

# Procedures: Absences from Work and Patient Coverage

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Sumlar Therapy Services, Inc.

**Planned Absences:** Employees may plan days off in accordance with the policy set forth in the Policy Manual. The scheduled time off may fall on a day when the therapist is scheduled to see patients. In this case, it is the therapist's responsibility to

- a) find coverage for every patient and report this coverage plan to their immediate supervisor (in the case of therapist assistants) and to the Executive Director, OR
- b) rearrange their schedule to accommodate covering all of the patients they expect to miss that day, OR
- c) discuss the coverage needs with their immediate supervisor and the Executive Director to create a coverage plan together, OR
- d) cancel their scheduled patients, with the approval of their immediate supervisor and the Executive Director.

It is appropriate in some settings (school and EI) to arrange to see patients twice in a week who are normally seen just once per week, to make up missed visits. For example, if the therapist normally works two days per week during the summer months, and wishes to take two weeks off, she may plan to see her EI patients twice the week before she leaves, and twice the week she returns.

**Unplanned Absences:** During times of illness or emergencies, employees may experience an unplanned absence. When this occurs, the employee is to call the office to report their pending absence, reporting to the Office Administrator or Executive Director. It is not acceptable to report to a co-worker. If no one is at the clinic, an employee may leave a message on the answering machine, then, if able, call again early in the work day to discuss patients.

If a therapist has patients scheduled for the day, the therapist should discuss the plan for contacting the patients to cancel/reschedule with the OA or Director, and determine who will make the contacts.

Typically, the following should occur:

- for clinic patients, the OA will review the schedule and contact patients as needed\*
  - \* Exception: As a courtesy to the patient, the therapist may want to contact their 8:00AM and 8:30AM patients early to let them know that she will not be there, if no one is available to provide coverage, and if she knows the patient has no other therapies that day.
- for school patients, the therapist should call one contact at each school to let them know she will not be coming\*\*
- for EI patients, the therapist should call each patient to advise the parent she will not be coming\*\*
  - \*\* Exception: If the therapist is not in a position to make the phone calls herself, she should inform the OA which schools or patients need to be contacted. The OA may then make the phone calls or appoint someone to make them on the therapist's behalf.