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**Lauren Jean Edwards**  
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**The Report Committee for Lauren Jean Edwards**

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**RediClinic: An Evaluation of a Convenient Care Clinic**

**in a Shifting Medical Landscape**

**Approved by Supervising Committee:**

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**Michael Mackert**

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**Brad Love**

**RediClinic: An Evaluation of a Convenient Care Clinic**

**in a Shifting Medical Landscape**

**by**

**Lauren Jean Edwards, B.S.**

**Report**

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## **Abstract**

### **RediClinic: An Evaluation of a Convenient Care Clinic in a Shifting Medical Landscape**

Lauren Jean Edwards, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

Supervisor: Michael Mackert.

This paper offers in-depth look at the convenient care/retail clinic industry in the context of today's changing medical landscape with specific focus on Texas-based RediClinic. In addition to a detailed analysis of RediClinic, this paper proposes detailed advertising, marketing and social media recommendations that will aid RediClinic in bolstering its brand image and expanding its client base.

Every suggested tactic is framed within the rapidly changing healthcare environment present in America, and specific focus is given to the recent passing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This paper attempts to aid RediClinic in understanding and leveraging its most important strengths: its strong position within the Texas market, and its service to those who are currently uninsured.

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# **RediClinic: An Evaluation of a Convenient Care Clinic in a Shifting Medical Landscape**

## **Introduction**

To say that America's healthcare industry is rapidly changing is a vast understatement.

The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in March 2010 represents a massive shift in the way healthcare will be run in this country. With coverage expected to be extended to an estimated thirty-two million Americans by 2014 (Pitts, Carrier, Rich & Kellermann, 2010), the amount of patients in the system is about to grow dramatically.

But this is only the beginning.

In addition to increasing access, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will ban lifetime benefit limits as well as annual limits on healthcare coverage. Additionally, pre-existing conditions will no longer matter, as coverage cannot be denied based on health status, and preventative care must be covered. But more than anything else, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act *will require every American to have health insurance.*

Healthcare in America is about to get shaken up in a big way, and providers everywhere will have to adjust the way they offer healthcare services to their patients. Yet there is a segment of the market that is already ahead of the curve: convenient care clinics. These low-cost providers have been offering a myriad of basic, essential health services to people for years, regardless of their insurance status. Since the beginning of

this industry, convenient care clinics have grown exponentially; today, it is estimated that they have served 3.5 million Americans (Convenient Care Association).

RediClinic is one such entity. Founded in 1989, RediClinic currently provides Texans access to quick, reliable and quality health services at a cost less than that of a visit to doctor or emergency room. RediClinic, who already serves a great number of uninsured consumers, is in a unique and special position: they already serve an otherwise-overlooked consumer; a consumer that will soon have a number of healthcare options under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

This paper will take an in-depth look at the convenient care clinic/retail clinic industry, from inception until today, with a specific focus on Texas-based RediClinic. From an analysis of RediClinic as a whole to a comprehensive breakdown of its competitors, this paper will illustrate where RediClinic currently stands in this competitive marketplace. More importantly, however, this paper offers detailed advertising, marketing and social media recommendations to help RediClinic build its brand image and increase its client base. Knowing the marketplace is vital in any industry, and this paper will aid RediClinic in understanding and leveraging its most important strengths: its strong position in the Texas market, and its service to the currently uninsured market.



## **Literature Review**

### **Background of Convenient Care Clinic Industry**

The boom of the convenient care industry commenced with the beginning of the new millennium: the year 2000 marked the beginning of the boom for convenience clinics with the founding of QuickMedx in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota area (Convenient Care Association). Emphasizing convenience and expediency, convenient care clinics offer a list of basic health services are offered in a walk-in, no-appointment-necessary setting generally staffed with nurse practitioners or physician's assistants, instead of doctors, in order to keep costs down (Howard, 2008).

While services vary slightly from clinic to clinic, the majority of convenience clinics in the United States focus on the most commonly-seen health complaints, such as upper respiratory infections, sinusitis and bronchitis, as well as offering immunizations and basic blood tests (Mehrotra, Wang, Lave, Adams & McGlynn, 2008). Retail clinics, which are typically located in large chain grocery and drugstores such as Walgreens, Wal-Mart, H-E-B and CVS, fall under the umbrella of convenient care clinics; RediClinic is one such entity.

The industry, which is rapidly on the rise, experienced a huge boom since its inception: from 2006 to 2008, the number of convenience clinics in the U.S. grew tenfold (Mehrotra, Hangsheng, Adams, Lave, Thygeson, Solberg, et al., 2009). According to the Convenient Care Association, there are approximately 1,200 convenient care clinics in the United States today; a number that, according to one report, is estimated to reach 6,000 by 2011 (Mehrotra, Wang, Lave, Adams & McGlynn, 2008). These clinics have

served an estimated 3.5 million patients, and there are more than major 12 companies in the country that provide such services (Convenient Care Association).

### **The Role of NPs/PAs**

One of the things that set convenient care clinics apart from traditional healthcare establishments is that central role that Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Physicians' Assistants (PAs) play. Both of these professions have been intimately involved in the development and expansion of convenient care clinics, and are crucial to the health and success of the industry (Evans, 2010). Instead of receiving treatment from a doctor, patients who visit convenience clinics are seen by either a NP or PA. While not officially MDs, both of these positions are able to perform a wide variety of healthcare duties, including writing prescriptions, and have undergone years of training (both in the classroom and in the clinic).

Senate Bill 532, which was passed in 2009 at Texas' eighty-first legislative session, further expanded the reach of NPs and PAs in the state with the nation's second-largest population. According to the Senate Research Center, S.B. 532 "expands the parameters related to prescriptive authority...decreases, from 20 percent to 10 percent, the amount of time required for physicians delegating prescriptive authority to practice on-site with a physician assistant or nurse practitioner...increases the distance allowed, from 60 to 75 miles, between an alternate site and a delegating physician's primary residence or practice site...authorizes the Texas Medical Board to waive limitations on the number of physician assistants or advanced practice nurses, mileage, and on-site supervision requirements...authorizes the development and usage of electronic options

for the delegation registration process of and review of medical charts” (SB 532 Bill Analysis).

Happily for convenience clinics, it appears that the care provided by NPs and PAs at these facilities is consistently well-received by consumers (Evans, 2010). Although there has been some resistance by physicians, the expediency and quality of care provided has been enough to keep consumers happy: according to a 2010 article, “patients have embraced the model and truly engage with the NPs and PAs who provide their care” (Ryan, 2010).

### **Clientele**

Although convenience clinics only accepted cash in their early days, insurance coverage—including Medicare and Medicaid—have begun to play a role in the convenience care industry. By 2007, all major national insurance carriers began providing coverage for visits to convenience clinics, and it is estimated that approximately 85% of convenience clinics now accept some form of health insurance (Tu & Cohen, 2008). Additionally, some employers have begun to offer co-pays for treatment at convenience clinics that are lower than those to doctor’s offices or emergency rooms.

A 2009 study (Mehrotra, Hangsheng, Adams, Lave, Thygeson, Solberg, et al., 2009) found that, of the 982 retail clinics in operation in late 2008, 88.4% were located in urban areas, with 29% of the U.S. population living within a 10-minute drive of one such clinic. Additionally, although retail clinics were represented in 33 states, a full 44% were located in one of five states (California, Florida, Texas, Minnesota and Illinois).

From serving as an alternative to the emergency room or a visit to a primary care doctor to meeting the needs of those Americans who are uninsured, convenience care clinics fill a variety of roles. A 2008 study from the Center for Studying Health System Change (Tu & Cohen, 2008) found that retail clinics are of especially high value to young families, those without insurance, minorities (especially Hispanic consumers) and those lacking a regular source of medical care; these groups are more likely to visit retail clinics than their older, insured and non-minority counterparts.

The Convenient Care Association reports that 30% of their clinics' patients report a lack of a regular source of primary care, and cite these clinics as "a critical access point of care...for many of the 47 million uninsured and 30 million underinsured Americans" (Convenient Care Association). These findings correlate almost exactly with a 2007 survey for the Center for Studying Health System Change (Tu & Cohen, 2008), which found that 27% of families who visited retail clinics were uninsured. According to an article in *Disease Management*, the convenient care clinic model "provides an accessible, affordable entry point into the health care system for those who previously were restricted access" (Hansen-Turton, Ryan, Miller, Counts & Nash, 2007).

### **The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: What it Means for the Convenient Care Clinic Industry**

Analysts predict that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will extend coverage to thirty-two million currently uninsured Americans by 2014 (Pitts, Carrier, Rich & Kellerman, 2010). Those who have previously had to visit the emergency room or

another non-primary care facility will soon have the ability to visit a primary care practitioner (PCP) in a traditional setting.

This means big changes for the healthcare industry are on the horizon. Doors will be opened to these formerly-uninsured individuals, and greater access for them means greater competition among healthcare entities. Combined with a growing shortage of primary care providers that is expected to reach 150,000 and chronic disease on the rise (Ryan, 2010) convenient care clinics are in the unique position to help bridge this ever-expanding gap.

## **RediClinic Situation Analysis**

### **Background**

RediClinic was founded in 1989 under the name InterFit. Classified as a convenience and retail clinic, RediClinic considers itself “a leader in retail-based convenient care...and one of the nation’s largest providers of health screening tests, flu shots and other health-related services to retailers and employers” (RediClinic site). The RediClinic model of care is based on convenience and efficiency, and has positioned itself as a bridge between the doctor’s office and the emergency room. RediClinic’s motto is “high-quality, affordable and convenient healthcare that fits how we live today: no appointments, no waiting—and routine treatment and preventative care in about 15 minutes” (RediClinic site).

A walk-in, no-appointment-necessary establishment, each RediClinic is staffed by one clinician (either a nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant) and one medical assistant. Like many of its competitors, RediClinic treats the most common complaints that plague children and adults, including respiratory infections, strep throat, influenza, etcetera. In addition, RediClinic offers “Get Healthy” and “Live Healthy” services, including immunizations, blood and allergy testing and physicals, among others. Prescriptions can be written when necessary, and the price for most minor illness and injury services is \$79. (This includes colds, flu, coughs, ear infections, diarrhea, vomiting, poison ivy, etcetera; ailments things that would otherwise mean a visit to the emergency room for those lacking insurance.)

Previously located in Wal-Mart stores in several states across the country, RediClinic ended its relationship with the retail giant in late 2008. Today, RediClinic is located in select H-E-B grocery stores in Houston and Austin, Texas. The clinics are open seven days a week, and RediClinic accepts payment by cash, check or an insurance co-pay; currently, the company accepts plans by 13 major insurance companies, including Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas, CIGNA and Humana.

RediClinic is affiliated with the Nurse Practitioner Corporate Partner Council (NPCPC); the American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP); the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA); Memorial Hermann Healthcare System of Houston, TX; St. David's HealthCare of Round Rock, TX; Revolution Clinics; and the Convenient Care Association.

### **Social Media Efforts**

Thus far, RediClinic done a fairly good job promoting itself in the social media realm. Below, each of RediClinic's social media efforts are analyzed and discussed.

#### Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/RediClinic>

RediClinic's Facebook page currently stands at 736 fans. Updated several times a month, the page serves as a tool to promote the clinic's services and hours, as well as a place to post photos, videos and career opportunities. During the summer of 2010, the Traveling Run-E-Nose contest was promoted on the RediClinic website, which involved RediClinic "mascot" Run E Nose being photographed at various locations across the

world. Currently, when fans visit the RediClinic page they will find information about everything from immunizations and Breast Cancer Awareness Month to the flu shot.

On the plus side, RediClinic's Facebook page is updated on a semi-regular basis, and the "fan" count is respectable. RediClinic's use of photos and links to relevant articles is excellent; engaging consumers is key, and these techniques are a great way to generate interest in the RediClinic Facebook page. However, the page has little two-way communication. While there are comments and "likes" on many of the posts, these are generally by the same people over and over again, indicating a lack of engagement with the majority of RediClinic's audience.

#### Twitter

<http://twitter.com/rediclinic>

RediClinic does a good job about updating the Twitter account regularly, yet the account doesn't have many followers; currently, there are 107. Yet for the type of material that RediClinic is promoting—healthcare—the account does a decent job of keeping their followers informed.

#### YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/RediClinic>

RediClinic has a YouTube channel featuring a video clip of a RediClinic nurse practitioner Susan Cooley King explaining the importance of getting a flu shot, as well as



a slide show of Traveling Run E Nose. The channel has been in existence since August 25, 2010 and has no subscribers.

The fact that RediClinic has a YouTube channel is excellent. Even though there might not be much content currently on the site, it is wise for RediClinic to be on board with this social media outlet. Competitors such as CVS have already entered this arena (YouTube-CVS Pharmacy Videos) and, though their videos are technically for their pharmacy and not clinic, they do an excellent job of providing the type of information consumers look for: videos as quick references on everything from cold and flu to allergies and prescription information.

RediClinic has attempted to provide a similar service with the flu shot video, but is it possible to compete with the social media efforts of large corporations like CVS or Walgreens? When it comes to social media, size is not what matters, but rather serving your client base. *(See Recommendations section for suggestions to improve RediClinic's social media efforts and more fully engage its audience.)*

## Competitors

### *Primary Competitors*

Convenient care clinics are on the rise in the United States. As discussed in the previous literature review, the convenient care and retail clinic industry has recently seen a period of rapid growth that is expected to continue as consumers seek alternative options to conventional doctor and emergency room visits.

There are currently 25 RediClinic sites, all of which are located in HEB and HEBplus! stores in Texas; a state that is already somewhat saturated with convenience clinics (Mehrotra, Hangsheng, Adams, Lave, Thygeson, Solberg, et al., 2009). Unfortunately for RediClinic, its major competitors have locations nationwide, making access much easier and more convenient for busy families seeking quick care. Below is a list of these competitors, including a brief analysis of their philosophies of care and the services each currently provides.

#### The Clinic at Walmart

Located in twenty U.S. states, The Clinic at Walmart is a convenience clinic located within various Walmart stores across the country. The Clinic at Walmart, which was conceived in 2007, is designed to “diagnose and treat common health ailments such as ear, throat and sinus infections, conduct diabetes and cholesterol screenings, administer vaccinations and more” (Walmart Medical Clinic Fact Sheet, 2010). They do accept insurance, but position themselves as an affordable alternative to the hospital or emergency room—whether or not the patient has health insurance.

At first, Walmart had plans for rapid expansion of its clinics—according to a 2007 press release by the company, 400 clinics were set to open by 2010 (Walmart Press Room website) and quickly formed a relationship with RediClinic to provide its in-store clinic services. However, RediClinic pulled out of Walmart stores in late 2008 and, combined with other issues, Walmart was left with just 17 of the 78 clinics it had by year’s end (Freudenheim, 2009). Walmart rebounded, however, and today has close to 95 clinic locations across the country (Walmart Clinics website).

Within the state of Texas (where RediClinic is currently located) there are ten locations (Walmart Clinics website) to RediClinic's twenty-two. Yet unlike RediClinic, which has a central management system, the Clinic at Walmart is managed by several healthcare groups that vary depending on location and are all unaffiliated with Walmart. The retail giant even states that it "does not employ any health care professionals or exercise any control over the provision of health care services at the clinics" (Walmart Clinics website) which could spell trouble when it comes to quality control.

Walmart posits that, in addition to convenience, it is also committed to transparency. Most visits cost between \$50 and \$65, and Walmart asserts that all signage is very clear about pricing. Additionally, the chain strives to be a "Store of the Community," meaning they are connected with local communities via local healthcare systems (Walmart Medical Clinic Fact Sheet, 2010). This effort to connect with neighborhood healthcare systems does help legitimize what might otherwise appear as de-personalized healthcare.

In terms of advertising, The Clinic at Walmart does not do anything exceptional in order to advertise; rather, it relies largely on its busy in-store traffic to generate clinic clients. Walmart runs in-store television advertisements (MSN Moneycentral) to notify customers of the clinic's existence, as well as posts ads on walmart.com. Additionally, Walmart uses relevant sponsored links on Google to advertise the clinic.

Since each individual clinic independently owned and run, its social media efforts are quite fragmented (and less than stellar). There is a YouTube channel (YouTube-WAGMedia) featuring Walmart commercials, including one featuring information about

the importance of flu shots; otherwise, however, The Clinic at Walmart lacks a centralized presence popular social media outlets such as Facebook or Twitter. While there are a few social media efforts by individual branches of The Clinic, there is definitely a lack of engagement and information dissemination about this entity as a whole.

Walgreens' Take Care Clinic

Website: <http://www.takecarehealth.com/>

Part of Take Care Health Systems, Take Care Clinics were established in Walgreens stores in 2006. Today there are more than 340 Take Care Clinic locations throughout the country, and, similar to the setup of RediClinic, these convenience clinics offer seven-day-a-week and after-hours medical services. From vaccines and minor injuries to allergies and the flu, Take Care Clinics serve the basic medical needs of those lacking insurance as well as those who don't have the time to make it to a doctor. Patients can pay by cash, credit or debit card, and many forms of medical insurance (including Medicare and Medicaid) are accepted.

While similar to RediClinic in most aspects, Take Care Clinics have an added facet of care that most retail and convenience clinics lack: in addition to its moderately priced walk-in service (treatments start at \$65), Walgreen's in-store clinicians provide patients with follow-up phone calls (Take Care Clinic-Our Commitment). This value-added proposition differentiates Walgreens from its competitors and helps to create a relationship between the patient/client and the clinic. (*See Recommendations section for more on this.*)

When it comes to advertising efforts, Take Care Clinics have taken a much more aggressive approach than competitor Walmart. In 2008, Take Care Clinics rolled out a multimedia advertising campaign that spanned television, online, print and radio. Themed “Life Diagnosis”, the multi-channel campaign focused on branding Take Care Clinics as a healthcare solution for the busy consumer (Take Care Clinic Press Release). Because all Take Care Clinics are owned by Walgreens/Take Care Health Systems, it is likely much easier to create centralized advertising campaigns; yet regardless of the reasoning, aggressive efforts such as these have helped make Take Care Clinics a formidable competitor in the convenient care clinic arena.

In the traditional sense of the word, Take Care Clinic’s social media efforts are nearly non-existent. Though Take Care Clinic doesn’t engage consumers through social networking sites, it is on the cutting edge of a very important (and growing) trend: the smart phone application. Walgreens offers a health application for smart phones that allows users to locate Take Care Clinics in their area, as well as refill prescriptions simply by taking a photo of their medicine’s bar code. This is certainly a wise marketing decision, especially since many of its competitors have yet to catch on to this important movement. (*For more on this, see Recommendations section*).

MinuteClinic (CVS, Target)

Website: <http://www.minuteclinic.com/>

The MinuteClinic, located primarily in CVS drugstores, was founded in 2000 under the name QuickMedx. QuickMedx officially became MinuteClinic in 2002, and today there are more than 500 locations nationwide (MinuteClinic website). MinuteClinic

operates under the larger umbrella organization CVS Caremark, which also includes the store's retail pharmacy and a pharmacy benefits management service (CVS Caremark website).

Originally focusing on seven common medical conditions (including strep throat, the flu, ear infections, etcetera), MinuteClinic has now expanded its offerings to include vaccines, health condition monitoring and wellness exams, among other services. In addition to its CVS locations, MinuteClinic expanded into select Target stores in 2004.

MinuteClinic's healthcare model—a moderately-priced retail clinic staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants—is quite similar to RediClinic's, but on a much larger scale. Located in twenty-six states, MinuteClinic has the nationwide penetration that RediClinic has not yet achieved, even though RediClinic has been in existence ten years longer. Within the Austin and Houston markets that RediClinic calls home, the MinuteClinic also has a strong foothold: there are seven locations in Austin and eight in the Houston area (MinuteClinic locations: Austin; Houston).

One standout service that MinuteClinic provides is their “My records” service, which gives customers a way to easily access and track their personal health information online (*My Records*-MinuteClinic website). This service is hugely beneficial to many consumers—especially those without a primary care physician. It is a service that certainly makes MinuteClinic stand out among competitors, and is something that could prove highly beneficial to RediClinic. (*Read more about this in the Recommendations section*).

MinuteClinic's advertising efforts have been more aggressive recently, as CVS pharmacy and MinuteClinic ran a widespread campaign in early 2010 to educate consumers about vaccines—specifically, the H1N1 vaccine. According to a MinuteClinic press release, the retail chain employed television, radio and internet to spread the word that MinuteClinic is the place to go for quick, affordable healthcare. MinuteClinic also utilizes more basic advertising tactics such as sponsored links on Google.

MinuteClinic does a good job of engaging potential clients in a nontraditional manner. Though MinuteClinic does not engage in a wide variety of traditional social media efforts, it has seized public relations opportunities such as having MinuteClinic CEO appear on popular medical show “The Doctors.” Additionally, parent company CVS has an entire channel on YouTube dedicated to health-related videos (YouTube-CVS Pharmacy Videos) featuring video clips such as the one described above, as well as clips featuring nurse practitioners discussing a myriad of health issues and answering common questions. This is an excellent (and free) health resource to anyone with internet access, and it helps keep MinuteClinic top of mind among potential consumers.

### *Secondary competitors*

#### Portable Medicine

Medicine, much like most industries today, is becoming increasingly immediate in its accessibility. Convenient care clinics are just one example of this trend; online sources that assist in self-diagnosis are another. But there is an even newer crop of offerings that allow consumers to access medical information and care almost

immediately: according to a 2010 report, “in-store kiosks (grocery stores, pharmacies) and retail-style healthcare were just the beginning” (Revelli, 2010).

This newest trend in healthcare is “movable medicine”; i.e. medical services that do not require patients to step outside their homes. For example, in fall 2010, Virtuwel’s round-the-clock online service began providing patients with diagnoses and treatment plans for common medical issues, and MinuteClinic’s “Monitoring Made Easy” now employs nurse practitioners and physicians’ assistants to monitor patients via phone, the web and in person (Revelli, 2010).

Then there is the world of mobile technology. There are iPhone applications that aid in medical diagnoses, hospitals (such as Reston Hospital in D.C.) which text emergency room patients their estimated wait time and technology that allows researchers to distinguish between healthy and cancerous cells using an image on a digital camera. Like it or not, mobile phones are rapidly becoming an integral part of the medical landscape.

Entities such as RediClinic would benefit greatly from getting on board with the medical technological revolution; because “for a patient in need, there is little more valuable than answers (with) no appointment necessary” (Revelli, 2010). (*See Recommendations section for examples.*)

#### Primary care physicians

On one hand, primary care physicians have been the heart of medicine since its inception. From the days of house calls to present-day annual physicals, many Americans have visited a doctor’s office at least once in their lifetime. However, the advent of the



convenient care industry has shaken things up, and many consumers no longer feel the need to visit a doctor for the majority of their healthcare needs. Especially for those without insurance, convenience clinics represent a much-needed option for receiving routine care. Unfortunately, some doctors are unhappy with this new situation.

According to a 2007 article (MacReady, 2007), “doctors claim the (convenience) clinics poach patients and undercut their fees. They have also raised concerns about access for disabled patients, handwashing standards and 'the wisdom of encouraging people who may have an infectious disease to visit a clinic in a store that sells groceries'.” Though many of these concerns may be unfounded, it is still a reality that many primary care physicians are none too pleased with the ever-growing number of convenience clinics in America.

However, their unhappiness is not the primary issue at hand. The real truth of the matter is that, when the new healthcare legislation goes into effect and thirty-two million uninsured Americans have a choice of where to seek healthcare (Pitts, Carrier, Rich & Kellerman, 2010), these primary care doctors will become an even greater source of competition for convenience clinics like RediClinic.

## Next Steps

The current convenient care clinic environment is becoming increasingly competitive. In addition to other retail clinics, RediClinic must also consider competition from primary care doctors and new legislation, both regional and national.

After careful consideration of RediClinic's external and internal environments, current positioning and both current and future competitors, it is recommended that a two-pronged strategy be employed: one, putting the focus on Texans; two, focusing on those currently uninsured persons who will soon have insurance through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The following *Recommendations* section will outline precise tactics on how to achieve these goals, but the reasoning behind choosing these audiences is relatively straightforward. Putting the focus on Texans is both a logical extension of RediClinic's relationship with Texas retail giant HEB, as well as its presence within the state of Texas. HEB does an excellent job of leveraging the concept of "Texas pride," and RediClinic would do well to use this already-successful marketing strategy for itself. When Texans think groceries, they think HEB. When they think routine health care, they should think RediClinic.

The second major area of focus should be on the currently uninsured. RediClinic already serves many patients who do not currently have health insurance, but taking this a step further and actually reaching out to this group is strongly recommended. With the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passing in 2010, the health care industry is going to radically change, and RediClinic is in the unique position to gain the business of

these uninsured persons right now—before primary care doctors or other providers can even serve them. By gaining their loyalty today, RediClinic can ensure that this group will continue to choose to visit their neighborhood RediClinic location for routine care—even after they have many other options.

Below are recommendations on how RediClinic can successfully compete in the current and future medical services environment. The suggestions below are designed to increase traffic to RediClinic locations, engage consumers and help build overall brand equity.

## **Recommendations**

### **Social Media Recommendations**

RediClinic is already doing well at utilizing the various social media outlets available today, but audience engagement can certainly be improved through a few tactical changes. First and foremost, it is vital to remember that RediClinic's client base is currently confined to the state of Texas: at this moment in time, there is not a real need to try to engage consumers in other states, because of their lack of access. RediClinic has a clear advantage over other convenience clinics within the state of Texas, however, because it is aligned with HEB, an incredibly well-known, well-loved Texas-based company. If RediClinic is able to further co-brand itself with HEB (*see General Recommendations for more*), this “Texas pride” connection will be strengthened; and in turn, RediClinic’s brand strength will grow among Texas consumers.

One way to strengthen this relationship with HEB is through social media. Instead of using Facebook, Twitter, etc. to solely promote broad issues such as the flu shot, RediClinic should address topics such as how it can treat local and regional allergies. On its site, RediClinic advertises allergy testing packages that “identify common allergens, plus regional environmental and food allergies”; since this is a service already in existence, RediClinic should certainly promote it among their core audience of busy families. Another service to promote on could be Texas’ immunization requirements. RediClinic can remind Texas parents of the importance of immunizations as well as what the state requirements are, and then give them a quick and easy solution: visiting their

neighborhood HEB and taking care of everything in a snap at RediClinic. Simply by promoting this via social media, RediClinic will put itself as top-of-mind among Texans.

Another way that RediClinic can grow its brand among Texans via Twitter is to “follow” prominent local organizations and schools throughout Texas. Twitter has evolved into a two-way conversation, and engaging key entities is an excellent method of giving the RediClinic brand more exposure. Ideally, these schools, organizations, etc. will “follow” RediClinic’s Twitter account back, serving two purposes: one, to help RediClinic stay abreast of important happenings statewide; two, potentially opening the door for RediClinic’s messages to reach a far greater audience via “retweets.” Dissemination of information is vital, and the open, sharing environment of Twitter is an excellent way to do this in a relaxed, almost grassroots manner.

By “acting locally”, RediClinic will have a greater change of engaging with its Texas consumer base, who will be much more likely to visit RediClinic’s Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts if the information disseminated is relevant to (and directed at) Texans. While promoting general health and wellness concepts is always important, finding a way to make these messages “Texas specific” can boost RediClinic head and shoulders above its competitors; because no matter how much expansion is planned for the future, RediClinic must first nurture its current audience: Texans. *(For more on this, see below.)*

## **General Recommendations**

### Follow-up phone calls

At RediClinic, there is not a policy in place requiring employees to provide routine follow-up phone calls to its clients. This service, which competitor Take Care Clinic at Walgreens purports to always provide (Take Care Clinic-Our Commitment), is one that could help RediClinic be much more competitive at virtually no monetary cost. Though there is a “time cost” to the employees who provide this service, research has shown that consumers truly appreciate this courtesy, and they let others know when they have this positive experience. For example, a patient’s review of a Chicago-based Take Care Clinic on Yelp.com stated, “Update: Follow-up phone call from my lovely nurse practitioner. She checked in a few days later to make sure I was still alive and kickin'. Excellent!” (Take Care Clinic consumer review- Yelp).

Another consumer review of the Take Care Clinic on a local Yahoo! site raved, “A few days after the appointment I received a voice mail from the clinic just checking up to see how I was doing! I've never in my life had a follow up phone call from a health clinic! I was impressed and will go back next time I get sick!” (Take Care Clinic consumer review-Yahoo). Clearly, people appreciate the personal touch of these follow-up phone calls, and such practices could help RediClinic increase client return rate for virtually no monetary cost.

### Personal Health Record

CVS’ Minute Clinic has a “My Records” section (CVS website-My Records) which is essentially an online personal health record. Admittedly, CVS is a nationwide

retailer with pharmacy locations in addition to their in-store clinics, which certainly makes creating and maintaining a records system much easier. However, RediClinic does serve a number of uninsured patients who lack a PCP and, consequently, most likely also lack an easily-accessible health record. With the new healthcare bill coming into effect, many of these people will soon have access to a myriad of healthcare options, including a PCP of their own. One way RediClinic can stay ahead of the game is to offer the option of a personal health record to its current clientele. This is a rare opportunity for RediClinic to gain this group's loyalty; if this is accomplished, the formerly uninsured Texans have a choice of medical services, they will choose RediClinic.

Even the clients who *do* have health insurance would appreciate the convenience of this option, because RediClinic clients are HEB shoppers, and according to a report by the Food Marketing Institute (Food Marketing Institute-Facts and Figures), consumers visit the grocery store an average of twice a week. RediClinic wants to keep these shoppers in HEB; the store must be more than a place to get groceries—it should be a one-stop shop.

And the greater the depth of information that is included in these personal health records, the better. The more comprehensive these records are, the less likely consumers will be to seek routine care elsewhere. Since quickly accessing your personal health record is next to impossible for the majority of people (except for those in extreme health circumstances), RediClinic is offering a solution to the “red tape” issue often encountered at doctors' offices.

By offering a personal health record, RediClinic will help to ensure the loyalty of all of its clients—because excellent and fast service, affordable prices and a convenient location with the value-added proposition of a personal, up-to-date medical history will certainly help to set RediClinic apart from its competitors.

### Smartphone Application

According to the Pew Research Center (Kharif, 2010), forty percent of American adults use their cell phones to surf the Web, email or instant message. This number is on the rise, and by the end of 2011, Nielsen expects that there will be more smartphones in the U.S. market than feature phones (Entner, 2010).

The cell phone revolution is certainly underway, and it is becoming increasingly true that there no matter what you want to do, there is indeed “an app for that”(Apple trademark).

Walgreens is an example of a RediClinic competitor that is on board with this technological revolution. Walgreens has created a smart phone application which can be downloaded not only for iPhones, but also for Blackberrys and phones operating on the Andriod market. The application not only allows users to quickly locate the nearest Take Care Clinic, but also provides the ultimate commodity—convenience—by allowing users to refill their prescriptions simply by photographing the barcode on their medicine bottle. In today’s increasingly-busy world, including such a feature was certainly a wise move on the part of Walgreens.

However, the Walgreens application is lacking in the fact that it does not provide much health-related information. WebMD, however, does an excellent job of this with



its' mobile application for the iPhone and iPad (WebMD Mobile), but consumers who do not own an Apple device are unable to use the service.

RediClinic should look into the possible development of a hybrid mobile application. Web developers are constantly inventing new and better applications, and often these can be created at a low cost—especially if created by computer science students or recent graduates. Ideally, RediClinic should create an application that both includes a “medical Q & A” service as well as a RediClinic store locator. Though it doesn't have to be as involved as the WebMD application, the types of basic health concerns that RediClinic treats would be just the type of questions the application should speak to. Whether a mother wants to know the signs of strep throat or questions what poison ivy looks like, a RediClinic application could help her quickly diagnose the problem while simultaneously reminding her that a quick solution is right down the road at her local HEB.

A RediClinic smartphone application would be an excellent way to help keep RediClinic at top-of-mind among its consumers. Especially for those RediClinic clients with children, this type of application would be an incredibly useful healthcare tool; something they could use as a quick resource when a health inquiry arises. Especially if it is designed to be compatible with a wider range of smart phones, a RediClinic application would be an excellent—and cost-efficient—endeavor.

#### Flu Shot Vouchers

Walgreens offered free flu shots to those without insurance in the fall of 2009 (City Data forum). Though this does not appear to be an outright money-making strategy,

it is an incredible public relations effort that helped get the word out about the Take Care Clinic in a positive way. If monetarily feasible, this is a strategy that RediClinic should consider.

As mentioned earlier, the uninsured population will soon be granted access to a much wider range of healthcare options (Pitts, Carrier, Rich & Kellerman, 2010), and it would behoove the medical community to seriously consider this group when making plans for the future. Offering something as simple as a flu shot could help bring uninsured persons into RediClinic locations, thereby making them aware of this convenient option. In the near future, when this group has the option of choosing a healthcare provider, RediClinic will already have established itself as a friendly company who is happy to meet their healthcare needs.

#### Truly Co-Branding with HEB: “The Texas Strategy”

Currently, RediClinic's client base is confined to the state of Texas. Though several of RediClinic's competitors are national giants, RediClinic has a clear advantage within the state of Texas simply based on the fact that it is a Texas-based company and is aligned with HEB, another well-known Texas-based company. RediClinic should seriously consider taking further advantage of this relationship for a number of reasons, including HEB's hold on the Texas market.

HEB, which operates in more than 150 communities in Texas and Mexico (HEB website) and had \$13.5 M in sales in 2008 (Business & Company Resource Center), is nearly a case study in "Texas-centric" advertising campaigns. HEB's television ads focus on the overall quality and value of the store's products, and, though format and content

vary, nearly all mention or include references to the state of Texas. Even when HEB utilizes celebrity endorsements, they select "Texas" celebrities such as players from the San Antonio Spurs basketball team or Texas-based actress Eva Longoria (HEB website). Part of HEB's success can certainly be attributed to the fact that this corporation not only understands the concept of "Texas Pride," but taps into this emotion at every opportunity.

In addition to their advertising campaigns, HEB offers "My HEB Texas Life", a free, monthly in-store publication that offers informative articles, games, tips for busy families and in-store savings (*see Appendix for example*). Everything the store does--from commercials to in-store promotions and displays--is based around the concept of living life as a Texan, and HEB has positioned itself as more than a store: the HEB brand is a solution for all of the daily concerns Texas families face.

This is where RediClinic fits in. RediClinic's current positioning is quite similar to HEB's: it is a solution to busy families' problems (lack of time, lack of insurance, etc.)— and it is strongly recommend that RediClinic work to further leverage this relationship with HEB. Below are some suggestions on how begin doing this.

One way to do this is through co-advertising. HEB already advertises RediClinic on its website (*see Appendix*), and this relationship can be extended to online and television advertising. To truly co-brand itself with HEB, RediClinic needs to get the word out to Texans that HEB, the store they know and trust, recommends that they turn to RediClinic for their everyday healthcare needs. Certain times of the year especially lend themselves to this type of advertising: back-to-school, flu season, etc. It would be reasonable for RediClinic to use these times of year to reach HEB shoppers who likely

have such issues already on their minds; and since RediClinic is located right where they already shop, it is a quick, easy and affordable way to take care of their family.

Another way to help co-brand the two companies is by making HEB shoppers aware of the presence of RediClinic—even when their neighborhood HEB may not have a RediClinic branch.

For those HEBs that do not have RediClinics, in-store signage in the healthcare aisle would be an excellent reminder to consumers of the relationship that exists between HEB and RediClinic. The opportunity to remind HEB customers about the convenience of RediClinic at the moment they are picking up cough syrup or allergy medicine is invaluable, and one that can feasibly be achieved with simple signage.

For HEB locations that currently have a RediClinic, similar reminders of its existence could do a great deal when it comes to increasing traffic. HEB shoppers who are not in the habit of visiting RediClinic when they have an ailment need a reminder that there is a quick, efficient way to take care of their families when issues arise—and it is in their neighborhood grocery store. One way to achieve increase both their awareness and attention is through alternative methods such as “floor signage.” This technique has been employed such major brands as Flip video cameras (*see Appendix for example*), and could be used by RediClinic as a way to both remind customers of RediClinic’s existence and direct them to the clinic. Using footprints, arrows or other directional images on the store’s floor could be a unique way to achieve these goals.

Whether through signage, television or online advertising or perhaps through alternative methods, RediClinic should work to both enhance and leverage their

relationship with HEB. If leveraged correctly, the relationship based on trust, loyalty and sense of value that already exists between HEB and its clients can become the same relationship that RediClinic has with this audience.

## **Conclusion**

Big changes for the healthcare industry are on the horizon, and the thirty-two million currently uninsured Americans that are poised to receive coverage (Pitts, Carrier, Rich & Kellerman, 2010) are the faces representing the enormous shakeup that is about to happen to healthcare as usual.

Doors will be opened to these formerly-uninsured individuals, and greater access for them means greater competition among healthcare entities. Combined with a growing shortage of primary care providers that is expected to reach 150,000 and chronic disease on the rise (Ryan, 2010), convenient care clinics like RediClinic are in the unique position to help bridge this ever-expanding gap.

Taking into account this key fact, it is reasonable for RediClinic to simultaneously target two broad demographics—both those currently insured and uninsured Texans—through some subtle shifts in brand personality.

The already-existing relationship RediClinic has with HEB is vital. As stated earlier, this retail giant is a favorite among Texas residents, and a greater co-branded relationship with this entity will mean great things for RediClinic. By becoming the “clinic of Texans,” the feelings of loyalty and pride that customers have for HEB will be transferred to the RediClinic brand.

Additionally, understanding and taking advantage of the technological revolution will be a cornerstone of RediClinic’s future success. Smartphones, mobile medicine and the predominance of social media are the realities of today’s marketplace, and they will be keys to engaging consumers in two-way communication and keeping RediClinic top-

of-mind. By starting a conversation with consumers and giving them useful, realistic healthcare tools at their fingertips, RediClinic will be able to grow its consumer base in a low-cost, efficient manner.

By truly understanding the new healthcare marketplace and using the aforementioned tools, RediClinic will not only boost its brand image and garner consumer loyalty, but will draw in new customers and ultimately increase profits. By doing this, RediClinic will have opened the door to a prosperous and healthy future.

## Appendix



## RediClinic Homepage

From: <http://www.rediclinic.com/>

**RediClinic**  
Great healthcare.  
Great experience.<sup>®</sup>

Locations and hours by city  or Zip Code

 Facebook  Twitter  RSS Feed

[Home](#) [About RediClinic](#) [Clinic Services](#) [Employer Services](#) [Careers](#) [Contact Us](#) [Run E Nose](#) [My RediClinic](#) [En Español](#)



- High-quality, affordable healthcare
- No appointments
- Conveniently located where you shop

Imagine high-quality, affordable healthcare for routine conditions and preventive care with no appointments necessary. Imagine specially-trained clinicians who are so professional and caring that 98% of patients rate their service as outstanding. Oh – and with facilities conveniently located inside the stores where you already shop. Sound like a fantasy? It's not. It's RediClinic.

FLU Prevent It Treat It Get Healthy

**FLU**  
PREVENT IT  
TREAT IT  
AT  
RediClinic

  
[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

RediClinic Flu Shot 2010

  
Susan Cooley King, PhD, RN, CPNP  
Nurse Practitioner





  
View Lab Results, Pay Bills Online,  
Exchange Messages with RediClinic,  
And Much More!  
Anytime, Anywhere! Sign In Today!

  
Career Video

**Career Opportunities**  
Escape from your traditional healthcare  
job. [Click here...](#) a new career path awaits  
you!




**Health Insurance**  
Accepting Aetna, CIGNA, Humana,  
UnitedHealthcare, Blue Cross Blue  
Shield of Texas, Texas True Choice  
and UniCare.

[Site Map](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | © 2010 RediClinic LLC

Newsletter Signup. Enter Email:

## Clinic at Walmart Homepage

From: <http://www.walmart.com/cp/1078904?adid=1500000000000028591320>



Save money. Live better.

Amazing Online Specials, While Supplies


New customer? [Sign In](#) | [Help](#)

[Value of the Day](#) | [Local Ad](#) | [Store Finder](#) | [Registry](#) | [Gift Cards](#) | [Track My Orders](#) | [My Account](#) | [My Lists](#)

See All Departments ▾

All Departments ▾

Find

 My Cart (0)

Choose My Store ▾

Pharmacy : **Walmart Clinics**

[\\$4 Prescriptions](#) | [Refill Prescriptions](#) | [Home Delivery](#) | [Medicare](#)

**Find a Pharmacy**  
Enter ZIP Code To Find Your Local Pharmacy  
  
[Find](#)

**Browse In:**  
[All Departments](#)  
[Pharmacy](#)  
**Walmart Clinics**


**Order Prescriptions**  
[Create an Account](#)  
[My Account Log-in](#)  
[New Prescriptions](#)  
[Pharmacy Help](#)  
[Refill Prescriptions](#)  
[Transfer Prescriptions](#)

**Services**  
[\\$4 Prescriptions](#)  
[Auto Refills](#)  
[Clinics](#)  
[Home Delivery](#)  
[Humana Walmart-Preferred RxPlan](#)

**Shop Health Products**  
[Home Medical](#)  
[Medicine Cabinet](#)  
[Personal Care](#)  
[Vitamins](#)  
[Wellness Shops](#)

**Featured Content**  
[Community](#)  
[Drug Information](#)  
[Flexible Spending Account](#)  
[Getting Started](#)

**Get Well. Stay Well.**  
Independent healthcare clinics at Walmart offer affordable walk-in care for everyone.  
[See all Clinic Locations](#)



**Clinics at Walmart**  
Independent health clinics are now offering healthcare services to our customers in select Walmart stores nationwide. These clinics provide one-stop convenience for many basic healthcare needs at affordable prices.  
**Clinic Services**  
All clinics offer essential preventative and routine health services for a standard set of common health ailments and screening needs that can be performed without urgent or emergency care, including:

- Acne
- Bladder infections
- Blood sugar testing
- Camp and school physicals
- Cholesterol screening
- Common vaccinations
- Ear aches
- Flu
- Insect bites and stings
- Minor wounds
- Sinus infections
- Upper respiratory infections
- Wart removal

Please [contact the clinic nearest you](#) for more information about their services and fees.  
**Clinic Convenience**  
Here are a few ways clinics save you time and money:

- No appointment is necessary to visit the clinics
- Clinics are open seven days a week. [View clinic locations and hours.](#)
- Patient data is electronic, which means limited time spent filling out forms and follow-up visits are quick and convenient
- All prices are posted clearly, so you always know the cost before treatment
- An average Get Well visit costs \$65 or less. For additional pricing information, contact the clinic nearest you.

**Please note:** Each medical clinic located in a Walmart store is owned and operated by an independent company that is unaffiliated with Walmart. Walmart does not employ any health care professionals or exercise any control over the provision of health care services at the clinics.

**New to Walmart Pharmacy?**  
[Learn About Our Services](#)


**Create a Pharmacy Account**  
[Create a New Account](#) | [Learn More](#)


**Fill New Prescriptions**  
[Request a New Prescription](#) | [Learn More](#)


**Transfer Prescriptions**  
[Sign in](#) | [Learn More](#)


**Shop By Best Sellers**

**Shop By Top-Rated Items**

**Clearblue Fertility Monitor**  
★★★★★  
**\$159.88**

**PRECISION XTRA STRIP 100ct**  
★★★★★  
**\$116.93**


**Precision Xtra Blood Glucose Test S...**  
★★★★★  
**\$63.64**

**Bayer Contour Blood Glucose Test St ...**  
★★★★★  
**\$61.83**

**Shop all Top-Rated Items**

## MinuteClinic Homepage


From: <http://minuteclinic.com/flu/>



[Locations](#) | [Services and Costs](#) | [Insurance](#) | [About Us](#) | [Careers](#) | [Sign Up for Health Alerts](#)

[Find a Clinic](#)  or

We make health care a little easier for people with a lot going on. Our family nurse practitioners and physician assistants are trained to diagnose and treat common illnesses, minor injuries and skin conditions to help you get better. And we offer health screenings and vaccinations to help you stay healthy all year round.



**flu shots**  
your way™

**Available at every location.**  
No appointment necessary.

[find out more >>](#)

**Services and Costs >>**

We offer a clear, straight-forward directory of the services we provide along with an up-front list of their costs.

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**FREE**  
**A1c test**  
for those with diabetes  
Sponsored by Bayer Diabetes Care.

[get the details >>](#)

**Careers >>**

Now hiring in several locations - click [here](#) to search for opportunities in your area. Or meet us at our [CME and Open House events](#).


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## Walgreens' Take Care Clinic Homepage


From: [http://www.takecarehealth.com/welcome-to-takecare.aspx?ext=gooBrand\\_take\\_care\\_clinic](http://www.takecarehealth.com/welcome-to-takecare.aspx?ext=gooBrand_take_care_clinic)


 **take care clinic**  
at select *Walgreens*


[> WELCOME TO TAKE CARE CLINIC](#)  
[ABOUT US](#)  
[WHAT WE TREAT](#)  
[ABOUT YOUR VISIT](#)  
[FIND A TAKE CARE CLINIC](#)  
[JOIN OUR TEAM](#)  
[CONTACT US](#)



 **Find a clinic.**  
at select *Walgreens*  
 [GO](#)

 **Join our team.**  
Compassionate caregivers,  
we're glad you found us.

 **Employer Solutions**  
The leader in workplace-  
based healthcare services.



I got a flu shot for...

**Arm yourself™  
for the ones you love**

**Seasonal flu shots  
\$29<sup>99</sup> every day**

[Click here to learn more.](#)

### Welcome to Take Care Clinic<sup>SM</sup>

We're here to bring everyday family healthcare to your neighborhood Walgreens. No appointments, no long waits, open 7 days a week and weeknights too. Most insurance welcome. Feels better already, doesn't it?

[Learn more about Take Care Clinics](#)

Patient care services provided by Take Care Health Services<sup>SM</sup>, an independently owned professional corporation whose licensed healthcare professionals are not employed by or agents of Walgreen Co., or its subsidiaries, including Take Care Health Systems<sup>SM</sup>, LLC.

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## RediClinic on HEB Site

From:

[https://www.heb.com/pharmacy/reditclinics.jsp?\\_DARGS=/hebonline/common/global-nav.jsp.36\\_A&\\_DAV=4](https://www.heb.com/pharmacy/reditclinics.jsp?_DARGS=/hebonline/common/global-nav.jsp.36_A&_DAV=4)



Weekly ads & couponsFind a storeCommunity involvementAbout us

Search forin All

[What's in Store](#) [Our Brands](#) [Recipes & Cooking](#) [Pharmacy & Health](#) [Party Planning](#)

[Home](#) [Pharmacy & Health](#) [ReditClinics](#)

## ReditClinics

Affordable healthcare  
that fits how we live today.



**ReditClinics deliver high-quality healthcare with no appointments — and routine treatment**  
and preventive care in about 15 minutes.

The staff provides convenient and affordable healthcare, including:

- Treatment for more than 25 common conditions, such as strep throat and ear infections
- Health screenings
- Vaccinations
- Immunizations
- Routine physicals

Each ReditClinic is staffed by clinicians who provide primary care and can prescribe appropriate medications when needed. They're registered nurses with advanced degrees and clinical training, often in partnership with doctors from an outstanding local healthcare system.

### Hours

ReditClinics are open 7 days a week:  
Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. (8 p.m. in Houston)  
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[Pharmacy Notice of Privacy Practices](#) | [Texas State Board of Pharmacy](#)

### Locations



ReditClinics are located inside 25 H-E-B and H-E-B plus!™ stores in the Houston and Austin metro areas. Use the [store locator](#) to find a ReditClinic near you.

[Join Us!](#) [My H-E-B Online](#)

 Sign up for H-E-B emails

 Weekly ads

 Shopping lists

 Prescription

**Join my H-E-B online!**

It takes just a minute, and you can:

- View weekly ads from your store
- Save recipes in your recipe box
- Rate & review recipes

[Learn More](#)

[Create an Account](#)

[Have an Account? Log in!](#)

**Time for a refill?**  
It's easy to submit your request online, anytime.  
[Refill a prescription](#)



**Get Cooking**  
Find thousands of new ways to satisfy your hunger.  
[View recipes](#)



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**From:** <http://www.heb.com/whats-in-store/texas-life-magazine.jsp>

[illegible]

**My** **H-E-B** **TexasLife**  
monthly savings and fresh ideas | october 2010

**FREE**

**BOO!**

**TRICK OR TREAT**  
**LOW PRICES ARE SWEET!**

**Example of floor signage: Flip video cameras**

*From: [http://www.avovision.com/portnoy/images/2009/november/adSaturation\\_2.jpg](http://www.avovision.com/portnoy/images/2009/november/adSaturation_2.jpg)*



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