

**Title:** Pediatricians' Perception of the Impact of Retail Based Clinics on Their Practice: A National Survey

**Authors:** KG O'Connor, BS, Research, American Academy of Pediatrics  
LM Olson, PhD, Research, American Academy of Pediatrics  
EP Zimmerman, MS, Practice, American Academy of Pediatrics  
H Fitzpatrick, MPH, Practice, American Academy of Pediatrics

**Background:** The recent national expansion of retail-based clinics (RBCs) has fostered concerns about their impact on continuity of care and increased competition with pediatric practices. Little is known about pediatricians' attitudes toward and actual experience with RBCs.

**Objective:** Measure pediatricians' attitudes toward and reported experiences with RBCs in their practice community.

**Design/methods:** National random sample, mailed AAP Periodic Survey in 2008 (N= 1620; response=58%). Questions assessed direct experience with RBCs, impact on practice and level of concern presented by RBCs. Analysis was limited to 722 pediatricians who provide patient care in ambulatory care settings. Multivariate analysis assessed associations between the presence of and concern about RBCs and practice characteristics.

**Results:** Nearly half (47%) of pediatricians report an RBC is currently or opening soon in their practice area. Few pediatricians report any change in the number of preventive care or sick visits (7%, 19%) as a result of a RBC currently in their practice area. Most (>80%) have received no referrals from or have had no contact with the RBC regarding treatment of patients, although 54% have received visits from patients within 24 hours of their RBC visit and have disagreed with RBC treatment protocols. Among pediatricians with current or planned RBCs in their area, most (84%) report no current or planned changes to their practice staffing or hours. Only 4% say their practice has or plans to establish a formal arrangement with a RBC to receive patient referrals. One-fourth (24%) of pediatricians with current or planned RBCs in their practice community report they are very or moderately concerned about competition from RBCs. In multivariate analysis, practice in a suburban area is independently associated with having a RBC in the practice community (AOR 2.50, 95% CI 1.32-4.75) and concern about competition (AOR 3.16, 95% CI 1.08-9.25).

**Conclusions:** Few pediatricians with current or planned RBCs in their practice area report changes to their practice, direct interaction with RBCs, or concern about the competition from RBCs, although those in suburban practice indicate greater concern. Many pediatricians report their patients have used RBCs, resulting in some treatment disagreements. Further research is needed to fully assess the effects of RBCs on continuity of care.