

The Veterans' Comprehensive Prevention, Access To Care, And Treatment Act Of 2020 (or Veterans' COMPACT Act) provides emergency suicide crisis care for eligible individuals including all enrolled Veterans, covered Veterans not yet enrolled and Veterans and Patients ineligible for enrollment but meet Other Than Honorable (OTH) requirements including Veterans who are eligible for care as well as those who are otherwise ineligible for health benefits, but present for emergent suicide care at VA facilities and authorized non-VA facilities.



Who is Eligible?

- Former members of the armed forces, including reserve service members who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, or
- Former members of the armed forces who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

The following characters of discharge require adjudication:

- Other than Honorable (OTH)
- Bad Conduct Special Court-Martial (Other)
- Uncharacterized (Dropped from Rolls)
- Uncharacterized (Fraudulent/Void Enlistment or Induction)
- Undesirable
- Dishonorable for VA Purposes (DVA) without 12C or 12D (with or without Chapter 17) indicated

Important:

- All of these characters of discharge require adjudication, regardless of time in service.
- Once a Veterans character of discharge is adjudicated, they are no longer eligible unless adjudicated Honorable for VA Purposes (HVA) and meet the minimum duty requirements.
- For more information, refer to KM article - [Character of Discharge Types](#).



Who is Not Eligible?

Veterans in a **Not Eligible** enrollment status or meet one of the not eligible reasons are not eligible for COMPACT. The Not Eligible reasons are as follows:

- **ACDUTRA ONLY**
- **Bad Conduct General Court Martial**
- **Dishonorable Discharge**
- **DVA 12D w/Ch 17, Seen for SC/MST**
- **DVA 12D w/o Chapter 17**
- **DVA 12C**
- **Fugitive Felon Program (FFP)**
- **Less Than 24 Months**
- **Not Eligible, Refused to Pay Copay**



COMPACT Act, Section 201 BLUF



Section 201 of [COMPACT Act](#) states VA will provide, pay for and reimburse for emergent suicide care for eligible individuals at VA medical facilities and at non-Department facilities.



Eligible individuals include all Veterans regardless of eligibility for VHA health care benefits (includes OTH discharges).



Emergent suicide care includes inpatient or crisis residential care for no more than 30 days and/or outpatient medical and mental healthcare for no more than 90 days. If the individual remains in acute suicidal crisis, extensions may be provided. Each **new** crisis is a new episode of eligibility.



VA will ensure eligible Veterans are not financially responsible for costs associated with emergent suicide care, including emergency transportation.

COMPACT Act, Section 201 Impact:

- VA providing cost-free mental health and medical emergent suicide care removes the cost barrier
- By extending eligibility and access to acute and follow up suicide care, the net of protection VA will provide to prevent suicide increases dramatically
- **COMPACT 201 benefit potentially increases eligibility to an additional 9 million unenrolled Veterans, potentially doubling the needed services**



VA Process Changes – What is Changing?



While clinical interventions and care protocols have not changed for acute suicidal crisis episodes of care, the **provider needs to properly document when the individual is eligible** for COMPACT Act care to **ensure such care is covered at no cost**.



Clinical documentation for visits and consults to care will **require COMPACT specific IVC consults** and/or indicators to identify care as related to COMPACT eligible event.



The COMPACT Act creates a **new benefit for the provision of, payment for, and reimbursement for emergent suicide care**. This benefit will be available to certain individuals who would not have previously been eligible to receive these services from VA.



Eligible individuals will receive **emergent suicide care at no cost**.



Revenue Operations Staff will review patient encounters and claims to ensure **Veterans are not billed for any VA copayments** for emergent suicide care.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is available?

- Up to 30 days of inpatient or crisis residential care related to the acute suicide crisis (this period can be extended if deemed clinically necessary).
- Up to 90 days of outpatient care related to the acute suicide crisis, which includes both medical and mental health care (this period can be extended if deemed clinically necessary).
- Prescription medications that are related to your acute suicide crisis
- Emergency transportation (i.e. ambulance and air ambulance) required to receive Emergent suicide care.
- Emergent suicide care and associated emergency transportation must be provided at no cost—there will not be copayments or bills for eligible individuals.
- VA will determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits if individuals receiving Emergent suicide care are not enrolled or registered with VA.
- VA will refer eligible individuals for appropriate services for which they are otherwise eligible, including social work.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Can they also receive emergent suicide care in the community or must they receive all COMPACT eligible care at a VA facility?

They may receive emergent suicide care at a VA or non-VA facility. VA can assist with coordinating their care to ensure their care plan is comprehensive and delivers the care they need when they need it.

What do they do if they receive a bill for emergent suicide care?

VA strives to ensure they are not billed for care related to an acute suicide crisis, to eliminate any additional stress during your time of need. If they receive a bill for COMPACT related care, please direct them to the patient advocate at your local VA facility to facilitate a clinical review with appropriate provider. Alternatively, they can contact the number on their bill to initiate this process.

What happens to the bill while it is under review?

Part of the billing inquiry related to emergent suicide care includes COMPACT specific processes. If collection activity has already begun prior to notification, it may continue – it is **imperative** that they notify the patient advocate or call the number on the bill promptly to avoid collection activity.

How will they know the result of their billing review?

They will be contacted by either revenue staff at their facility or their provider.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I do not agree with clinical or eligibility decisions related to emergent suicide care?

VA has a well-established appeal process for both clinical and administrative appeals. The best way to initiate these processes is through the local VA facility patient advocate.

What happens if an eligible individual has an additional suicidal crisis?

A new, and separate, 30/90-day period for providing medical and mental health care begins with each acute suicidal crisis. The new crisis does not affect the period of care for previous acute suicide crises.

What happens if an eligible individual continues to require care associated with the crisis beyond the 30 or 90 days?

Either period of care (inpatient or outpatient) can be extended by VA, if they determine that the eligible individual continues to require care to address the effects of the acute suicidal crisis. Where clinically necessary, the treating provider has the authority to initiate one extension per episode of care for a period of up to 30 days. If an eligible individual requires additional extensions for the episode of care, the extension must be authorized by the local VAMC Chief of Staff.

How can a provider prepare for transition of an individual who is eligible for COMPACT care but not eligible for VA health care?

During the COMPACT episode of care, providers should include care management and social work in care plans to ensure transition planning is complete and thorough. In the community, transition discussions with community providers is current practice.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What if an eligible individual wants to receive Emergent suicide care in the community?

COMPACT Act allows eligible individuals to receive Emergent suicide care in the facility of their choice regardless of their eligibility for such services under the Veterans Community Care Program. Eligible individuals can receive all or part of their care in the community for a maximum of 30 days inpatient or residential and 90 days outpatient.

Are social services provided for a homeless COMPACT eligible individual?

VA recognizes homelessness as a risk factor for suicide; as such, the Emergent suicide care provided to eligible individuals will include those services intended to decrease risk of future crises, including consultation with social work.

Can a Veterans or eligible individual appeal decisions regarding COMPACT care?

Clinical and administrative appeals by the Veteran or eligible individual will follow policy outlined in Directive 1041 (Appeal of Veterans Health Administration Clinical Decisions).

- To decrease burden for high-risk individuals, please refer individuals to the facility patient advocate. A process has been developed with the Office of Patient Advocacy, specific to appeals related to COMPACT Act.

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