



# 2016 Survey

## Managed Care Appointment Standards

**aetna**

AETNA BETTER HEALTH® OF MISSOURI



home state health.

**missouricare**   
A WellCare Company



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**BHC**





# 2016

## SURVEY

### Managed Care

### Appointment Standards

*A Survey Examining the MO HealthNet Managed Care Health Plans' Adherence to Appointment Standards*

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# ***2016 Survey of MO HealthNet Managed Care Health Plan Adherence to Appointment Standards***

## Summary Report

### **OVERVIEW**

The ability of MO HealthNet's (MHD) Managed Care Plan members to schedule and receive services is dependent upon the member having access to accurate information on available physicians within the health plan provider network and upon those providers having adequate accommodations for new and returning patients when appointments are requested. To this end, Missouri HealthNet Division's (MHD) Managed Care Health Plans (health plans) are contractually obligated to ensure that the time elapsed between the member's request for appointment and the scheduled appointment is compliant with appointment standards (see Table 1) seventy percent (70%) of the time.

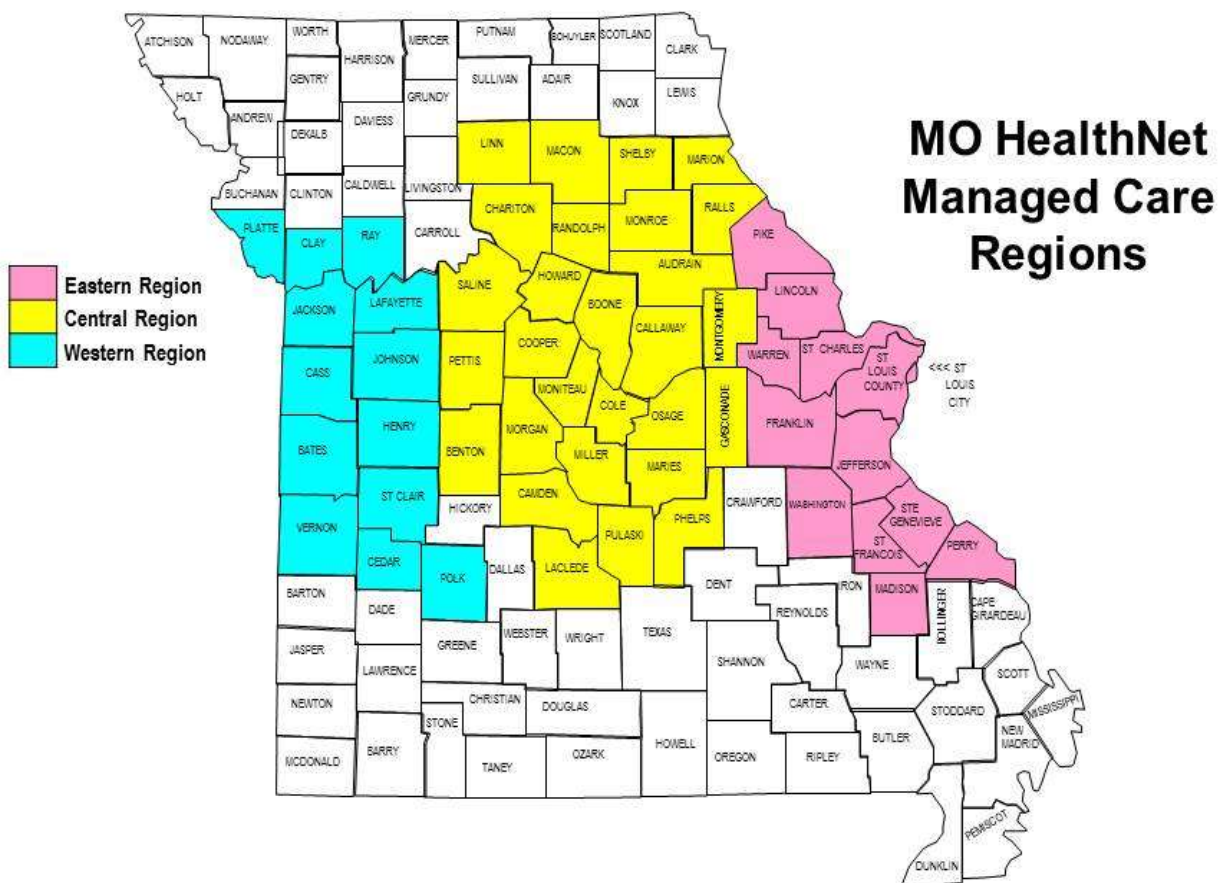
### **Appointment Standards**

Table 1. *Appointment Standards*

<b>Appointment Standard</b>	<b>Appointment Type</b>
Twenty-four (24) hours	<b><i>Urgent care</i></b> Appointments for Illness or Injury requiring immediate care (Not an emergency)
One (1) week or five (5) business days whichever is earlier	Routine care with symptoms (" <b><i>Sick care</i></b> ") (e.g. persistent rash, recurring high grade temperature)
Thirty (30) calendar days	<b><i>Routine care</i></b> without symptoms (e.g. well child exams, routine physical exams)
Within two (2) weeks	Behavioral health and substance abuse services: <b><i>Routine care</i></b> with or without symptoms ( <i>Psychiatrists</i> )

To determine the degree to which the health plans are compliant with these appointment standards, MHD contracted with Behavioral Health Concepts, Inc. (BHC), to develop and conduct a "Secret Shopper" survey. The survey targeted primary care physicians (PCPs) and psychiatrists in each of MHD's health plans: Aetna Better Health of Missouri; Home State Health; and Missouri Care, across the three managed care regions (Western, Central, and Eastern).

**Figure 1: MHD Managed Care Regions**



## **METHODOLOGY**

Between March 1 and May 15, 2016, associates at BHC called a random and statistically valid sample of primary care physicians (PCPs) and psychiatrists from those listed on each of the health plan's websites as "accepting new patients". A total of 1,653 calls were completed across all three health plans (see Table 2).

The goal of each call was to replicate the experience of someone new to MO HealthNet Managed Care. BHC surveyors were trained to call physician offices and present themselves as a caseworker for a family who was relocating and seeking to choose a physician through the health plan's website provider listings. The surveyors called on behalf of the family to inquire about physician availability, including the physician's next available appointment. Two scripts (see Appendix A) were provided to guide the surveyors in obtaining answers to the following questions:

- Did the physician accept the target health plan's insurance? (Yes/No)
- Was the physician currently taking new patients? (Yes/No)
- When would be the next available appointment for a well-child exam or routine physical? (PCP Only)
- When would be the next available appointment date for an unexplained rash, or high fever without other symptoms? (PCP Only)
- When would be the next available appointment for a fever and vomiting that would not require an emergency room visit? (PCP Only)
- When would be the next available routine appointment? (Psychiatrist Only)

For each 'Yes' or 'No' question, the percentage of 'Yes' responses was tabulated to produce each health plan's rate for that question. Credit was given if the provider reached was not taking new patients, but a colleague in the same location was taking new patients and was available to members. Averages were calculated for each health plan by region and in the aggregate.

For each of the appointment availability questions, the date of the next available appointment was logged and the amount of time between the call and the available appointment was calculated. An average availability for "routine", "sick" and "urgent" appointments was calculated for each health plan.

Phone research was conducted during a ten week period. The results therefore are a snapshot of physician availability at a particular time. A change in timing or approach could yield different results.



## Sample Size Calculation

The formula for calculating sample size for survey research is as follows:

$$SS = \frac{C^2 * p * (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- C = Confidence Level (expressed as a Z-score) – how “confident” that the final result from the sample accurately reflects the “true” result of the population. Common Confidence Levels are 90%, 95%, and 99%. The confidence level for this survey was 95% (Z=1.96).
- p = The degree of variability in the responses received, measured as the percentage of the sample choosing a particular answer. When determining sample size, the worst case scenario of 50% (0.5) is used.
- e = Margin of Error (also called confidence interval), expressed as decimal. This reflects the range of values within which the “true” population response lies. The survey’s margin of error of was ±5% (0.05).

For smaller populations (less than about 200,000), a correction factor is applied as follows:

$$CSS = \frac{SS * P}{SS + P + 1}$$

Where:

- CSS = Corrected Sample Size
- SS = The Sample Size as calculated from the original equation above
- P = The Population Size (in the case of this survey, the number of physicians enrolled in the designated health plan/region)

The resulting survey sample sizes are shown in the following table.

### Number of Survey Calls

Table 2. *Survey Call Numbers*

Provider Type	Health Plan	Website Provider Count	Survey Calls Made
PCP	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	5,674	360
PCP	Home State Health	2,002	323
PCP	Missouri Care	2,574	335
Psychiatrist	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	778	257
Psychiatrist	Home State Health	236	146
Psychiatrist	Missouri Care	567	232

# Survey Results

## Appointment Standards

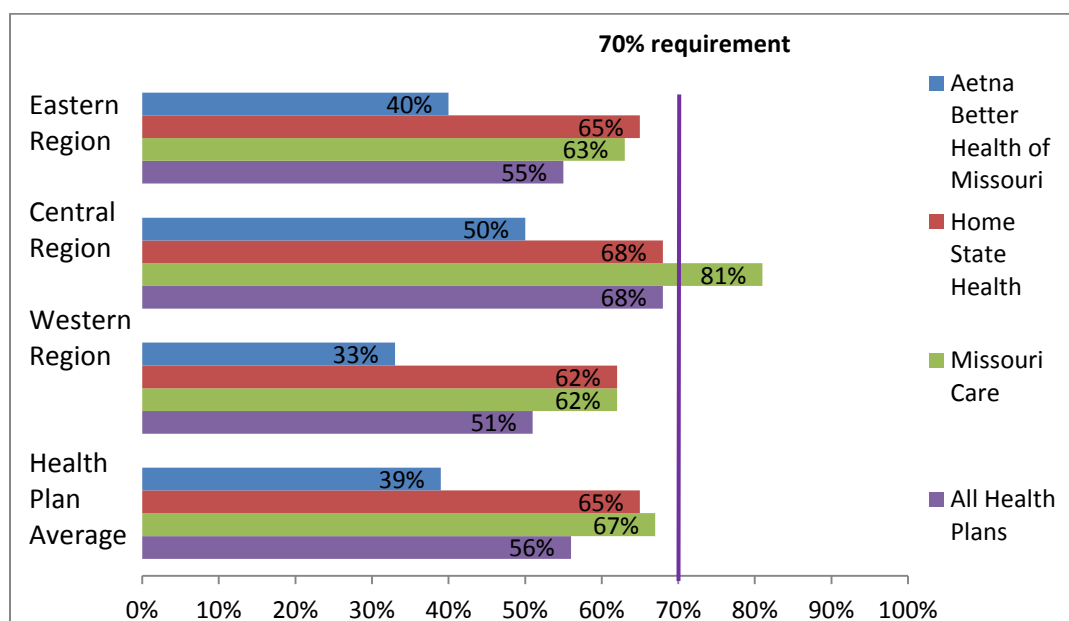
### PCPs

When examining the survey questions individually, the widest range of meeting the appointment standards exists in the areas related to urgent care appointments (Figure 2). (Note that while the expected standard requires urgent care appointments to be within 24 hours, any appointment that was scheduled to occur by the end of the next calendar day, even if it was slightly longer than 24 hours was accepted.) The average number of urgent care appointments that met the expected standard ranged from a high of 81% (Missouri Care) to a low of 33% (Aetna Better Health of Missouri). Missouri Care's Central Region had the highest percentage of available urgent appointments, meeting the standard at a rate of 81% for each appointment type.

Missouri Care's Central Region was also the only health plan area to meet the 70% requirement for all three appointment standards. Home State Health's Central Region met the 70% requirement in the sick and routine appointment standards as well.

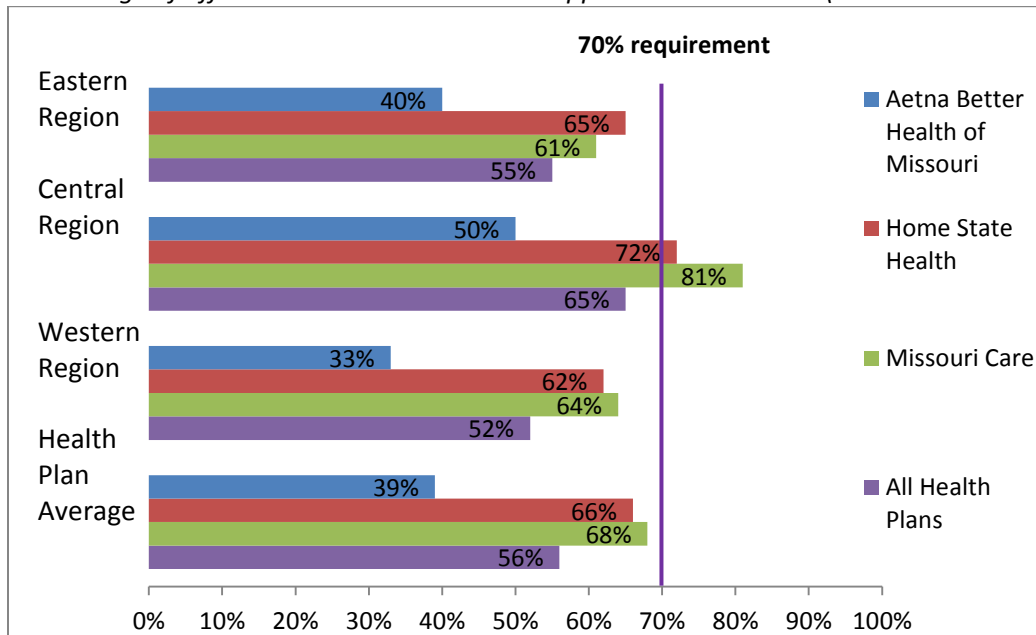
### Urgent Appointments

Figure 2. *Percentage of offices called that met the urgent appointment standard (24 hours)*



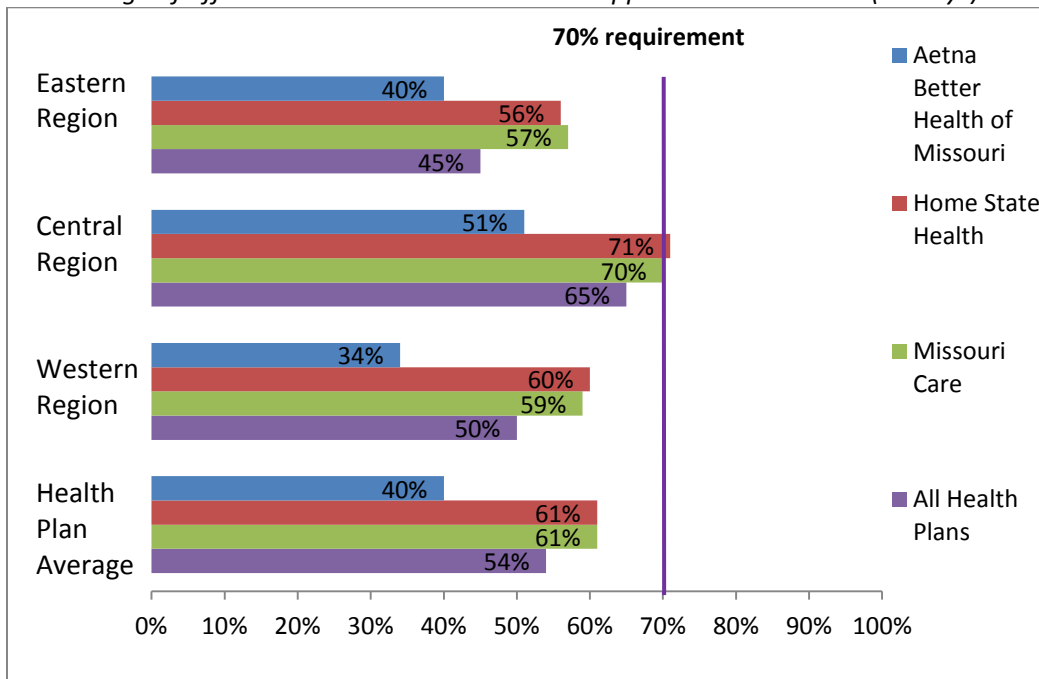
## Sick Appointments

Figure 3. Percentage of offices called that met the sick appointment standard (1 week or 5 business days)



## Routine Appointments

Figure 4. Percentage of offices called that met the routine appointment standard (30 days)



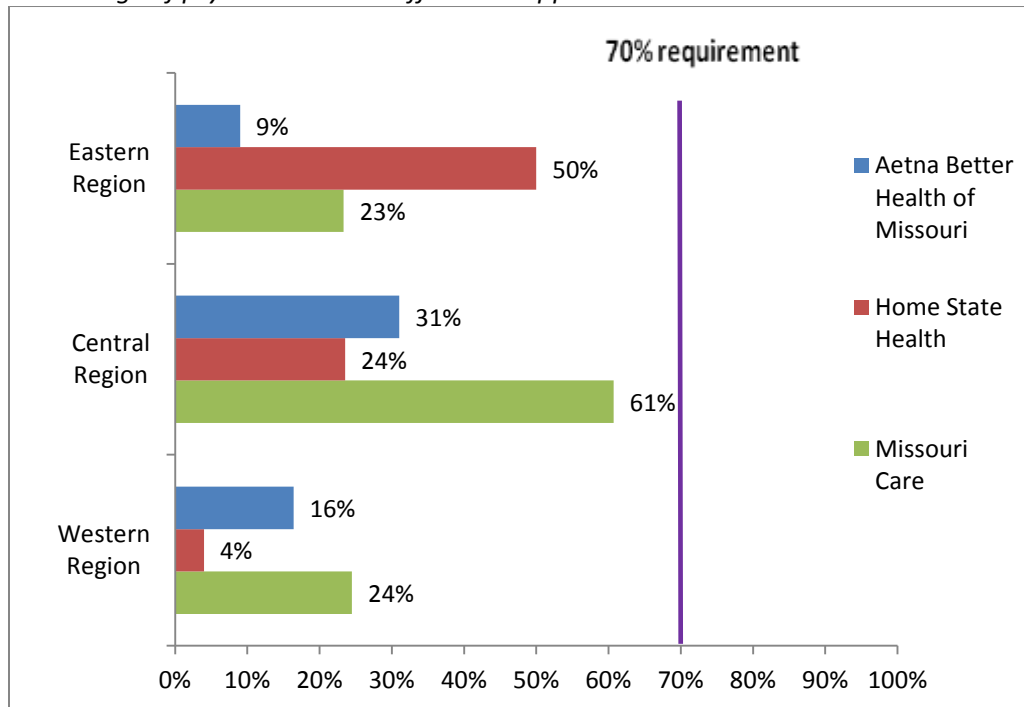


## Psychiatry

The average number of psychiatrists in the sample who met the behavioral health appointment standard and offered an appointment within two weeks of the date of the call ranged from a low of 4% (Home State Health – Western region) to a high of 61% (Missouri Care – Central region). None of the health plans met the 70% requirement for the Missouri appointment standard.

### Psychiatrists Appointments

Figure 5. *Percentage of psychiatrists that offered an appointment within two weeks*



As indicated in Figure 5, the average wait time for an appointment with a psychiatrist by health plan was well above the two (2) week standard. In fact, the average wait time between a call to a psychiatrist's office and their next available appointment was more than double the standard for each health plan:

- **Aetna Better Health of Missouri:** 46 days
- **Home State Health:** 36 days
- **Missouri Care:** 39 days

## Aetna Better Health of Missouri

Table 3. *Aetna Better Health of Missouri's Days from Request to First Available Psychiatrist Appointment*

Aetna Better Health of Missouri	Average # of days to next available appointment	# of Days longer than the 14 day standard
Western	49	35
Central	29	15
Eastern	61	47
Health plan Total	46	32

## Home State Health

Table 4. *Home State Health's Days from Request to First Available Psychiatrist Appointment*

Home State Health	Average # of days to next available appointment	# of Days longer than the standard
Western	52	38
Central	33	19
Eastern	23	9
Health plan Total	36	22

## Missouri Care

Table 5. *Missouri Care's Days from Request to First Available Psychiatrist Appointment*

Missouri Care	Average # of days to next available appointment	# of Days longer than the standard
Western	54	40
Central	27	13
Eastern	36	22
Health plan Total	39	25

## Appointment Availability

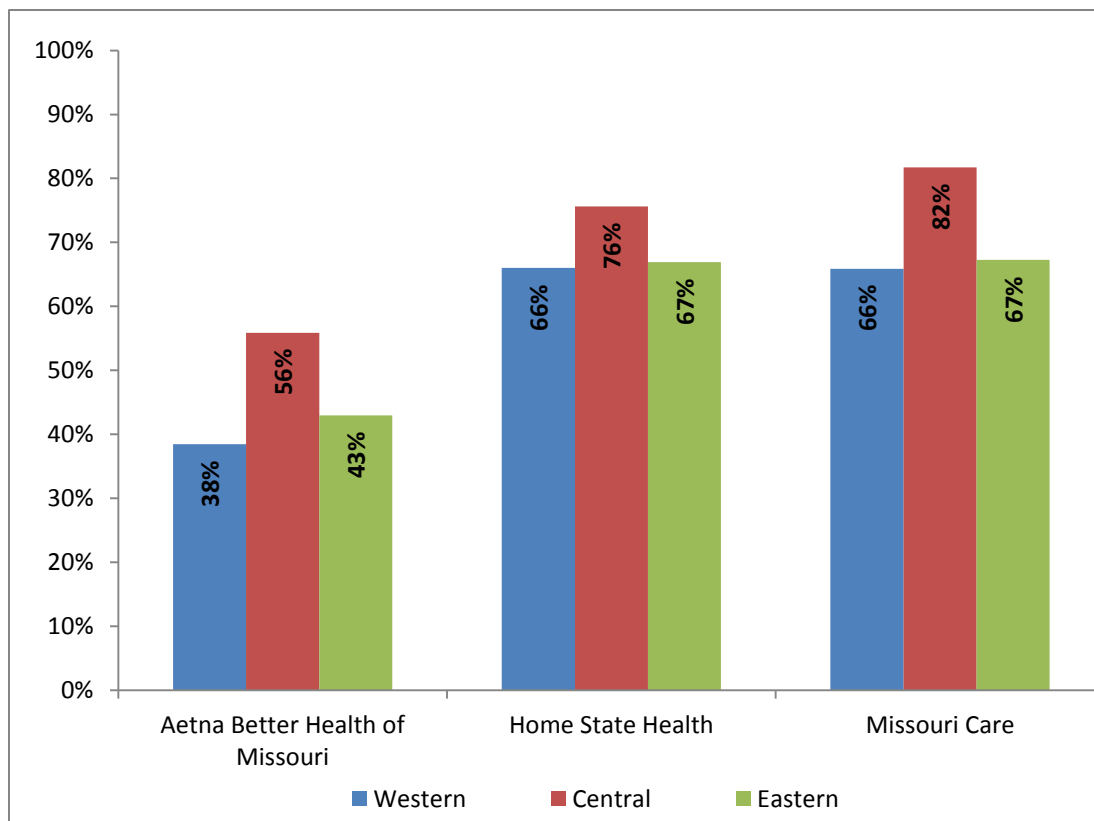
### PCPs

Although the surveyors contacted PCPs that were listed as accepting new patients on each health plan's website, when contacted, an average of only 62% of PCPs statewide offered appointments. Missouri Care PCPs in the Central region had the highest rate of offered appointments at 82% of all calls made to those PCPs. Aetna Better Health of Missouri's Western Region PCPs offered appointments at a rate of only 38%. Credit was given when another physician in the same practice was able to offer an appointment.

*62% percent of  
PCPs offered  
appointments*

### PCP Offices Offering Available Appointments

Figure 6. PCP offices offering available appointments



## Impact

The impact of the providers' inability to offer appointments can create a significant obstacle for members seeking care, indicating that MO HealthNet Managed Care members may only be able to make an appointment with 62% of the PCP offices listed on their health plan's website. There were many reasons that PCP appointments were not offered. The following table illustrates those reasons.

### Reasons for No PCP Appointment Offered

Table 6. *Reasons for PCP Appointment Not Being Offered*

Reason for No Appointment	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	Home State Health	Missouri Care	All Health Plans
Provider no longer at the office (when another provider was available; an appointment time was recorded with that provider)	52	31	57	140
Provider is a Specialist, not a PCP	88	3	12	103
Full Panel	23	29	32	84
Phone number was inaccurate	27	31	28	76
The office does not take the identified insurance	12	0	20	32
Provider has a hospital based practice	7	3	7	17
<b>Total Appointments Not Offered</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>452</b>

The statewide results for PCPs not offering appointment times were somewhat better than those identified in a 2014 Office of Inspector General (OIG) Access to Care study. In that study, the OIG surveyed providers in 32 States and found that 51% of providers surveyed could not offer appointments to Medicaid managed care members due to non-participation at the listed location or not accepting new patients enrolled in the plan.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> OIG, *Access to Care: Provider Availability in Medicaid Managed Care* (OEI-02-13-00670)

## Psychiatrists

Although surveyors contacted Psychiatrists that were listed as accepting new patients on each health plan's website, when contacted, an average of only 45% of Psychiatrists were able to offer available appointments to the BHC surveyors.

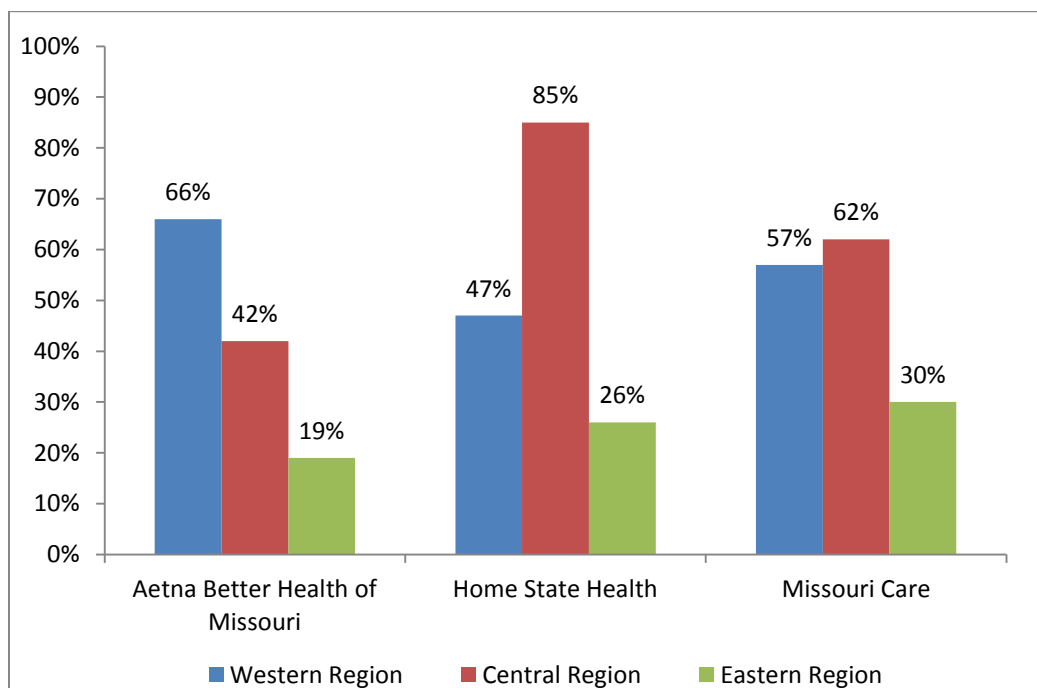
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*[45% percent of Psychiatrists offered appointments]*

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### **Psychiatrist Offices Offering Available Appointments**

Figure 7. *Psychiatrist offices offering appointments*



Home State Health psychiatrists in the Central region had the highest rate of offered appointments at 85% of all calls made. Aetna Better Health of Missouri psychiatrists in the Eastern region offered appointments at a rate of only 19%.

The impact of the providers' inability to offer appointments can create a significant obstacle for members seeking care, indicating that MO HealthNet managed care members may only be able to make an appointment with 45% of the Psychiatrists offices listed on their health plan's website. There were many reasons that Psychiatrist appointments were not offered. The following table illustrates those reasons.

## Reasons for Psychiatrist Appointment Not Offered

Table 7. *Reasons for Psychiatrist Appointment Not Being Offered*

Reason for No Appointment	Aetna Better Health of Missouri	Home State Health	Missouri Care	All Health Plans
Full Panel	28	12	40	80
Provider not at this location	28	26	15	69
Provider no longer at this address ( <i>when another provider was available, an appointment time was logged for that provider</i> )	28	26	15	35
Hospitalist ( <i>inpatient treatment only</i> )	11	9	14	34
Office does not accept Medicaid	21	0	9	30
The office does not take the identified insurance	10	13	6	29
Phone number is inaccurate	19	7	9	12
Provider is not a Psychiatrist ( <i>despite being designated as such on the health plan website</i> )	9	1	2	12
<b>Total Appointments Not Offered</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>289</b>

## Discussion

### *PCPs that offered*

### *appointments met the 70% requirement*

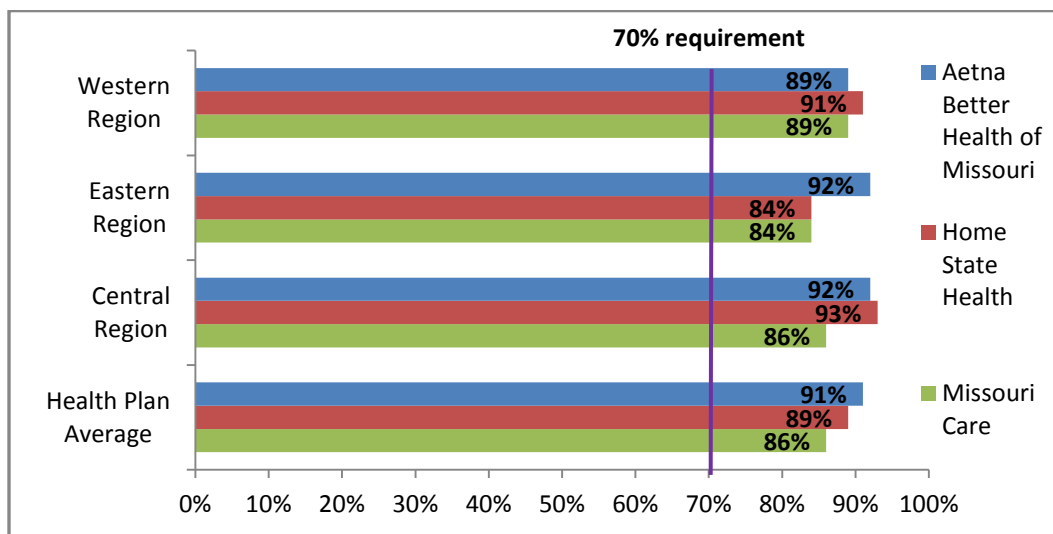
It is important to note that when the surveyor was able to reach a PCP office that was offering appointments to the targeted health plans' member, the availability of appointment times exceeded the 70% requirement. However, this was not true for psychiatrists.

The reasons for not offering appointments (see Tables 6 and 7) severely impacted the health plans' ability to comply with the appointment standard 70% accuracy requirement.



## PCP Offices Offering Available Appointments for Routine Care

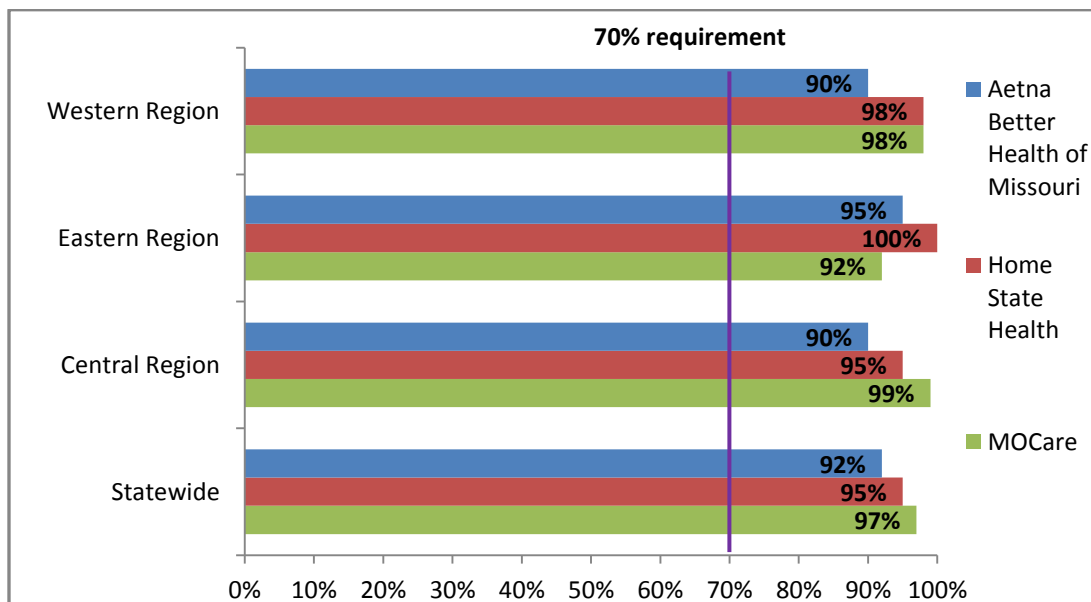
Figure 8. Percentage of offices that offered appointments who met routine appointment standard (30 days)



For routine appointments, Home State Health – Central Region PCPs were able to meet the 30 day standard at a rate of 93%.

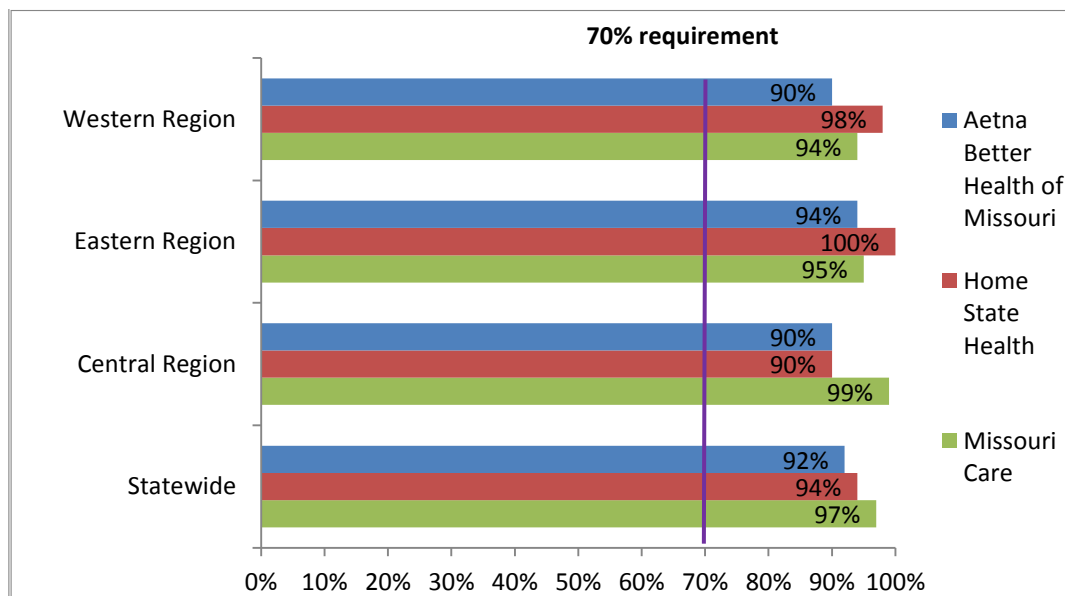
## PCP Offices Offering Available Appointments for Sick Care

Figure 9. Percentage of offices that offered appointments who met sick appointment standard (1 week or 5 business days)



## PCP Offices Offering Available Appointments for Urgent Care

Figure 10. *Percentage of offices that offered appointments who met urgent appointment standard (24 hours)*



Home State Health – Eastern Region PCPs were able to meet the 1 week or 5 business day standard for sick appointments and the 24 hour urgent appointment standard 100% of the time.

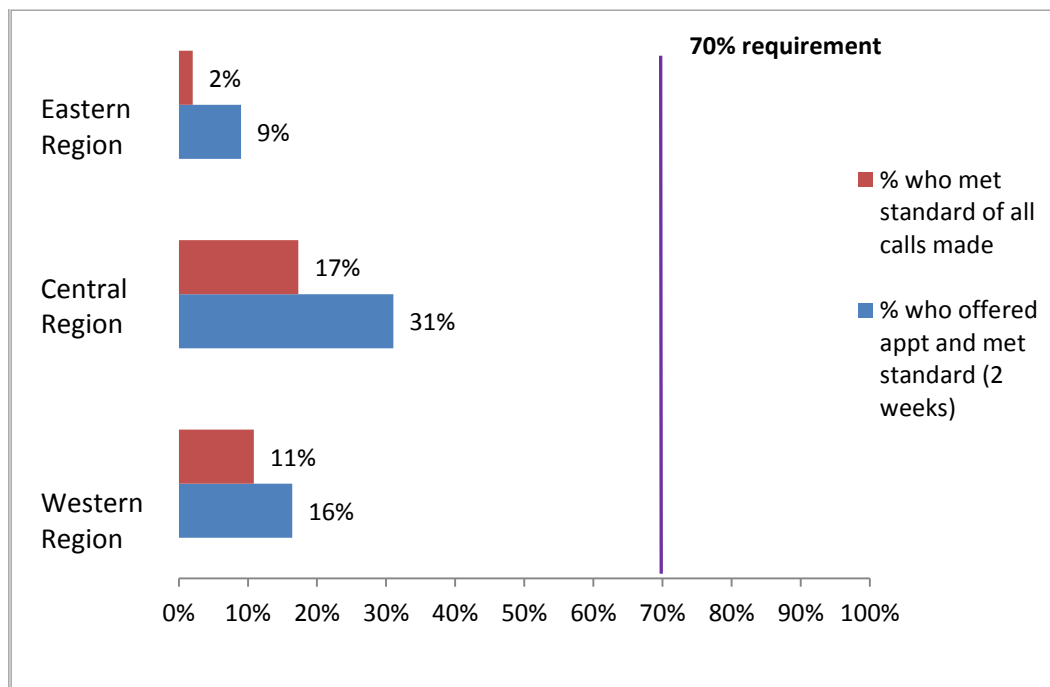


### ***Psychiatrist appointment standards did not meet the 70% requirement***

Unlike PCP appointments, even when a member is able to contact a psychiatrist who can offer an appointment, the health plans are not meeting the requirement for compliance with the two week standard for psychiatrist appointments 70% of the time. Although the rate of offices that meet the requirement increases in all regions and for all health plans, the health plans are far from compliant with the appointment standard.

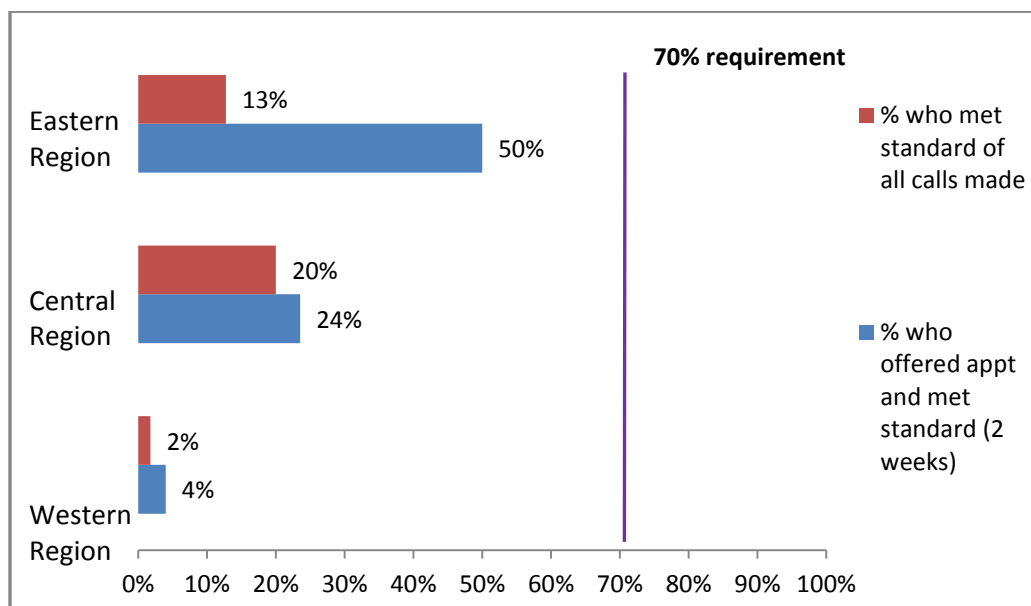
#### **Aetna Better Health of Missouri** **Psychiatrist Offices Offering Available Appointments**

Figure 11. *Comparison of Aetna psychiatrist offices that met appointment time standard*



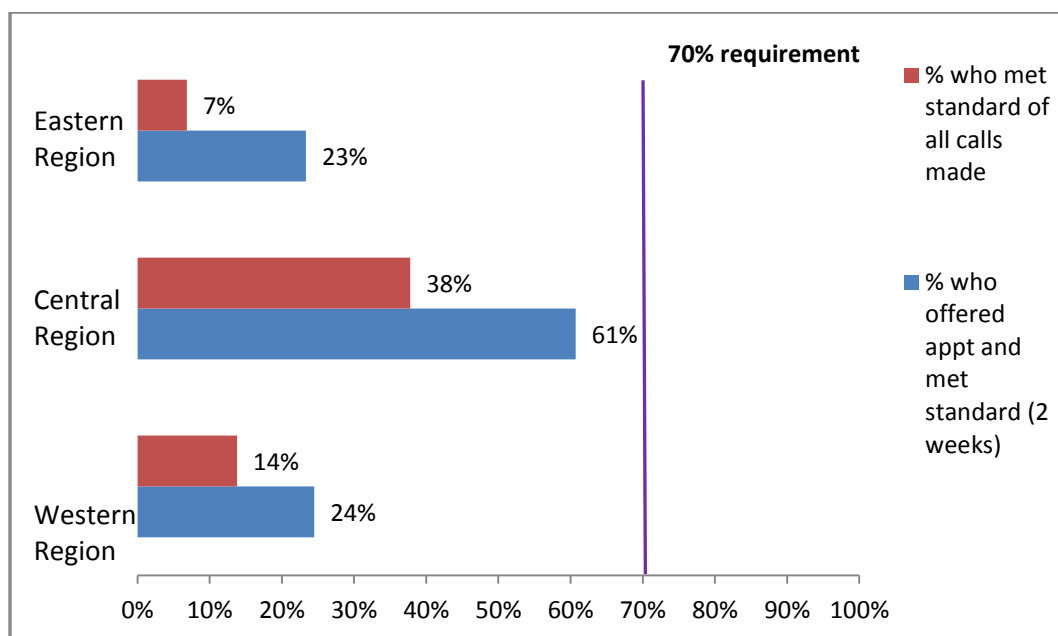
## Home State Health Psychiatrist Offices Offering Available Appointments

Figure 12. Comparison of Home State Health psychiatrist offices that met appointment time standard



## Missouri Care Psychiatrist Offices Offering Available Appointments

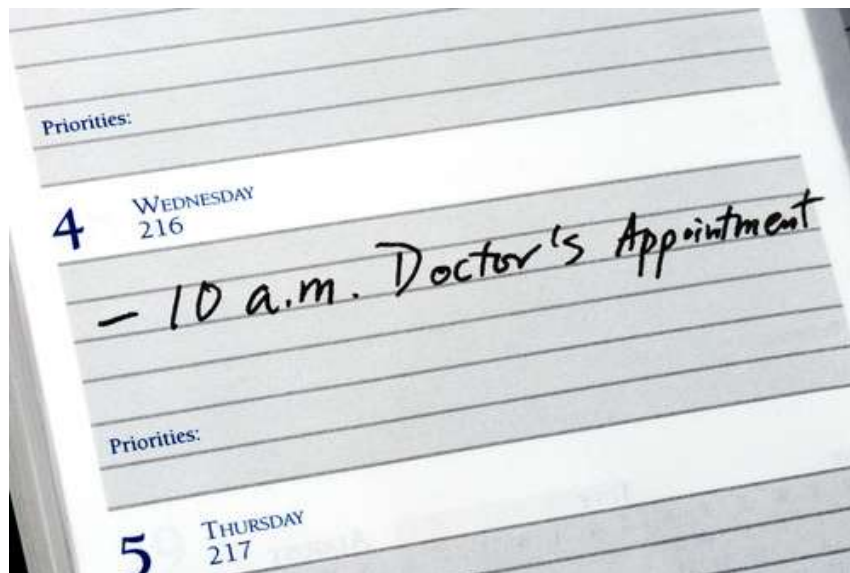
Figure 13. Comparison of Missouri Care psychiatrist offices that met appointment time standard



## Conclusion

When the surveyor was able to contact a PCP and schedule an appointment, all health plan PCPs were able to provide the appointment within the required timeframes for all three types of care. This suggests that improving the accuracy of the website information will lead to health plans being better equipped to meet appointment standards for this provider type.

However, when the surveyor contacted a Psychiatrist to schedule a routine appointment, all health plans were unable to ensure that an appointment would occur within the two (2) week standard. In most instances, this timeframe was more than doubled. The average number of days until a routine Psychiatrist appointment ranged from a low of 23 days (Home State Health – Eastern Region) to a high of 61 days (Aetna Better Health of Missouri – Eastern Region). This indicates that the number of available psychiatrists for MO HealthNet Managed Care members may not be sufficient to meet the demand for services.





**MO HealthNet  
Secret Shopper Survey Script  
Survey 2 – Obtaining Appointments (PCPs)**

**Instructions:**

On the day of each call, please look up provider/by Health Plan on the health plan's website. Verify that the provider is listed as "accepting new patients."

If the website indicates that the provider is no longer "accepting new patients", or during the call the staff states that they are not accepting new patients please take a screen shot of your computer screen, and attach to this form.

Proceed after verification that the provider is listed as "accepting new patients".

***Complete this sheet for all calls made:***

**Listing to be verified:**

**<Doctor's name>**

**<Office address>**

**<Phone number>**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date and Time call began**

1. "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a caseworker and I'm working with clients who are moving to your area. I'm putting together a list of available doctors from which they can choose."

2. "They have insurance/coverage through: \_\_\_\_\_."

If they indicate they do not accept that health plan –  
Explain: \_\_\_\_\_.

If they state this doctor is not accepting new patients –  
Explain: \_\_\_\_\_.



If the doctor named above, is not available, but they give the name of another doctor in the office who would see your client – Explain:

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. When would be the next available appointment if they or their child needed a well-child exam, or a routine physical?

Date and time:

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. “When would be the next available appointment date if they have something like an unexplained rash, or high fever without other symptoms?”

Date:\_\_\_\_\_.

5. “Can you tell me when your next available appointment would be if they had a child with a fever and vomiting, but it would not require an emergency room visit?”

Next appointment date and

time:\_\_\_\_\_.

If they respond “We would suggest going to urgent care.” Ask:

Where is the Urgent Care located?\_\_\_\_\_

Is the Urgent Care associated with your practice? Response:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date and Time call ended**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Caller’s initials**



MO HealthNet  
Secret Shopper Survey Script  
Survey 2 – Obtaining Appointments/Psychiatrists

**Instructions:**

On the day of each call, please look up provider/by Health Plan on the health plan's website. Verify that the provider is listed as "accepting new patients."

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1. "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a caseworker and I'm working with clients who are moving to your area. I'm putting together a list of available doctors from which they can choose."

2. "They have insurance/coverage through: \_\_\_\_\_<Managed Care Health Plan>\_\_\_\_\_."

If they indicate they do not accept that health plan

Explain:\_\_\_\_\_.

If they state this doctor is not accepting new patients –

Explain:\_\_\_\_\_.



If the doctor named above, is not available, but they give the name of another doctor in the office who would see your client – Explain:

\_\_\_\_\_.

**3. When would be the next available routine appointment?**

Date and time:

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Caller's name/initials**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Time call ended**