEN
15 to 21	Russian	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Fall	https://bit.ly/yaflyerfallRU
15 to 21	Spanish	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Fall	https://bit.ly/yaflyerfallES
15 to 21	Vietnamese	Well-Child Visit Educational Flyer (Young Adult) - Fall	https://bit.ly/yaflyerfallVI

These flyers may also be found on the [Washington State Department of Health’s Child and Adolescent Well-Care Visit page](#). Additional materials and resources will be added as they become available.

Tips to Strengthen the Engagement of Parents and Patients

Reminders

Parents report that clinic reminders get prompt attention, while a reminder from the Managed Care Organization (MCO) is often postponed or even ignored.

Many parents prefer text messages or emails rather than phone calls without the clinic name. Remind parents about upcoming well-care visit due dates at least 30-60 days in advance to ensure timely scheduling or re-scheduling.

Informal research suggests that reminders sent out 3 weeks in advance, with reminders 3 days and 3 hours in advance of an appointment, are effective in getting appointments rescheduled and/or reducing missed appointments.

Clinics report that including a link or phone number in a text message or email for contacting scheduling desk is highly successful.

Keep in mind that parents may attempt to schedule appointments on their work break. Monitor telephone hold time to reach a scheduler, strategize to keep wait times as short as possible.

Communicating Benefits (Addressing the “Why?”)

When reminding parents or patients to schedule a well-care visit, mention:

- That Apple Health appointments are based on calendar year (Note: Medicaid provides one free well-care appointment (EPSDT) **each calendar year**);
- Remind parents that scheduling in September or October is easier than November or December;
- Which immunizations will be offered at the appointment in plain language (e.g., anti-cancer immunization for youth and adolescents, flu vaccine for all kids or particularly children with asthma. Note that flu vaccine may reduce days missed from school for kids and days missed from work for parents); and
- Share that the patient’s MCO **may** offer a reward for getting preventive services.

Include information about MCO incentives for well-care visit completion in reminder messaging and in appointment reminders as well. Clinics report fewer missed appointments when parents are reminded about the MCO reward for completing a well visit. MCO incentives can be found on their websites or through the MCO provider representative.

Let parents know children and adolescents can catch up on missed vaccines.

Mention that well-care visits for adolescents include mental health screenings and behavioral health support.

Scheduling

Offer well-care appointments outside of standard business hours 1 or 2 evenings a week or on a weekend by allowing a provider to flex their hours to cover these. This allows parents to come in during non-work hours and students to be present for school and afterschool activities.

Schedule the next well-care visit when the patient checks in for any appointment.

Allow scheduling the next annual check-up at this year's check-up. Parents can reschedule if you remind them about the appointment several weeks in advance.

Be opportunistic! Perform a well-care visit while the patient is at the clinic when sick, depending on the severity of the illness.

Tips for Outreach to Adolescents

Consider using “well-care” or “preventive care” visits versus “well-child” visit. The term “well-child” visit is diminutive and could be offensive to some adolescents.

Mention the anti-cancer vaccine (HPV) for youth, adolescents, and young adults nine years and older (up to age 26). Presumptive communication style is associated with significantly higher odds of vaccine uptake than an elective or conversation style.

As an additional incentive offer a monthly or quarterly drawing, like some dentists' offices, for movie tickets, concert tickets for a local band, or food delivery from a favorite local restaurant to entice adolescents to come in for a well-care visit.

Newly-Assigned or Unengaged Patients

Compare the Medicaid lists of patients attributed to the clinic against the EMR list of clinic patients. Medicaid MCOs post a list of each clinic/provider assigned panel on their provider portals. Patients who are not established at the clinic offer an opportunity to increase WCV rates and build new parent/patient relationships.

Having difficulty reaching an unestablished patient? Check the WA IIS (Washington State Immunization Information System) <https://waiis.doh.wa.gov/iweb/> for more contact information. Users who are able to add or edit information in the IIS may do so frequently, and this may include your local health jurisdiction (LHJ) or another provider or organization in your community. Community Health Workers may offer another strategy to locate parents/patients.

Other Tips

EPSDT and treated health problems can be completed and billed on the same day. Ask the business office for assistance.

Share with patients that their children can get the well-care visit via telehealth or telemedicine, and it counts for a preventive health service with their health insurer! Their child's provider can see them and review all their physical and behavioral health histories, medications, current and past health conditions during the tele-visit. A comprehensive physical can be done at the next in-person visit at the clinic.

Celebrate Successes with staff—set up a thermometer in the staff lounge showing the clinic rate, post a report in a public hallway to create staff and patient interest, order lunch for the staff for milestones. If your situation permits give staff extra time off if a stretch goal is achieved.

Have providers sell the value of well-care visits by talking through what they are doing, and why, as they provide care. Many parents in Medicaid today did not have check-ups themselves as children and are confused as to why they should take time off from work or find care for other children when the child being seen is “healthy”.

Make “missed appointment” messages friendly and use them to build the relationship with the patient/parent. Frame them as the “I (the provider) missed you, and I want to be sure that you are doing okay”. Inquire about when would be good to reschedule. Some clinics have had the provider call during the missed appointment time slot with great success.

Tips from Clinic Participants about Empanelment Project

We have learned that to increase patient participation, we need to be proactive and remind them of the importance of participating in their healthcare and that prevention is the best way.

Use Care Gap reporting mid-year to identify kids overdue for appointments, billing problems, and other anomalies. Claims processing can take around 90 days to update the Care Gap report, plan accordingly. Your MCO representative can provide assistance.

Be sure that schedulers and receptionists know when a well-care visit is needed. If a well-care visit is needed it can be scheduled at check-in while the parent is fresh, and the kids are cooperative.

When a well-care visit is due, let the nurse and/or provider know so it can be mentioned to the parent/guardian; if one has been scheduled, have the nurse and/or provider comment that they see that it has been scheduled and they are pleased that the parent is getting the important preventive care. This allows the clinic and parent to ensure the child is on target and growing in all the right ways or address any issues early.

Consider setting your EHR to report as “overdue” patients whose last WCV was 300-315 days ago. This will let December appointments get in prior to year-end. The report will not need to be run in December because those patients were in January of the same calendar year. Well-child visits are paid one per calendar year.