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NAPNAP Perspective: Retail Based Health Clinics

Quality healthcare services that are accessible, affordable, consistent, and convenient are of vital importance to consumers and healthcare providers. The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) maintains that pediatric health care is best provided by pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and pediatricians through consistent health care sites. Consistent care sites allow for monitoring and treatment if needed of children's growth and development, immunization status, chronic conditions, and episodic acute illnesses. Parenting issues, school and behavioral concerns are also addressed.

We recognize, however, alternatives such as retail based health care sites are a reality. These facilities provide opportunities for consumers and patients to access episodic health care. Healthcare services in retail establishments are not new phenomena. Immunizations, especially influenza vaccines, have been a popular service provided in pharmacies and other retail settings for some time. Blood pressure screenings, whether by a person or a machine, have been available in a variety of settings for many years. This is recently demonstrated by the number of retail based clinics opened and plan to open (Pierce 2006, Spencer 2005). This is fulfilling the after hours urgent care needs.

The diagnosis and treatment of acute health problems in a retail environment by nurse practitioners is a growing concept because consumers demand accessible, more convenient, and affordable health care. One stop shopping is appealing to today's active families. Some families with no insurance and even those with insurance and high co-payments for emergency department or office visits find the retail based health clinic a less expensive option to obtain services for minor illnesses. In these clinic patients are receiving excellent quality care provided by nurse practitioners.

NAPNAP has been monitoring this trend. We want to ensure healthcare in the retail environment is provided with the best interest of children and families in mind. If care is to be provided to children in these environments, we strongly urge clinic owners to employ pediatric nurse practitioners to provide those services to children. NAPNAP knows children receive the best health services when they are cared for by providers, such as PNPs, pediatricians, and other specialized health care providers with in-depth knowledge and clinical skills that are focused on the unique needs of children and their families.

NAPNAP will work to ensure that employment opportunities are afforded to PNPs to practice to the fullest extent of their scope of practice and as independently as their state practice act allows. Nurse practitioners must follow retail based clinic protocols and expect to be regulated similarly

to private practice, group practice, and urgent care clinics. As these settings evolve into full-service and high volume facilities, we expect PNP's will become integral partners providing evidence-based pediatric health care in all settings where children receive care.

Therefore we urge retail-based health clinics to reflect the established healthcare standards of nursing practice (NAPNAP 2006, AANP 2007) and:

1. Promote continuity of pediatric care through a pediatric health care home where pediatric nurse practitioners and pediatricians will monitor growth and development, provide comprehensive immunizations, address parenting issues, behavior concerns, chronic conditions and episodic acute illnesses.
2. Provide well defined and limited scope of services and systems to communicate all care provided to children to their primary health care provider.
3. Limit services to children over two years of age and develop mechanisms to encourage families with children less than two years of age to access appropriate care.
4. Collaborate about services for children with pediatric nurse practitioners as consultants, resources and providers of care for all children.
5. Provide clinical services and treatments that are evidence-based and focused on continuous quality improvement.
6. Create formal team-based collaborations with community-based pediatric health care providers, including pediatric nurse practitioners and establish quality assurance through appropriate peer review and quality measures.
7. Identify resources for families such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program and others that help uninsured and underinsured children access care.
8. Create an electronic health record and system that adequately collects patient information and communicates it to the patients' primary health care provider in a format preferred by that community-based primary health care provider.
9. Support reimbursement parity for nurse practitioners that provide services equal to physicians related to health outcomes and patient satisfaction.
10. Create programs to provide reduced cost or free services and treatments, including pharmaceuticals to underserved or uninsured patients in the service community.
11. High standards of professionalism in all activities undertaken in the retail based clinic environment.
12. Insure that NPs utilize in retail-based clinics meet all regulatory requirements for certification and education and be recognized to practice as a NP in the state in which clinic functions.

Further, we urge parents and grandparents to:

1. Identify a community-based primary health care provider for children under their care
2. Use retail-based health clinics judiciously and inform your primary pediatric health care provider during follow-up and/or routine visits
3. Learn more about the range of primary pediatric health care services available to your children in your community including pediatric nurse practitioners, pediatricians, and other specialists educated, licensed and certified by your state law to provide pediatric health care services
4. Exercise your right to choose a primary health care provider for your children

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) is committed to improving the health care of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. An association of nearly 7,000 health care providers throughout the United States, NAPNAP is the only advanced practice registered nursing organization in the world focused on pediatric health. For more information, call 856/857-9700 or visit NAPNAP's Website at www.napnap.org.

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