

## VA News 6/8/2018

May 25 marked a momentous occasion for the Veterans Crisis Line as VA officially cut the ribbon at its new satellite call center in Topeka, Kansas. With nearly 60 call responders, social service assistants, and support staff, the center joins the VA facilities in Atlanta and Canandaigua, New York, that offer support for Veterans, service members and their family members during times of crisis.

“The new Veterans Crisis Line facility in Topeka represents a positive step forward for VA, one that will increase our capacity to provide 24/7 suicide prevention referrals and support,” said Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd, VA deputy chief of staff. “Suicide prevention is VA’s top mental health priority, and the work being done at the Veterans Crisis Line is a vital part of our care for our nation’s Veterans. By adding the Topeka call center, we’ll be able to support the expansion of the Press 7 to directly connect to VCL, now available on all VA medical center initial phone messaging and over 700 Community Based Outpatient Clinics to assist more Veterans each day.”

Beyond providing support at the point of crisis, the Veterans Crisis Line plays a critical role in connecting Veterans with suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs). SPCs engage Veterans and their communities to raise awareness about the mental health and suicide prevention resources provided by VA and community-based providers. SPCs also can work directly with Veterans in crisis to help them access the information and support they need to get through a difficult time.

Since its launch in 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has:

- Answered more than 3.3 million calls, nearly 395,000 chats, and more than 92,000 texts.
- Dispatched emergency services to callers in crisis more than 93,000 times.
- Forwarded more than 478,000 referrals to local SPCs.

VA is committed to providing the support that our nation’s Veterans have earned. Call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text to **838255**, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net) for help. More than 500 responders are ready to answer calls.

**The Veterans Legacy Program:** The Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) is NCA's (National Cemetery Administration) educational outreach initiative. Our mission is to memorialize our nation's Veterans through sharing their stories of service and sacrifice.

We partner with universities, schools, teachers, professors, and students of all levels to research Veterans interred in NCA cemeteries and how they contributed to their country as servicemembers, and how they contributed to their community as Veterans. <https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>

**Emergency medical care for Veterans: eligibility and VA payments:** During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest medical facility. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger. If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department (ED) right away. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an ED. During a medical emergency, VA encourages all Veterans to seek immediate medical attention without delay. A claim for emergency care will never be denied based solely on VA not receiving notification prior to seeking care.

In general, VA can pay for emergency medical care at a local ER for a Veteran’s service-connected condition, or if the care is *related* to a Veteran’s service-connected condition. VA can also pay for emergency medical care for a Veteran’s non-service connected condition.

However, there are specific requirements in federal law and regulation that detail the conditions for eligibility for both service-connected and non-service connected conditions.

- [Fact Sheet: Emergency Medical Care](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Emergency Transportation \(Ambulance\)](#)

Eligibility requirements notwithstanding, Veterans should always seek care at the nearest medical facility during a medical emergency, and never delay emergency medical care.

## Filing a Claim

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 or a nonservice-connected condition. The charts below describe the requirements, how to file a claim, and payment rates.

*Requirements for filing an emergency care claim*

### Filing a Claim

| Veterans/Veterans' Representatives  | Providers  |
|---|--|
| <p>Veterans or their personal representatives may file a claim for reimbursement of emergency treatment costs that they have incurred and paid to the provider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In this situation, Veterans should obtain and submit all related treatment and billing records to the closest VA medical facility.</li><li>• In most cases, providers will submit a claim directly to VA, and the Veteran will not have to take further action.</li></ul> | <p>Submit claims for services not preauthorized by VA to the VA medical facility closest to where the emergent treatment was provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submission must include a standard billing form (such as a CMS 1450 or CMS 1500), containing false claims notice.</li><li>• Submit claims via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transaction (such as an 837I or 837P).</li><li>• Documentation related to the medical care may be required prior to claim processing.</li></ul> |

*Filing deadlines for emergency care claims*

## Claim Filing Deadlines

| Service-Connected Condition   | Nonservice-Connected Condition   |
|---|--|
| Claims must be submitted to VA within two (2) years of the date emergency medical care was received. However, filing the claim as soon as possible after care has been provided is highly recommended because it helps ensure that all required documentation is readily available and that providers receive their payment in a timely manner. | Claims must be submitted to VA within 90 days of the date of discharge, or 90 days from the date that all attempts to receive required payments from a liable third party are completed and not successful in eliminating the Veteran's personal liability to the provider. A liable third party includes other health insurers, worker's compensation, civil litigation, etc. |

*Payment rates for emergency care claims*

## Payment Rates

| Service-Connected Condition    | Nonservice-Connected Condition |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Generally, 100% Medicare rates | Generally, 70% Medicare rates  |

## Receiving Payment from VA

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. VA makes every effort to adjudicate claims for emergency treatment quickly and accurately. When further information or clarification is needed by VA, claims processing may be delayed.

If a Veteran is charged for emergency care received in the community and believes the charges should be covered by VA, they should contact the nearest VA medical facility as soon as possible. VA staff will assist the Veteran in understanding eligibility and in determining whether the bill received is appropriate. VA will assist the Veteran and work to resolve any billing issues with the community provider.

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## After Receiving Care

Once a Veteran's immediate emergency medical care needs have been addressed, the Veteran, a family member, friend, or hospital staff member should contact the nearest VA medical facility within 72 hours. Once notified, VA staff will assist the Veteran and/or his/her representatives in understanding eligibility and how eligibility relates to services rendered in the community. VA staff will also ensure that, if desired, the Veteran is transferred to a VA medical center upon stabilization and that the Veteran is set up to receive additional care, post discharge, without interruption.

**IMPORTANT:** When a Veteran receives emergency medical care, notifying VA as quickly as possible is always best. It ensures maximum VA coverage and assists the VA in providing the Veteran with the care they need.