

To Parents of Ballard Pediatric Clinic Patients

**RE: After Hours Phone Consultation With Triage Nurse**

Over 20 years ago, Ballard Pediatric Clinic, along with several other pediatric clinics in Seattle and on the Eastside, developed an after-hours clinic and call system. The service has evolved into the after-hours clinics currently in place at Seattle Children's Hospital and Children's Eastside, which includes an after-hours nurse consultation service. Many of you are familiar with this service if you've ever had to call and speak to a healthcare professional after the clinic was closed.

About ten years ago Seattle Children's Hospital took over the entire program and has been contracting the nurse consultation call service to individual clinics on a per call basis. Since then the cost per call has increased six fold – we now pay Children's eighteen dollars (\$18.00) per call.

From the beginning we have paid the entire cost of this service. However we now need to offset this ever increasing expense by charging our families for some of the cost. Beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> there will be a \$10.00 charge for after hours calls. This charge is not something covered by insurance; therefore, this fee will be your responsibility.

We average over 300 after-hours calls per month. We review a copy of all the calls made and find that many of the calls made after-hours are not of an urgent nature. These calls can and should be made during clinic hours where a nurse has access to your medical record and is much more likely to know you and your child.

You can help control the cost by doing the following:

- ❑ Please do not hesitate to call if you have an urgent concern.
- ❑ Limit the after-hours calls to those of an urgent nature - illnesses that require medical attention before regular office hours.
- ❑ Please make calls during business hours whenever possible.
- ❑ Please do not use the after hours consultation service for routine questions.
- ❑ If you already know you want your child seen in the after-hours clinic; ask for an appointment rather than discussing it first with a nurse. There is no fee generated for calling to schedule an appointment in the after-hours clinic or for patients who, based on the after hours nurse's assessment, are referred on to the Emergency Room or the After-hours clinic.
- ❑ Utilize our web site [www.ballardpediatrics.com](http://www.ballardpediatrics.com) for commonly asked questions such as non-prescription medication dosages and the management of common self-limiting illnesses.

Thank you for your understanding.