

POSITION STATEMENT:

Prescription Practices in Virtual Urgent and Primary Care

At First Stop Health, our clinical mission is to deliver safe, evidence-based, and compassionate care through virtual platforms that support urgent, preventive, and chronic health needs. Prescription management is a critical component of our care delivery and is guided by clinical judgment, best practices, and applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including telemedicine specific provisions.

Virtual Urgent Care

First Stop Health providers may recommend a prescription when it is medically appropriate, based on a virtual assessment. Our clinicians commonly prescribe:

- **Short-term medications** to manage acute conditions (e.g., antibiotics, antivirals, antihistamines).
- **Temporary refills** of maintenance medications (e.g., for hypertension, diabetes, or hyperlipidemia) when patients are in transition between providers or traveling, provided sufficient medical history and verification of prior prescriptions can be obtained to support safe prescribing.

Prescriptions are issued only when clinicians can collect sufficient information to make a safe, accurate diagnosis. If the presenting concern exceeds the scope of virtual urgent care or requires in-person evaluation, the patient is referred appropriately.

Notably, First Stop Health Virtual Urgent Care clinicians do not prescribe:

- DEA-controlled substances (e.g., opioids, benzodiazepines, stimulants).
- Lifestyle medications (e.g., erectile dysfunction medications, weight loss drugs).
- Medications for ongoing psychiatric illnesses (though short-term treatment for anxiety may be provided in limited cases using non-controlled medications only and refills as described above).
- Medical marijuana.

Prescribing decisions are always at the discretion of the provider and must align with federal and state laws.

Virtual Primary Care

First Stop Health Primary Care services are designed to support longitudinal, whole-person care. As such, our clinicians are equipped to prescribe:

- **Chronic disease management medications**, including but not limited to those for diabetes, hypertension, asthma, high cholesterol and more.
- **Non-controlled behavioral health medications**, such as SSRIs and SNRIs for anxiety and depression, when clinically appropriate.
- **Women's health medications**, including but not limited to hormonal contraceptives and treatments for menopause-related symptoms.
- **Men's health medications**, including prescriptions that address sexual health or hair loss.

Prescriptions are provided only when they are **safe, clinically indicated, and aligned with evidence-based standards**. Our providers do not initiate or prescribe controlled substances, and there is no guarantee a prescription will be written. Referrals to in-person or specialty care are made when additional diagnostics, lab work, or follow-up is needed.

Unified Principles Across All Services

- **No Controlled Substances:** First Stop Health providers do not prescribe DEA Schedule II-V medications in any care setting.
- **Safety First:** Prescriptions are issued only when the clinical information gathered virtually is sufficient to ensure safe care.
- **Independent Clinical Judgment.** All prescribing decisions are made in the independent medical judgment of the treating clinician and in compliance with applicable federal and state law and standards of care. Nothing in this policy guarantees the availability of any specific medication.
- **Generic First:** We prioritize the use of cost-effective, generic medications whenever possible.
- **Care Coordination:** When needed, our care teams assist patients with referrals, lab work, and navigating benefits for follow-up care.

Our prescribing philosophy reflects our broader commitment to affordable, high-quality care that is patient-centered, clinically sound, and aligned with regulatory and ethical standards.