


FACULTY PRACTICE GROUP – Ambulatory Operations		
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES		
SECTION:	Front Office Operations	REFERENCE #:
SUBJECT:	Answering Services	PAGE: 1 OF 1
APPROVALS:	FPG: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAO-SC: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APCA: N/A EAC: N/A	EFFECTIVE: 10/2008

PURPOSE:

It is a goal of the FPG to show consistency regarding how patients’ needs are met during and after business hours. This policy will define acceptable means of meeting patient needs in regard to telephone answering services.

POLICY:

Answering services will be utilized to answer patient calls when staff is not available during business hours or after business hours. If an answering service is not utilized by a practice for after hours’ calls, there must be a paging or voice mail system in place for urgent calls. It is not sufficient to state “For emergencies, hang up and call 911.”

Operator-Phone Response Time

- Calls to answering service will be answered in 20 seconds, or 4 rings.
- Calls will be answered in a courteous and professional manner and will include all of the following 3 elements:
 - Identification of clinical area represented.
 - Identification of staff member name.
 - Offer of “How may I help you?”

Clinical Area Information

- Clinical areas utilizing an answering service for after hours paging are responsible for notifying the service of changes in the on-call schedule within 24 hours of change. Notification of changes will follow the standard format established by the service.
- Departments will provide their answering service with a contingency phone list if the attending cannot be reached.
- Clinical areas will provide the answering service with on-call information according to the standard format established by the service.

Holiday, Weekend, and Off-Hour Coverage

- Attending physicians or Practice Manager are responsible for notifying the answering service of any changes in the set schedule.

Monitoring

- The Practice Manager is encouraged to call the practice during off hours to determine whether this policy is being followed.
- The FPG telephone audit will include calling the office during off hours. Reports will be provided to the Practice and FPG Administration detailing our findings.

REVISION HISTORY

Effective Date:

Review Date:

Revised Date: