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## Health clinic may be on aisle 9

### MedBasics to set up sites in Price Chopper, Hen House Market stores beginning this summer.

By JULIUS A. KARASH  
The Kansas City Star

More retail health clinics are coming to the Kansas City area.

Irving, Texas-based **MedBasics** said Wednesday that it had reached an agreement with **Ball's Food Stores** to open about 15 clinics in **Price Chopper** and **Hen House Market** stores, beginning late this summer.

"Our partnership with MedBasics will offer Price Chopper and Hen House Market customers a convenient and affordable way to access high-quality basic health care," Mike Beal, chief financial officer of Ball's Food, said in a news release. "We expect the in-store clinics to provide a much-needed service to our customers, and to be a great overall benefit to Ball's Food Stores."

Ball's owns area Hen House stores and certain Price Chopper stores.

MedBasics, a year-old company, operates two clinics in Dallas stores owned by **Minyard Food Stores Inc.**

MedBasics plans to open 25 clinics in Minyard stores in the next three years. It also projects operating 500 clinics by 2010.

The clinics are staffed by nurse practitioners and physician's assistants and offer services such as physical exams, immunizations, flu shots and treatment of common illnesses such as ear infections and strep throats. Patients are seen without appointments, and most services cost \$49, MedBasics said.

Similar clinics already operate in some area **Walgreen Co.** and **CVS** drug stores.

Walgreen on Wednesday said it had completed an acquisition of **Take Care Health Systems**, which manages clinics in Walgreen stores in the Kansas City area and several other cities. CVS bought in-store clinic operator **MinuteClinic** in 2006.

**Wal-Mart Stores Inc.** recently said it plans to open as many as 400 in-store clinics in the next two to three years.

Many patients are drawn to such clinics by their convenient locations and hours, and the fact that they are seen without an appointment. Stores hope the clinics will boost their sales.

However, some doctors and physician organizations have concerns about quality and continuity of care when patients use such clinics instead of visiting a doctor's office.

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