IN THE NEWS

Health Dept. Issues Conditional CVS Application to Operate MinuteClinics

PROVIDENCE — MICHAEL D. FINE, MD, Director of Health, has approved the application of CVS MinuteClinics Diagnostics of Rhode Island, LLC to license seven healthcare facilities in Rhode Island, but with a number of significant conditions attached.

In deciding to approve the license application, and in determining the conditions upon which that approval depends, the Department investigated and considered the effect these services will have on Rhode Islanders’ access to primary care, and on the quality of patients’ relationships with primary care providers within both the MinuteClinics and primary care practice settings.

In assessing the expediency of conditions of licensure, the state agency addressed concerns regarding [1] potential conflicts and the appearance of conflicts of interest incident to the corporate structure and relationships between pharmacy and prescribers; [2] the potential fragmentation of primary care delivery and effect on the primary care business model; [3] the appropriateness of pediatric care in the MinuteClinic setting, and; [4] patient access for underserved communities.

“Primary care based delivery systems around the nation and around the world create the best population health outcomes at the lowest cost,” Dr. Fine said. “Primary care practices have been significantly challenged by the necessity of functioning as businesses in a world in which they have no effective market power, while obligated to meet regulated standards of professional practice, and by their own ethical commitments.”

Conditions

The following are among the conditions stipulated by the Health Department which may be subject to revision after review by all pertinent parties:

- Each clinic must maintain a roster of primary care practitioners or community health centers who are currently accepting new patients.
- Only provide care to children 18 months and older; each clinic must be enrolled in Kidsnet to provide vaccination information for minors under the age of 19.
- Treatment limited to three repeat visits for an individual for the same condition or illness.
- Clinic must provide a copy of the visit’s medical record to the patient and, with the patient’s consent, provide an electronic copy to the patient’s primary care provider.
- All prescribers must be enrolled in Currentcare and the Prescription Monitoring Program before prescribing any medications.
- Each clinic must have an Electronic Medical Record that is fully integrated with various EPIC systems utilized by Rhode Island hospitals within 6 months of each of the hospitals going live with EPIC.
- CVS (the applicant) shall freely provide uncompensated care to patients who have been determined eligible for charity care.

Approval of MinuteClinics’ request for licensure is contingent upon MinuteClinics’ acceptance of the Health Department conditions or a mutually agreeable revised set of conditions.


The proposed MinuteClinics are located in Woonsocket, Cranston, North Smithfield, East Greenwich, Westerly, Providence and Wakefield. They will be staffed by nurse practitioners or physician assistants, who will be under the supervision of a Rhode Island physician.