ACCURACY AND RESPONSE TIME WHEN CLERKS ARE USED FOR PEDIATRIC HEALTH INFORMATION LINES (PHIL). AE Klasner, WD King, T Crews, KW Monroe, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama.

**Purpose:** To determine if using clerks at PHIL is an efficient and accurate mechanism to handle the initial phone triage of home calls.

**Methods:** Retrospective review, of a convenience sample (31 consecutive days) of PHIL calls for Health Department (HD) patients in Birmingham, AL. All HD calls are fielded by clerks who obtain basic information regarding the call. These clerks have no formal training and most, no more than a high school education. During the weekday evenings (5 pm to 11 pm) and all day on weekends, these calls are then directed to in-house nurses to answer. On weeknights (11 pm to 8 am), calls are faxed to a nurse at home. We analyzed overall clerk efficiency, and accuracy in terms of chief complaint, and compared in-house vs. home calls for response time.

**Results:** 313 HD calls were received in the study period. 60 calls were faxed to home nurses and 253 were handled in-house. 9 calls were missing either call in or call return time. For 21 calls no contact with the family could be made. Mean call back time for all calls (n=304) was 17.6 +/- 17.3 minutes. Mean call back time for in-house nurses was 18.4 +/- 18.5 minutes; call back time for home nurses was 14.2 +/- 10.2 minutes. This difference in the mean time to return calls of 4.2 minutes was not significant (95% CI: -0.78, 9.12)(p = 0.10). For the calls where contact was made with the family (n=299), 281 (96.2%) of the clerk sheets had a chief complaint that was consistent with the nurses’ or would not affect disposition.

**Conclusions:** Utilizing clerks at PHIL is efficient, and faxing call-in sheets to home nurses is comparable to in-house nurses call back times to parents. Clerks’ accuracy in obtaining chief complaints is excellent. Clerks and home nurses may be an alternative to in-house nurses at PHIL.