



POLICY

AFTERHOURS COVERAGE

3034

Professional coverage for medical emergencies will be available to established and active Bullhook Community Health Center patients after hours, on weekends, and holidays through an after-hours call system.

When a patient calls after regular business hours, the voicemail system directs patients to call 911 if they are experiencing a medical emergency or to stay on the line to be automatically connected to Bullhook Community Health Center’s after-hours service. The patient’s calls will be answered by a contracted call center’s trained triage staff who will answer as “Bullhook Community Health Center After-Hours.”. Symptoms-based calls will be triaged by a Registered Nurse (RN) and documented appropriately. RN(s) shall use reasonable efforts to elicit health information from callers to assess the callers’ condition and concerns. Based on the information provided, the RN(s) will recommend appropriate services and actions based on pre-approved clinical guidelines and protocols. A certified electronic triage system will be used by the contracted call center’s staff to answer questions, give medical advice, and refer patients back to their BCHC provider or direct them to the Northern Montana Health Care’s Emergency Department.

The after-hours service is expected to help the patient decide if they should seek emergency medical care or if they can wait until the next business day to have an appointment with their provider at BCHC. This service will be conducted 24 hours/7days per week including holidays. A list of calls from BCHC’s patients will be automatically emailed to BCHC daily. These calls will be entered into Bullhook Community Health Center’s EMR by the BCHC staff in order to document clinical advice given to patient. This process will also allow for follow-up with the patient’s concerns and hospital admissions by BCHC staff.

The voicemail message at the clinic will be activated during any closure, including staff meetings. After-hours service information will be posted at patient entryways throughout the clinic along with Bullhook’s hours of operation.

*Kynde Ball*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date: 12/14/2020

*Debi K Rhines*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date: 12/14/2020

Date first adopted	06/26/2013
Date Revised/QI Board approval	06/13/2013, 06/28/2017, 11/24/2020
New date adopted/Board of Directors approval	06/26/2013, 07/10/2017, 12/14/2020