



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
CENTRAL IOWA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
3600 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50310

VA Clinic-Mason City  
520 S. Pierce  
Mason City, IA 50401

VA Clinic-Ft. Dodge  
2419 Second Ave N  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

VA Clinic-Knoxville  
1515 West Pleasant Street  
Knoxville, IA 50138

VA Clinic-Marshalldown  
101 Iowa Ave W  
Marshalltown, IA 50158

VA Clinic-Carroll  
311 S. Clark St.  
Carroll, IA 51401

April 17, 2014

In Reply Refer to: 636A6/11

Central Iowa EMS Directors:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the capabilities of emergency services available at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System (VACIHCS). VA will accept all Veterans for treatment at this facility. The emergency department 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.

There are three 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:

*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.

*Probable MI with ST segment elevation per EKG.* If a Veteran has typical signs and symptoms of an acute MI or is in cardiac arrest, we 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, diaphoresis and/or a nondiagnostic or negative EKG) we recommend that the Veteran be transported to VACIHCS for evaluation.

*Probable acute stroke.* If a Veteran has signs and symptoms consistent with acute stroke we recommend that the Veteran be taken to a designated stroke center.

**Please note:** During community emergencies the VA will assist and furnish hospital care or medical services to non-VA beneficiaries as a humanitarian service. In a community mass casualty incident the VA is capable of accepting patients triaged as "yellow" or "green".

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) 699-5848, and requesting to speak with the ER physician.

2.

Central Iowa EMS Directors

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fredrick Bahls". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

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