2.5 Specific Requirements for Urgent Care Centers

Appendix material, intended to be advisory only, is offset and begins with the letter “A” following the corresponding requirement in the main text.

2.5-1 General

2.5-1.1 Application

*2.5-1.1.1 This chapter shall apply to facilities that provide urgent care to the public but are not emergency facilities, departments or do not provide care on a 24-hour-per-day, seven-day-per-week basis.

A2.5-1.1.1 Urgent care centers offer walk-in, after-hours, and weekend care for patients with common illnesses and non-life-threatening injuries. X-rays and lab tests are often provided on-site.

*2.5-1.1.2 The urgent care center shall meet the standards described in this chapter and the standards in Part 1 of these Guidelines.

A2.5-1.1.2 Site features

a. Emergency vehicle access. Provisions for patient access to emergency vehicles for transport to a higher-acuity facility should be considered in the design of the urgent care center.

b. Signage. Provisions should be made for the location of legally required signage at the entrance to the urgent care center.

2.5-1.1.3 Requirements in Chapter 2.1, Common Elements for Outpatient Facilities, shall apply to urgent care centers as cross-referenced in this chapter.

2.5-2 Accommodations for Care of Individuals of Size

See Section 2.1-2 (Accommodations for Care of Individuals of Size) for requirements.

2.5-3 Patient Care and Diagnostic Areas

2.5-3.1 General

2.5-3.1.1 At least two patient care stations shall be provided; one of these shall be a single-patient room.

2.5-3.1.2 The patient care stations shall be permitted to be any a combination of bays, cubicles, and single-patient examination rooms.

*2.5-3.2 Triage Area
2.5 Urgent Care Centers

2.5-3.2.3 Triage areas can be used for assessing patients, conducting interviews, or having private conversations with patients and families.

2.5-3.2.1 3.2.3.1 Location

The space used to triage patients shall be permitted to be any of the following:

2.5-3.2.1.1 A dedicated triage space
2.5-3.2.1.2 A patient care station(s)
2.5-3.2.1.3 A space in a consultation room or other patient care area

2.5-3.2.2 3.2.3.2 Patient Privacy

The triage area(s) shall have provisions for patient privacy as indicated in Section 2.1-3.1.2 (Patient Privacy).

2.5-3.2.3 3.2.3.3 Hand-Washing Station

The triage area(s) shall be directly accessible to a hand-washing station(s) that complies with Section 2.1-3.8.7 (Hand-Washing Station).

2.5-3.2.4 The triage area shall include the following:

(1) Access to language translation services
(2) Means to alert other staff, internal or external, or local authorities when assistance is needed

2.5-3.3 Examination and Treatment Rooms

2.5-3.3.1 3.2.1 Urgent Care Single-Patient Examination Room

Urgent care Single-patient examination rooms shall meet the requirements in Section 2.1-3.2.1 (Examination Rooms) as amended in this section.

2.5-3.3.1.1 Reserved

2.5-3.3.2 Multiple-Patient Examination Room

Where an examination room with multiple-patient care stations is provided, it shall meet the requirements in this section.

2.5-3.3.2.1 3.2.1.2 Space requirements

(1) Clearances. These shall be measured from the extended lounge chair/gurney position.

(a) Where bays are used, the following minimum clearances shall be provided:

(i) 4 feet (1.22 meters) between the sides of gurneys/lounge chairs
(ii) 2 feet 8 inches (81.28 centimeters) between the sides of gurneys/lounge chairs and adjacent walls or partitions
(iii) 2 feet 8 inches (81.28 centimeters) between the foot of gurneys/lounge chairs and the cubicle curtain

(b) Where cubicles are used, a minimum clearance of 2 feet 8 inches (81.28 centimeters) shall be provided between the sides and foot of gurneys/lounge chairs and adjacent walls, partitions, or cubicle curtains.

(2) Where bays or cubicles face each other, an aisle with a minimum clearance of 5 feet (1.5 meters) independent of the foot clearance between patient care stations or other fixed objects shall be provided.

(3) Where single-patient exam rooms are used, they shall comply with the requirements in Section 2.1-3.2.1.2 (Single-patient examination/observation room).

2.5-3.3.2.2 Patient care station features. Each bay or cubicule shall contain the following:

(1) Examination light. See Section 2.1-8.3.4.3 (1) (Lighting for exam/treatment/trauma rooms) for requirements.

(2) Accommodations for written or electronic documentation

(3) Space for a visitor’s chair

2.5-3.3.2.3 Hand-washing station

(1) At least one hand-washing station(s) shall be provided in each multiple-patient examination room.

(2) Hand-washing stations shall comply with Section 2.1-3.8.7.2 (Hand-Washing Station—Design requirements) and Section 2.1-3.8.7.3 (Hand-Washing Station—Additional requirements for hand-washing stations that serve multiple patient care stations).

2.5-3.3.2.4 Supply storage. Storage for supplies shall be provided in the multiple-patient examination room.

2.5-3.3.3 3.2.2 Urgent Care Single-Patient Treatment Room

Where a treatment room is provided, it shall meet the requirements in Section 2.1-3.2.1-2.8-3.4.2 (Examination Single-Patient Treatment Room) as amended in this section.

2.5-3.2.2.1 The treatment room shall meet the space requirements in Section 2.1-3.2.1.2 (2)(b) (Single-patient exam room for specialty clinical services).

2.5-3.2.2.2 Carpeting shall not be used in the urgent care treatment room.

#2.5-3.3.3 Triage Area [moved to 2.5-3.2.1]

2.5-3.2.3.1 Location. The space used to triage patients shall be permitted to be any of the following:

(1) A dedicated triage space

(2) A patient care station

(3) A space in a consultation room or other patient care area
2.5 Urgent Care Centers

A2.5-3.2.3 Triage areas can be used for assessing patients, conducting interviews, or having private conversations with patients and families.

2.5-3.2.3.2 Patient privacy. The triage area(s) shall have provisions for patient privacy as indicated in Section 2.1-3.1.2 (Patient Privacy).

2.5-3.2.3.3 Hand-washing station. The triage area(s) shall be directly accessible to a hand-washing station(s) that complies with Section 2.1-3.8.7 (Hand-Washing Station).

2.5-3.4 Observation Facilities

2.5-3.4.1 General

*2.5-3.4.1.1 Facilities shall be provided for temporary holding of urgent care patients until they can be discharged or transferred to an appropriate hospital.

A2.5-3.4.1.1 Local regulations, state licensure requirements, and third-party reimbursement conditions related to length of stay can vary. Health care organizations and designers should verify these requirements with the appropriate entities and document how the intended use conforms to current expectations.

2.5-3.4.1.2 Use of one or more examination or treatment rooms for this purpose shall be permitted.

2.5-3.4.2 Facility Requirements

Size, type, and equipment shall be as required for anticipated patient load and lengths of stay.

2.5-3.4.3 Functional Requirements

2.5-3.4.3.1 Direct visual observation of each patient shall be provided from the nurse station, except where examination or treatment rooms are used for patient holding. In the latter case, a view from the nurse/control station to the doors of the examination or treatment rooms shall be permitted.

2.5-3.4.3.2 Each observation patient care station shall have the following:

(1) Patient privacy in accordance with Section 2.1-3.1.2 (Patient Privacy)

(2) A readily accessible patient toilet room that meets the requirements in Section 2.1-3.10.2 (Patient Toilet Rooms)

2.5-3.4 Reserved

2.5-3.5 Imaging Services

2.5-3.5.1 General

Where imaging services are provided, facilities to accommodate the modalities used shall meet the requirements in Section 2.1-3.5 (Imaging Services) as amended in this section.

2.5-3.5.2 – 2.5-3.5.9 Reserved
2.5-3.5.10 Support Areas for Patients

Separate changing rooms for imaging services are not required where imaging is used only for emergency procedures.

2.5-3.6 – 2.5-3.7 Reserved

2.5-3.8 Support Areas for Patient Care and Diagnostic Areas

2.5-3.8.1 Reserved

2.5-3.8.2 Nurse Station Control and Workstation

2.5-3.8.2.1 A nurse station control and workstation that meets the requirements in Section 2.1-3.8.2 (Nurse Station) shall be provided to accommodate charting, files, and staff consultation activities.

2.5-3.8.2.2 The nurse station control and workstation shall be located to permit direct observation of the clinical area and access to it.

2.5-3.8.2.3 Communication links for staff with the examination rooms, treatment rooms, reception control, laboratory, and imaging services shall be provided.

2.5-3.8.2.4 The nurse station shall be permitted to share space with the reception and information area.

*2.5-3.8.3 Poison Control Center

Where a poison control center is provided, a telephone shall be provided for staff to call regional and/or national poison centers.

A2.5-3.8.3 This telephone may be located at the nurse control and workstation.

2.5-3.8.4 – 2.5-3.8.7 Reserved

2.5-3.8.8 Medication Safety Zone

See Section 2.1-3.8.8 (Medication Safety Zones) for requirements.

2.5-3.8.9 Nourishment Area

Where a nourishment area is provided, it shall meet the requirements in Section 2.1-3.8.9 (Nourishment Area or Room).

2.5-3.8.10 Reserved

2.5-3.8.11 Clean Supply Room

Where a clean supply room is provided, it shall meet the requirements in Section 2.1-3.8.11 (Clean Workroom or Clean Supply Room).

2.5-3.8.12 Soiled Holding Room

A soiled holding room that meets the requirements in Section 2.1-3.8.12 (Soiled Workroom or Soiled Holding Room) shall be provided.
2.5-3.8.13 Equipment Storage

2.5-3.8.13.1 – 2.5-3.8.13.2 Reserved

*2.5-3.8.13.3 Wheelchair and gurney storage. Wheelchair and gurney storage shall be provided in the clinical area.

A2.5-3.8.13.3 The appropriate number and locations for wheelchair/gurney storage in the urgent care center should be identified in the functional program.

2.5-3.8.13.4 Emergency equipment storage. Emergency equipment storage shall be provided in accordance with 2.1-3.8.13.4 (Emergency equipment storage).

2.5-4 Patient Support Facilities

2.5-4.1 Laboratory Services

Where facilities for laboratory services are provided, see Section 2.1-4.1 (Laboratory Services) for requirements.

2.5-5 Building Support Facilities

2.5-5.1 Reserved

2.5-5.2 Waste Management

See Section 2.1-5.2 (Waste Management) for requirements.

2.5-5.3 Environmental Services Room

A readily accessible environmental services room shall be provided in accordance with Section 2.1-5.3.1 (Environmental Services Room).

2.5-6 Public and Administrative Areas

2.5-6.1 Reserved

2.5-6.2 Public Areas

Public areas shall be provided in accordance with the requirements in Section 2.1-6.2 (Public Areas) as amended in this section.

*2.5-6.2.1 Vehicular Drop-Off and Pedestrian Entrance

A2.5-6.2.1 The urgent care entrance should allow visualization of the unloading area from the nurse station via windows or remote camera.

Access to wheelchairs shall be provided at the urgent care entrance.
2.5-6.2.2 Reception
Reception and information areas shall provide for direct observation of the urgent care entrance and access to the lobby and patient care area.

2.5-6.3 Administrative Areas
Administrative areas shall be provided in accordance with the requirements in Section 2.1-6.3 (Administrative Areas) as amended in this section.

2.5-6.3.1 Reserved

*2.5-6.3.2 Interview Space
2.5-6.3.2.1 Space(s) shall be provided for private interviews.

A2.5-6.3.2 Initial interviews may be conducted in the triage area, in a patient care station, or in a separate consultation room.

2.5-6.3.2.2 For initial interviews, space in the triage area, a patient care station, or a consultation room shall be permitted to meet this requirement.

2.5-6.3.3 Reserved

2.5-6.3.4 Staff Conference Space
2.5-6.3.4.1 Space shall be provided for staff conferences.

*2.5-6.3.4.2 Another functional space in the urgent care center shall be permitted to meet this requirement.

A2.5-6.3.4.2 Staff conferences may take place in a dedicated staff conference room or in a staff lounge, a waiting room after hours, or a similar space.

2.5-6.4 Staff Support Areas
See Section 2.1-6.4 (Staff Support Areas) for requirements.

2.5-7 Design and Construction Requirements
2.5-7.1 Reserved

2.5-7.2 Architectural Details, Surfaces, and Furnishings
2.5-7.2.1 Reserved

2.5-7.2.2 Architectural Details
2.5-7.2.2.1 Corridor width. The minimum corridor width provided shall be in accordance with Section 2.1-7.2.2.1 (Corridor width).

2.5-7.2.2.2 Reserved
2.5-7.2.2.3 Doors. Door openings shall be provided in accordance with Section 2.1-7.2.2.3 (2) (Door openings).

2.5-7.2.3 Surfaces

See Section 2.1-7.2.3 (Surfaces) for requirements.

2.5-8 Building Systems

See Section 2.1-8 (Building Systems) for requirements.