

# Pharmacy Process

## Quick Reference Guide for VA CCN Providers

### Key Points

- Routine prescriptions require an approved referral with an authorized community care provider. VA handles all routine medication fulfillments directly. Prescribe the medicine in accordance with [VA National Formulary](#).
- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will cover medically necessary urgent/emergent medication as part of a Community Care Network authorized episode of care. Urgent/emergent medication must be on the [Urgent/Emergent Formulary](#).
- As per U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) policies, providers are encouraged to obtain a waiver directly from the state to write for controlled substances. Some controlled substances require the Veteran to bring a hard copy of the prescription to the overseeing VA medical facility.
- Veterans **do not** pay a copayment.
- Real-time pharmacy dispensing will be available on the Availity Portal in the TriWest CCN Payer Space.
- Processes differ slightly between Urgent and Referred Care for medications and vaccines.
- **Urgent care providers** must call TriWest at 833-4VETNOW (833-483-8669) to confirm Veteran eligibility and activate the pharmacy benefit for the medication to be approved for fulfillment.

### Routine Prescriptions

Prescriptions written must be related to an approved referral with an authorized community care provider. VA handles all routine medication fulfillments directly. To prescribe routine, non-urgent/non-emergent medicine:

- Prescribe the medicine in accordance with VA's National Formulary.
- The Veteran may pick up the medicine at the VA pharmacy or have it mailed from the VA pharmacy to their home address.
- Fax both the prescription and a copy of the approved referral/authorization to your local VA Pharmacy for processing and fulfillment **within one hour of seeing the Veteran**.
- If the Veteran prefers to take the prescription to the VA pharmacy, they must also bring the approved referral/authorization.
- You may **not** dispense medication samples to Veterans.



You must be registered with your state's prescription monitoring program.

If the Veteran needs a medication that is **not** on VA's National Formulary (i.e., non-formulary or prior authorization required), take these steps before prescribing:

- Use the [VA Formulary Search Tool](#) to identify formulary alternatives to non-formulary drugs in the same VA drug class.
- If unable to identify a formulary alternative or if prior authorization is required, contact the VAMC listed on the referral and ask for a Formulary Request Review Form.
- Complete the form, including justification or required medical records, and return it to the VAMC immediately.
- VA will either approve or deny your request.
- If approved, continue prescribing the medication as described above.

## What to Include in Routine Prescriptions

VA requires that prescribing providers under CCN include the following information for each routine/maintenance prescription for fulfillment:

1. Provider Name (Family, Given, Middle Suffix) Provider Name Suffix (e.g., Sr., Jr., II., III.)
2. National Provider Identifier (NPI) of the Provider
3. Tax ID Number (TIN) of the Provider
4. Provider's personal DEA Number and expiration date (not a generic facility number)
5. Provider's office address
6. Provider's office phone and additional phone number
7. Provider's fax number (if applicable)
8. Provider's discipline (e.g., physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner)

## Urgent/Emergent Medicine

- When there is an urgent/emergent need to start a medication and it is not possible to fill the prescription at a VA Pharmacy, the provider may write a prescription for up to a maximum 14-day supply (without refills) or a maximum of 7-day supply for controlled substances.
- No refills, must be a new prescription.
- Send the prescription and a copy of the [TriWest Billing Information](#) to an ESI retail pharmacy, preferably through the [Surescripts e-Prescribing tool](#).
  - For **Urgent Care/Walk-In**, medications do NOT require an approved referral/authorization.
- When it is medically necessary to continue the medicine beyond the initial 14-day supply, write a second prescription and fax it to the VA's authorizing facility pharmacy **within one hour** of seeing the Veteran.
- CCN providers must check with their state's prescription monitoring program for any controlled substance utilization prior to writing any controlled substance prescription for a Veteran to ensure appropriate opioid/controlled substance use.

Veterans who consent to participate in Human Subject Research studies and are enrolled in clinical trials **CANNOT** be authorized for those services under CCN. Veterans must be referred to their respective Community Care Office for the administration and coordination of non-VA care associated with clinical trials.

## Vaccines

### Vaccines – Urgent Care

When **urgent care-eligible Veterans** are seen in the community at a **CCN Urgent Care/Walk-In provider**, they may obtain the following vaccines at an ESI in-network community pharmacy **without a referral** and for the sole purpose of receiving the vaccine:

- Flu
- COVID-19

### Vaccines – Authorized Medical Care

Veterans may receive a flu or COVID19 vaccine as part of an authorized care visit with any in-network provider. All authorized care visits require an approved authorization/referral.

When Veterans are seen in the community as part of an authorized care visit with any in-network provider, they can obtain other VA-directed vaccines at an ESI community pharmacy:

- Shingles
- T-Dap
- Pneumonia
- RSV