



Prescribing Medications for Veterans

Key Points

- CVS Caremark is the pharmacy benefits manager (PBM) for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Care Network (CCN).
- VA CCN retail pharmacies include CVS locations with other partner pharmacies.
- Veterans can only fill **urgent or emergent** prescriptions written by a VA CCN participating provider at a VA CCN retail pharmacy. These prescriptions can be for up to a 14-day supply (opioids maybe filled for up to a seven-day supply or state limit, whichever is less) with no refills.
- For VA to cover an urgent or emergent prescription filled at a VA CCN retail pharmacy, VA must have issued an approved referral for the Veteran.
- VA CCN providers must submit all routine maintenance prescriptions, and urgent or emergent prescriptions for more than a 14-day supply, directly to a VA medical facility pharmacy.
- The VA national formulary is available at pbm.va.gov > VA National Formulary > Formulary Search. The website includes preferred medications for Veterans and prior authorization requirements.
- VA prohibits VA CCN providers from dispensing pharmaceutical samples to Veterans.
- VA prohibits VA CCN providers from prescribing topical compound drugs as urgent or emergent.

Prescribing Controlled Substances

Prior to prescribing controlled substances for a Veteran, VA requires providers to check their state's prescription-monitoring program to see if the Veteran has been prescribed other controlled substances. This can help providers and Veterans ensure appropriate use of controlled substances.

Formularies: Finding VA's Preferred Medications

- VA Urgent/Emergent Formulary is available at provider.vacommunitycare.com > Formulary and Pharmacy Search.
- When prescribing for an urgent or emergent need, VA CCN providers must use the Urgent/Emergent Formulary.
- The VA National Formulary is available at pbm.va.gov > VA National Formulary > Formulary Documents.
- When prescribing routine or maintenance medication, VA CCN providers must use the National Formulary.
- The VA [formulary search tool](#) provides formulary alternatives to non-formulary drugs in the same VA drug class.
- Additional information about VA's formularies and how to request non-formulary medications, including VA National Formulary Frequently Asked Questions, is at pbm.va.gov > VA National Formulary > Formulary Documents.

Urgent or Emergent Prescriptions

Providers can write an urgent or emergent prescription to be filled at a VA CCN retail pharmacy for up to a 14-day supply without refills. Opioids may be filled up to a seven-day supply or to state limits, whichever is less. When it is determined to be medically appropriate, a second prescription for opioids may be filled at a VA CCN retail pharmacy for up to a seven-day supply or state limits, whichever is less (up to a 14-day total supply). Buprenorphine may be filled for an initial 14-day supply and will allow for a second fill of up to a 14-day supply within 30 days (up to a 28-day total supply). With the exception of urgent care, the prescription must be associated with an approved referral.

When urgent or emergent prescriptions are clinically needed for continued or maintenance treatment beyond the initial urgent or emergent 14-day supply, VA CCN providers must generate a second prescription for the additional days' supply. Providers should submit the second prescription to the referring VA medical facility's pharmacy by electronic prescribing or fax. To obtain a pharmacy fax number, contact the community care representative at the referring VA medical facility.

Urgent or emergent prescriptions for the same drug and strength within 30 days of the original 14-day prescription will not be eligible at a VA CCN retail pharmacy with the exception of one-time continuation of pain or antibiotic therapy. Following the dispensing of the second 14-day



supply by VA CCN retail pharmacy, subsequent prescriptions for the same therapy will be required to be filled at the local VA pharmacy.

Topical compounded medications are not considered urgent or emergent and should be submitted to the referring VA medical facility's pharmacy.

If there is not an approved referral for emergent care, the Veteran will have to pay out-of-pocket for the prescription filled at a CCN retail pharmacy. The prescribing provider must inform the Veteran of their option to contact the VA Office of Community Care to be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Routine Prescriptions

If a VA CCN provider is prescribing **routine or maintenance** medication to a Veteran, the VA CCN provider must use the VA National Formulary. The prescription must be submitted to the referring VA medical facility's pharmacy using secure fax or electronic prescribing. Please include the following information:

Veteran Information

- Veteran's full name
- Date of birth
- Integration control number (ICN) or Social Security number (SSN)

Prescriber Information

- Provider name (Last, First, Middle); Suffix (e.g., Sr., Jr., II, III.)
- National Provider Identifier (NPI) number
- Tax ID number (TIN)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Number and expiration date (not a generic facility number)
- Office address
- Office phone and additional phone number
- Fax number (if applicable)
- Discipline (e.g., physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, etc.)

Using the Online VA National Formulary Search

- Go to pbm.va.gov > VA National Formulary > Formulary Search.
- Type the name of the medication and click "Search."

This is an example of a medication listed on the National Formulary:

[Return to previous screen](#)

[New Search](#)

VA Generic Name	Dosage Form	Listed on VA Formulary?	VA Drug Class Click below to display other drugs in the same VA Drug Class	
CLOPIDOGREL	TAB	Yes	BL117	Criteria for Use

Figure 1: Example of a Medication Listed on the National Formulary

Information on the Online VA National Formulary Search

Dosage Form: How the medication is administered

Listed on VA Formulary?:

Yes, this medication is preferred and on VA Formulary.

No, this medication is not preferred and not on the formulary.

VA Drug Class: Click on the link to see other medications in the same drug class.

Criteria for Use (CFU) will only appear if the medication requires prior authorization.

Prior Authorizations

Routine or Maintenance Medications

A VA CCN provider must submit supporting medical documentation with the prescription to VA pharmacy for review. The referring VA medical facility pharmacy will determine if the prior authorization drug request (PADR) is approved and dispense the medication as appropriate. VA CCN providers can submit a PADR using electronic prescribing or fax to VA pharmacy.

Urgent or Emergent Medications

The VA CCN provider must submit supporting medical documentation and an urgent or emergent prescription to the VA CCN retail pharmacy. The VA CCN retail pharmacy, through the PBM, will review and determine if the PADR is approved. If it's approved, the retail pharmacy will dispense the medication as appropriate. VA CCN providers can submit a PADR using electronic prescribing or faxing to CVS Caremark at 888-836-0730. If VA CCN providers have questions regarding the PADR submission, call 855-297-2026.

Influenza (Flu) Vaccine

Flu vaccinations do not require a referral or copayment at a VA CCN retail pharmacy that offers flu vaccinations in accordance with:

- VA vaccination recommendations at publichealth.va.gov > Health and Wellness > Vaccines and Immunizations
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) immunization protocols at cdc.gov/vaccines

Veterans who are seeing a VA CCN provider with an approved referral may request a flu vaccination at no charge during the referred visit. Flu vaccines are eligible for reimbursement



according to the VA CCN provider's amendment and payment appendix with any approved referral.

Urgent care eligible Veterans may also receive a flu vaccination at a CCN urgent care facility. Additional information on urgent care benefits is available at provider.vacommunitycare.com > Training & Guides: [Urgent Care Benefits](#).

A VA CCN retail pharmacy administering the flu vaccine must verify the Veteran's eligibility before delivering a flu vaccination. Veterans are required to present a valid identification with full name and a photograph to verify eligibility and identity. The identification may be in the form of a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC); federal issued identification (e.g., passport), or state issued identification (e.g. driver's license).

All other vaccinations provided by a VA CCN provider or retail pharmacy require an approved referral.