

# Outside Use

## Quick Reference Guide

This short guide will help you address key outside use challenges that DoctorCare often helps doctors resolve.

Read below for best practice recommendations that will help you reduce outside use, enhance patient care and maximize your access bonus.

Challenge	DoctorCare Best Practices and Recommendations
<b>I.</b> How do I identify high outside use patients and communicate with them on this issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check your Practice Care report for your top 20 rostered high outside use patients.</li><li>• Consider removing them from your roster (the report suggests a service date to remove each patient from your roster).</li><li>• Have your staff call or email to make patients aware of the negatives to using services outside the FHO (i.e. it inhibits continuity and quality of care).</li><li>• Send letters informing them on the above points. Ask DoctorCare for a template letter.</li><li>• Repeat the above recommendations with the next top 30 rostered high outside use patients.</li></ul>
<b>II.</b> How can my staff best help communicate my practice's after-hours availability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have your staff consistently communicate after-hours availability to patients (e.g. have staff remind patients before they leave the office).</li><li>• DoctorCare has effective posters available that explain to patients the importance of not using walk-in clinics and that communicate your practice's after-hours availability. This 11" x 17" full-colour, professionally printed poster can be displayed in your waiting room.</li></ul>
<b>III.</b> Patients who live far away sometimes find walk-ins more convenient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check that your rostered patients are within 100 km of your practice – this is a MOH requirement. Consider narrowing this parameter down to within 50 km (or less) of your practice.</li><li>• Consider taking these patients off your roster and see them on a fee-for-service basis – you will still be their family physician. Check your Practice Care report to review that you are within your FHO FFS cap.</li></ul>

## Challenge

## DoctorCare Best Practices and Recommendations

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**IV.** How can I communicate my FHO group's after-hours availability?

- If your group is under one location, include after-hours details on your website and in your main phone line's message recording.
- If your group has multiple locations, set up a dedicated "after-hours line" with details of your group's after-hours. Make sure to include details on each doctor's full name, practice phone number and address, and their availability. Then consistently share this line with patients. Also include this number on the waiting room poster available through DoctorCare.
- Set up a FHO group website where you can update the after-hours availability and share the weblink with patients. Also include this weblink on the waiting room poster available through DoctorCare.
- Create a card or handout for patients with after-hours information such as the after-hours line and weblink.

**V.** My practice is 100% booked – how can I open up my availability?

- Review your renewal process for prescription refills, and try not to book separate appointments for just this. Identify the appropriate timeframe and conditions for in-office prescription refills at your practice (e.g. three month versus one year renewal).
- Keep time slots open for urgent same-day or next day appointments. HQO Advanced Access Methodology can help you identify the optimal number of slots for you.
- Train your staff to triage urgent appointments and schedule efficiently.
- Use phone calls instead of clinic visits when appropriate (e.g. lab results, prescription refills, etc.).
- Add more weekend hours and ensure you have allotted time slots for unscheduled visits so you can bill A888. Add evening hours as well for more after-hours slots (e.g. a weekday 5pm-8pm slot). Your Practice Care report shows which days your patients are most often using outside services. Use this to match your extra hours to those hours and days.

**VI.** When I'm in front of a patient, how can I remember they've used outside services?

- Have your staff note it in your EMR, within the patient's chart. Staff can access the top outside use patient list from your Practice Care report.
- Many EMRs automatically populate charts with outside use visit details – if your EMR is enabled for this feature, your EMR provider or DoctorCare can help you use it.

**VII.** Some doctors don't roster patients who go to other practices or walk-ins often. Is that right?

- Rostering is unique for each practice. We recommend rostering all patients from whom you can provide comprehensive care. However, it's not necessary to have a 100% rostered practice since you're likely to see some patients only for episodes of acute illness.

**QUESTIONS?**

Call our special Billing Hotline at 1-844-224-6244 or email [support@doctorcare.ca](mailto:support@doctorcare.ca).