POLICY | PURPOSE STATEMENT:
It is the policy of the TTUHSC SON Larry Combest Community Health and Wellness Center clinics to accommodate patients who request an appointment whether for routine care or urgent care. It is the purpose of this policy to outline the process by which patient appointments are created and utilized.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to all patients, providers and staff.

DEFINITIONS:

Established/Return appointments - Appointments with patients who have an established PCP in clinic. This appointment can be used for chronic conditions or be used for any established patient regardless of appointment reason.

Hospital follow up appointments –Appointment is left open until 24 hours before use and if not filled at that point can be used for other appointment visit types

New patient appointments-Appointments with any patient who we are not their established PCP.

Primary Care Provider (PCP) – Is a Nurse Practitioner (NP) who is responsible for patient care and sees regularly for wellness, acute illness, and urgent needs.

Provider – Nurse Practitioner taking walk-ins as available and not necessarily the PCP.

Patient Services Specialist (PSS) – Front desk clerical staff.
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Same-day appointment – Appointment does not open until the beginning of the clinic day in the clinic scheduling system. Eligible patients include, patient who arrives without a scheduled appointment, who request to be seen the same day for an acute, urgent or chronic problem, or patient who calls for appointment for an acute problem or urgent care need.

Walk-in appointment- Appointment that is used for acute or urgent issues that need to be addressed that day if possible.

PROCEDURE:

1. Established/Return Appointments- The daily clinic schedule will include Established/Return Appointments for all PCPs at various times each day. Established/Return appointments are used for patients who have an established PCP in the clinic.
   a. Future appointments can be made while checking out with PSS at completion of visit. This is the preferred method.
   b. Call-In Patients:
      1. The PSS staff will assist the patient to schedule a same day appointment with their PCP.
      2. If the same day appointments have been filled, the patient will be offered the option of coming in as a walk-in patient to see an available Provider or the patient call will be transferred to the triage nurse who will assist the patient.
   c. Established/Return appointments are for chronic/routine care or acute care as needed.
2. Hospital Follow-Up Appointments- The daily clinic schedule will include Hospital Follow-up Appointments for all PCPs at various times each day. Hospital Follow-up Appointments not filled within 24 hours of an appointment time on the clinic schedule, the appointment will be used for walk-in patients.
3. New Patient Appointments- The daily clinic schedule will include New Patient Appointments for all PCPs at various times each day.
4. Same Day Appointments-The daily clinic schedule will include Same Day Appointments for all PCPs at various times each day. Same Day Appointments not filled within one hour of an appointment time on the clinic schedule will be used for walk-in patients.
5. Walk-In Appointments:
   a) Sign in at registration:
      a. The PSS will check PCP appointment availability, if no appointment is available with their PCC the PSS will assign a Provider.
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b. If a PCP or Provider appointment is not available, the PSS staff will refer the patient information to the Triage RN for evaluation.

c. When there are no appointments available the Triage RN may:
   1. Arrange for the patient to be registered in an open Provider appointment time that has been vacated by a “no show” or not utilized for a same day patient;
   2. Assist the patient to arrange a scheduled visit another day if condition or if concern is not acute and/or urgent;
   3. Assist the patient with immediate needs such as prescription refill;
   4. Collaborate with the PCP or available Provider to overbook on the schedule.

a. Call-In Patients:
   1. The PSS staff will assist the patient to schedule a same day appointment with their PCP.
   2. If the same day appointments have been filled, the patient will be offered the option of coming in as a walk-in patient to see an available Provider or the patient call will be transferred to the triage nurse who will assist the patient.

6. Data regarding appointments is reviewed by the management team to assess the adequacy of scheduling and processes for patients requesting same day appointments.

RESPONSIBILITIES | REVIEW | REVISIONS:
It is the responsibility of the Policy & Procedures Committee to review and initiate necessary revisions based on collaboration and input by Policy and Procedure committee and through Administrative management of this policy, including the review and revisions will be the responsibility of the Clinical Services Director.

RIGHT TO CHANGE POLICY:
TTUHSC SON Combest reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time to reflect changes in policy and/or law.