



# fact sheet

## Convenient Care Clinics: Reducing Costs For Consumers and Third-Party Payers

**QUESTION:** *Are convenient care clinics (CCCs) more affordable than other healthcare delivery outlets?*

**ANSWER:**

CCCs are more cost effective for basic healthcare needs than physicians' offices, urgent care clinics and emergency rooms.<sup>1</sup> This is possible because CCCs provide high-quality care by certified nurse practitioners (NPs) or physician assistants. CCCs are affordable to the insured, underinsured and uninsured alike.

CCCs accept most insurance co-payments, and patients without insurance typically pay \$40 to \$75 for a clinic visit, which is far less than they would be billed for emergency room care.

**THE FACTS:**

Average costs for treatment<sup>2</sup>:

- Convenient Care Clinic - \$60
- Emergency department - \$356
- Urgent Care - \$124
- Physician Office - \$127

Care provided at retail clinics costs 30% to 40% less than similar care at physician offices and approximately 80% less than similar care at emergency departments.<sup>1</sup>

Lower CCC costs also take the pressure off of overburdened emergency rooms by offering significantly less expensive treatment for basic medical needs.

- 12 to 14% of all ED visits can be seen at convenient care clinics.<sup>3</sup>

Convenient Care Clinics offer a quick, affordable alternative for patients with pressing, non-emergency medical needs.

- CCCs prominently display their healthcare services and pricing, so patients know costs upfront.
- CCCs may reduce healthcare costs by providing preventive care (e.g., flu shots) and facilitating earlier access to care.
- CCCs demonstrate significant cost savings for both consumers and third-party payers.

Total treatment costs for a CCC operator were found to be approximately \$300 less than emergency departments.<sup>2</sup>

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota eliminated co-pays for enrollees who used a clinic, citing \$1.2 million in cost savings.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mehrotra, Ateev, Llu Hangsheng, John L. Adams, et al. "Comparing Costs and Quality of Care at Retail Clinics with that of Other Medical Settings for 3 Common Illnesses." *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 151 no. 5 (2009): 321-328.

<sup>2</sup>Thygeson, Marcus, Krista A. Van Vorst, Michael V. Maciosek, and Leif Solberg. "Use and Costs of Care In Retail Clinics Versus Traditional Care Sites." *Health Affairs*, 27 No. 5 (2008): 1283-1292.

<sup>3</sup>Weinick, Robin M., Rachel M. Burns, Ateev Mehrotra. (2010) "Many Emergency Department Visits Could be Handled at Urgent Care Centers and Retail Clinics." *Health Affairs*, 29, No. 9 (2010): 1630-1636.

<sup>4</sup>BlueCross BlueShield Association, July 29, 2008.