

Free Child Care Equals Regular Health Care for Low Income Mothers at Molina

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Most parents can agree that finding time to take the kids to the doctor is hard enough – keeping up with their own preventive care appointments---nearly impossible. Molina Healthcare recently found that a significant barrier to routine care for young Medicaid mothers was a simple lack of child care. By introducing a free child care service called Kid's Corner inside Molina's staff model clinics in 2011, Molina has seen the number of young mothers taking advantage of recommended preventive care rise encouragingly.

Molina Medical Group (MMG) has primary care clinics in 5 states. We have the highest no show rate for young women. Whether for Pap smears or other female wellness exams, they just can't seem to find the time to come in. These "no shows" were investigated by the patient-access coordinators on staff at each clinic, and their follow-up calls demonstrated that lack of child care was the number one reason

that these women weren't getting treated.



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There are many barriers to health care, especially for young mothers in underserved populations who may struggle to balance children, work and other demands. The repercussions of missed preventive care exams are broad, as regular screenings and checkups can often prevent patients from developing

chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and some forms of cancer. Despite the preventable nature of these diseases, they continue to claim the lives of 7 out of 10 Americans each year and account for 75% of our nation's health spending, according to statistics published by HealthCare.gov. A lack of child care is one barrier to regular health services that was not only mentioned by the MMG patients when surveyed but is frequently named by women in national studies as a reason for missing appointments.

We set out to eliminate this barrier to care for Molina's patients by providing a safe environment where mothers could leave their children while attending their own appointments, or where they could leave well siblings while taking a sick child to an appointment. I decided that if health clubs could offer child care services to patrons, Molina could do the same in their clinics. Molina's solution? Kid's Corner.

Kid's Corner offers a safe space with activities and toys for children

within the clinic, often right next to the waiting room. Each facility is staffed by a state-licensed care provider, and features windows that allow parents to check in and see how their kids are doing. Parents sign a form stating their intention to remain on the clinic property while their child is inside, and then are free to attend their appointments, knowing that their children are cared for and safe.

We offer free child care to children between the ages of three and nine. Some of the older siblings have a worker help them with their homework. So there's been some tutoring. As long as the parent

doesn't leave the premises, we can have that child in that center. The only restriction is that children must be potty trained to use the Kid's Corner.

The first Kid's Corner was launched in Fontana, California, in the summer of 2011, and between August and January, the center cared for more than 700 youngsters. Based on this success, and the decline in missed appointments among patients in the targeted demographic, Molina will launch Kid's Corners in every new clinic we open from this point forward. In addition to new clinic, we are also looking at installing the service in existing clinics – Palm

Beach, Florida and Albuquerque, New Mexico are both getting one.

As the Affordable Care Act takes effect, nearly 16 million more people are expected to join the rolls of Medicaid in the next ten years. This population explosion is one of the things that led us to solve the childcare issue now, to ensure that as Molina's patient population grows, the services will be in place to accommodate future patients. Molina strives to understand the wants and needs of our patients. That's what the Kid's Corners are all about.

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