Emergency Care in Non-VA Facilities

At some time in your life, you may need emergency care. This document explains what the VA might be able to do for you if you need emergency care. When it is not possible for you to go to a VA medical center, you should go to the nearest hospital that has an emergency room. If you are in an ambulance, the paramedics will usually take you to the closest emergency room. Here is what you should know...

What is an emergency?
A medical emergency is when you have an injury or illness that is so severe that without immediate treatment, the injury or illness threatens your health or life.

How do I know my situation is an emergency?
Use your best judgment. If you believe your health or life is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

If I believe my life or health is in danger, do I need to call the VA before I call for an ambulance or go into an emergency room?
No. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

Do I need to notify the VA after an ambulance takes me to an emergency room, or when I am treated and released?
Yes. You, your family, friends or hospital staff should contact the nearest VA medical center as soon as possible — preferably within 72 hours, so you are better aware of services the VA may limit payment for. Provide the VA with information about your emergency event and services being provided to you. Ask the VA for guidance on how they will consider reimbursing these emergency charges on your behalf, so you can plan accordingly.

If the doctor then wants to admit me to the hospital, must I obtain advance approval from the VA?
- If the admission is an emergency–NO, although prompt notification of the VA is necessary.
- If the admission is not an emergency–YES.

If a VA bed is available and I can be safely transferred, do I have to move to the VA hospital?
Yes. If you refuse to be transferred, the VA will not pay for any further care.

If I am admitted to the hospital as a result of an emergency, how much will VA pay?
This depends on your VA eligibility. The VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges . Ask your local VA medical center's eligibility staff about what is allowed under non-VA emergency care programs:
- For service-connected conditions
- For non-service-connected conditions

Will I have to pay for any part of my emergency care?
It is possible. Sometimes co-pays are required based on your VA enrollment. Sometimes the extent of healthcare services reimbursable by the VA are limited by federal law.

Will VA pay for the ambulance and any possible emergency room charges if I leave the emergency room before being treated by a doctor?
Possibly not. If you leave the emergency room prior to being treated by a physician, the VA may not consider claims for that emergency event. You may be liable for some or all resulting ambulance and emergency room charges, regardless of your Veteran eligibility.

Does my enrollment in the VA Health Care System affect my eligibility for emergency care at VA expense?
Yes. Your local VA medical center's eligibility staff can explain how enrollment (or other special status categories) affect your eligibility .

If I have other insurance (TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, etc.), will it affect whether claims for emergency services will be paid at VA expense?
Yes, it may. Your local VA medical center's eligibility staff can explain how other insurance can affect whether the VA can pay for your non-VA medical claims.

Will VA pay for emergency care if I am in jail?
No. The VA is prohibited, by federal law, from paying for the medical claims of incarcerated veterans (or fugitive felons).

How long do I have to file a claim for reimbursement for emergency medical care?
File your claim with the nearest VA medical center quickly. Time limits of 90-days usually apply. Contact your local VA medical center's eligibility staff for more information on the timely filing requirements for non-VA care programs.

Will VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States?
Yes in certain cases. VA will only pay for emergency care outside the US if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. For more information, contact the VA Health Administration Center at (877) 345-8179 or consult this web site **http://www4.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/fmp/fmp.asp**

Non-VA Emergency Care The right care... At the right time... At the right place...

Know your options ahead of time in case an emergency arises. See your VA Medical Center about your eligibility today!

Please be sure the Erie VA is notified when you present to a community Emergency Department or are admitted to a community hospital. You can call one of the following numbers:

Erie VA Call Center	888-860-2124	24 hours/day
Erie VA Fee Basis	814-860-2800	8 am - 4:30 pm

After 4:30pm, you can also call 814-868-8661 and ask for the Medical Administration Assistant (MAA).