



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Central Iowa Health Care System  
3600 30th Street  
Des Moines IA 50310-5885

July 22, 2010

In Reply Refer To: 636A6/11

Central Iowa EMS Directors:

**Knoxville Division:**  
1515 West Pleasant Street  
Knoxville IA 50138-3399

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the capabilities of the emergency services available at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System (VACIHCS).

**VA Clinic-Mason City**  
520 S. Pierce, Suite 150  
Mason City IA 50401-1525

VA will accept all veterans for treatment at this facility. **The emergency room is open and staffed with a board certified physician at all times, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, including holidays.** VACIHCS is equipped to care for a wide range of medical and surgical problems, including patients on a backboard or with a C-collar, and acute strokes.

**VA Clinic-Ft. Dodge**  
2419 Second Ave N  
Ft. Dodge IA 50501-5742

**There are two instances when the initial evaluation of the veteran should take place at a designated trauma center/tertiary care facility, instead of the VACIHCS. They are:**

- 1) **Major trauma patient** with an Out of Hospital Trauma Triage Destination Decision Protocol that suggests transport to a Level 1 or Level 2 facility. Patients meeting this criterion should be transported directly to a trauma facility.
- 2) **Probable MI with ST segment elevation per EKG.** If a veteran has typical signs and symptoms of an acute MI, then we would recommend that the veteran be taken directly to a facility with immediate interventional cath lab capability. However, if a veteran has chest pain, but there is doubt as to the diagnosis (atypical chest pain, absence of dyspnea, nausea, or diaphoresis and/or a nondiagnostic or negative EKG) we recommend that the veteran be transported to VACIHCS for evaluation.

Please note: we are not equipped to provide obstetrical or pediatric care.

Please contact VA Central Iowa Health Care System in Des Moines for questions regarding our ER capabilities and/or the transportation of a veteran patient to VACIHCS, by calling (515) 699-5507, and requesting to speak with the ER physician.

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you to provide the best service and medical care to veterans.

Sincerely,

FREDRICK BAHLS, M.D., Ph.D.  
Chief of Staff