

ACP provides guidelines for retail health clinics

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(HealthDay)—Retail clinics have a place in health care and should encourage the longitudinal care relationship with primary care physicians, according to a position paper published online Oct. 12 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Hilary Daniel, and Shari Erickson, M.P.H., for the Medical Practice and Quality Committee of the American College of Physicians (ACP), developed recommendations relating to retail health clinics.

According to the paper, retail clinics should serve as an episodic alternative to care from an established [primary care](#) practice for relatively healthy [patients](#) who do not have complex medical histories; ideally patients should establish a longitudinal care relationship with a physician. Retail health clinics should have a well-defined and limited

scope of clinical services, which should be disclosed to patients before or at the visit. Retail clinics should practice standardized medical protocols in accordance with evidence-based practice guidelines. Retail health clinics should refer patients to primary care and encourage patients to establish a longitudinal care relationship with a primary care physician. The retail clinic should promptly communicate information about clinic visits to the primary care physician. There is currently insufficient data relating to provision of chronic care management in the retail health setting.

"A balance must be struck between the convenience and access [retail clinics](#) provide and the importance of longitudinal relationships between patients and physicians, particularly for patients who have complex medical histories," the authors write.

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