

Medication Process

Quick Reference Guide – All Regions

Key Points:

- ➔ Under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Care programs, providers may prescribe medications to Veterans in various ways, depending on the reason and urgency.
- ➔ All medications must be prescribed in accordance with the [VA National Formulary](#), and medications prescribed during an urgent care or retail location visit must be prescribed in accordance with the [VA Urgent Care Formulary](#). If the urgent medication is not listed, the provider may use the VA National Formulary.
- ➔ Always fax **both the authorization and prescription** to the [authorizing VA Medical Center \(VAMC\)](#) for routine medication prescribed during a pre-authorized visit. If the Veteran prefers to take his or her prescription to the pharmacy, he or she will also need to bring the authorization.
- ➔ As per U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) policies, some controlled substances will require the Veteran bring a hard copy of the prescription to the overseeing VAMC.

To ensure Veterans do not incur medication costs, please review the information below.

Medication Prescribed During Pre-Authorized Visits

If a Veteran attends a pre-authorized appointment at a provider's office, VA allows the provider to write a prescription for the Veteran. In these cases, VA is primarily responsible for fulfilling and supplying Veterans with medications. Providers should follow the rules of the [VA National Formulary](#) and adhere to the general process below:

- ➔ Medications may be filled in-person at a VA Pharmacy.
- ➔ Community providers should always fax **both the authorization and prescription** to the [authorizing VA Medical Center \(VAMC\)](#). If the Veteran prefers to take his or her prescription to the VA Pharmacy, he or she will also need to bring a copy of the community care authorization.
- ➔ If the Veteran needs a medication that's not on VA's National Formulary, the provider should:
 - ➔ Contact the local VAMC and request assistance with that VAMC's non-formulary request process.
 - ➔ Fill out the VAMC's form and return it.

- Wait for approval or denial. Turnaround time may take approximately 96 hours. If approved, providers may proceed with prescribing the medication.
- We strongly recommend providers do not give samples to Veterans. This practice has caused problems for Veterans receiving VAMC-approved medications.

If Medication is Needed Immediately

If a Veteran needs medication fulfilled immediately after a pre-authorized or emergency room visit and cannot wait for, or travel to, a VA Pharmacy, providers should follow this process below:

- Write a prescription for a 14-day supply without refills.
- The Veteran may fulfill the 14-day supply of medication at any local pharmacy and pay out-of-pocket, then contact the VAMC for reimbursement.
- If additional medication is needed after the 14-day supply, write a second prescription to be filled at a VA Pharmacy.
- If the prescription is for a non-formulary drug, the provider may write an initial 14-day supply. However, if the medication needs to be continued, the provider needs to contact its local VAMC and fill out a Formulary Request Review Form, as outlined above. The use of the 14-day supply of a non-formulary medication will not affect the likelihood of approval of a non-formulary request.

Medication Prescribed During Urgent Care/Retail Location Visits

Under the new Urgent Care/Retail Location benefit as a part of the VA MISSION Act, network urgent care or retail clinics may treat eligible Veterans without a prior authorization. In these cases, urgent care or retail clinics may prescribe medication under the following conditions:

- The prescription is no more than a 14-day supply **without refills**.
- If prescribing opiates, the prescription is no more than a seven-day supply and adheres to state law.
- All medications must be prescribed in accordance with the [VA Urgent Care Formulary](#). If the medication is not listed, the provider may use the [VA National Formulary](#).
- Veterans may fulfill the medication at any Express Scripts network pharmacy without having to pay out-of-pocket. Express Scripts network pharmacies can be found here: www.vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com.

NOTE: Urgent care and retail location clinics must be in-network with TriWest in order to accept Veterans under this benefit. Pharmacies must be in-network with Express Scripts to dispense medications under this benefit. For more on the Urgent Care benefit, please review the [Emergency and Urgent Care Quick Reference Guide](#).