



# The Urgent Care Center PPO Network

When it's not an emergency



**Y**ou can't prevent those minor cuts and scrapes – especially when it comes to your kids. Unfortunately, these little accidents tend to happen at the most inconvenient times. You know, when your doctor is already gone for the day, but you can't wait until tomorrow for an appointment.

In the past, many of us dealt with unexpected, but non-life-threatening health dilemmas by going to the emergency room (ER).

Once in the ER, we usually encountered long wait times, overcrowding and exposure to people much sicker than ourselves. Anthem Blue Cross recognizes there is a better solution for our members when it comes to nonemergency situations when your doctor is unavailable: the **Urgent Care Center**.

**Note:** If you are uncertain about the seriousness of a health problem, please go to your local ER immediately. You and your provider are the only ones who can make the critical decision about what's right for you and your loved ones!

## The overuse crisis

Every three-and-one-half seconds in California, someone is brought to an emergency room. That's over 30,000 people every day seeking emergency care at community hospitals.<sup>1</sup> In a 2002 survey, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that almost half of all visits to the ER are neither emergencies nor urgent in nature. Industry studies show this volume has been steadily rising for a number of years.

In addition, patients spent **3.2 hours on average in the ER**, including the actual doctor consultation and any treatment.<sup>2</sup> And ER visits are about **six times more expensive** than comparable care in a physician's office.<sup>3</sup>

## Our solution and why it makes sense

Anthem Blue Cross has developed an Urgent Care Center PPO Network to fill in the gaps between your primary care physician and the ER.

### Urgent Care Centers offer the following advantages:

- Convenient locations
- No appointment required
- Shorter wait times
- Lower costs

That means a lot less frustration for you, your family and the people in the ER line truly facing life-threatening situations.

## The Urgent Care Center Network

Anthem Blue Cross' Urgent Care Center PPO Network is extensive and we continue to add facilities. As of September 2008, we have contracts with 221 sites across 31 counties in California for PERSCare and PERS Choice members, and have 154 sites across 31 Counties in California for PERS Select members. All participating PPO network Urgent Care Centers meet Anthem Blue Cross' health care management criteria.

Due to schedule variances in each Urgent Care Center, we recommend you call your preferred location for operating hours.

You can find the Urgent Care Center closest to you by visiting our website, at [anthem.com/ca/calpers](http://anthem.com/ca/calpers). From there, follow these simple directions:

1. Click on "Find a Doctor (Provider Finder)" located on the home page.
2. To identify providers participating in PERS Choice or PERSCare, click on "Anthem Blue Cross PPO (PERS Choice/PERSCare Providers)."
3. To identify providers participating in PERS Select, click on "Anthem Blue Cross Select PPO (PERS Select Providers)."
4. Follow the prompts and you will find the "Urgent Care Centers" heading.



Save time and money.  
Check out this exciting new network today!

<sup>1</sup>Radio Broadcast, California Hospital Association, December 2005

<sup>2</sup>"Visits to U.S. Emergency Departments at All-Time High; Number of Departments Shrinking," CDC, May 26, 2005

<sup>3</sup>Page, L., "Patients Bypassing Primary Doctors for Emergency Care," *American Medical News*, Feb. 12, 2001