

Emergency Care

Quick-Facts

May 2021

A medical emergency is an injury, illness, or symptom so severe that a prudent layperson reasonably believes that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health.



In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

- Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency room.
- The St. Cloud VA does not have an emergency department, acute medical care services, or after-hours outpatient services at any of our locations.
- To facilitate treatment and claims payment, emergency care episodes must be reported to VA within 72 hours of receiving emergency care. Veterans and family members should remind community hospitals and providers to report emergency visits to VA using the VA Community Care portal at <https://emergencycarereporting.communitycare.va.gov/#/request> or by phone at **1-844-72HRVHA** or **(844-724-7842)**. Reporting emergency admissions helps your VA team arrange additional care or transfer to a VA facility.
- VHA clinical staff are not trained to answer questions concerning payment and billing issues—their mission is your health.

VA payment authority for emergency care is normally limited to the point-of-stabilization only. VA authorization is required to engage in any additional treatment at community hospitals.

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Emergency Care Claims

- Claims for emergency medical care should be submitted to VA as soon as possible after care has been provided. The deadline for filing a claim depends on whether care was provided for a service-connected condition (2 years) or a nonservice-connected condition (90 days).
- In most cases, providers will submit a claim directly to VA or to the Third party Administrator-Optum Health Service, and the Veteran will not have to take further action.
- Veterans or personal representatives may file a claim for reimbursement of emergency treatment costs that they have incurred and paid to the provider.
- For emergency care claims assistance, Veterans can call 877- 881-7618.

Billing and payment

- VA has specific legal authorities to purchase emergency care. VA can pay for care an eligible Veteran received from a community emergency department in certain circumstances and under specific conditions.
- Once a claim for emergency treatment is received by VA, the claim will be administratively reviewed to determine Veteran eligibility. If the Veteran meets the administrative eligibility criteria to receive emergency care in the community, the treatment documentation will then be reviewed by VA clinical staff to determine if the treatment received meets the clinical criteria necessary for VA to pay for the care.

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