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Retail Clinic Poll

More Children Expected to Seek Care at Retail Clinics

Consumer-Driven Health Care and Retail Clinics

As part of the movement toward consumer-driven health care, retail clinics (also called in-store or convenient care clinics) have developed across the country. Retail clinics advertise treatment for common acute health problems, screening tests and vaccinations that is more convenient, quicker, and less expensive than care in traditional doctor's offices and emergency rooms. The average cost for a retail clinic visit ranges from \$40-\$70.

Retail clinics are small walk-in health care offices located in department stores or pharmacies, typically staffed by nurse practitioners or physician assistants. The first retail clinic opened in 2000. Today, more than twenty companies operate about 300 retail clinics in the U.S., with an estimated 2000 or more expected to open by the end of 2008.

Retail Clinics and Health Care for Children

Prior national polls have indicated that 5%-7% of Americans have used retail clinics for adult health care. No prior reports have investigated how retail clinics have been used for children's health care, or how many families anticipate using retail clinics in the future.

In March 2007, the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health found that 10% of children and 11% of adults have used a retail clinic. Moreover, 15% of children and 19% of adults are very likely or likely to use a retail clinic in the future (Figure 1).

Current retail clinic users are more likely to use them again in the future. Among parents who had a prior visit to a retail clinic for their child, 28% are very likely and 42% are likely to use a retail clinic in the future, versus only 2% very likely and 8% likely to use a retail clinic in the future among those who had no prior use (Figure 2).

Report Highlights

- **10% of U.S. children have used a retail clinic for health care.**
- **15% of children are expected to use a retail clinic in the future.**
- **The majority of children who have used a retail clinic have insurance that has paid for the visit.**
- **Children who have used retail clinics are less likely to have a regular doctor than children who have not used a retail clinic.**

Figure 1. Current and Future Use of Retail Clinics for Children and Adults

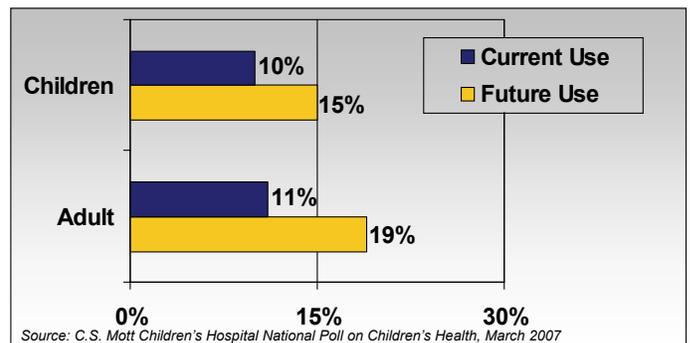
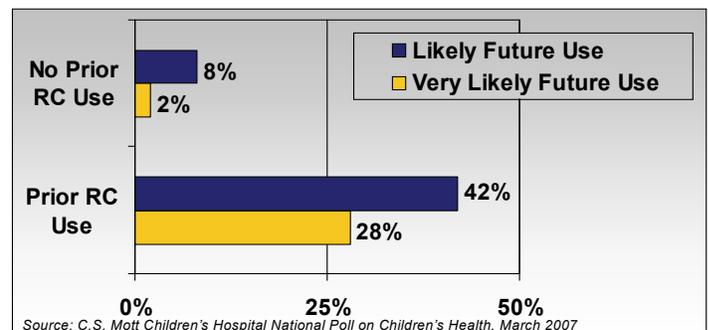


Figure 2. Likelihood of Future Use of Retail Clinics for Children and Prior Use



Paying for Children's Care at Retail Clinics

A common criticism of consumer-driven health care is that it places families at greater financial risk than in more common health plans. On the other hand, proponents of retail clinics in particular argue that uninsured children and families can access health care for routine, uncomplicated problems at a lower cost than if they sought care at a standard physician's office or emergency room. Retail clinics have reported that they are serving high proportions of uninsured patients, and have also announced that many clinics now accept insurance payment. However, these issues have not been examined regarding children.

The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked households how they had paid for care they had sought at retail clinics. Parents are less likely to have paid out-of-pocket for a child's visit than are adults who have sought care themselves (Table 1). More than half of parents reported that their child's last visit to a retail clinic was covered in full by insurance.

Table 1. Payment for Last Visit to Retail Clinic

	Child Visit	Adult Visit
Paid for the visit in full	22%	38%
Insurance covered full cost of visit	53%	30%
Insurance covered portion of visit	25%	32%

Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, March 2007

Parents with lower annual household income (less than \$30,000) were more likely to use a retail clinic and are more likely to use them in the future than parents with higher household income.

Retail Clinics and Usual Sources of Care

In December 2006, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement opposing the use of retail clinics as an appropriate source of medical care for infants, children and adolescents, chiefly because retail clinics do not provide a "medical home" for their patients.

This criticism raises the question of what proportion of children who have used retail clinics have a usual source of care. Overall, 96% of parents in the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health reported that their children have a usual source of care. Among children who had used a retail clinic, 89% have a usual source of care, compared with 97% of children who had not used a retail clinic.

Implications

Given the relatively small number of retail clinics nationwide in 2007, a remarkably high proportion of children and adults have used retail clinics for their health care. This trend, and the fact that prior users are so satisfied with the care they have received, suggest that the demand for retail clinic care for children will rise steadily.

As use increases, especially for children with a usual source of care elsewhere, patients and physicians will face challenges regarding how to coordinate health care across retail clinics and more traditional care settings, in ways that promote access to timely care and safeguard children's health.

Data Source

This report represents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Knowledge Networks, Inc, for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. The survey was administered from March 14-26, 2007, to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults aged 18 and older with and without children on the Knowledge Networks standing panel that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample of 2076 people was subsequently weighted to reflect the U.S. population figures from the U.S. Census Bureau. The response rate was 73% among Knowledge Networks panel members contacted to participate.



C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

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