



MEMORANDUM

To: Maine EMS Board
From: Maine EMS Office
Subject: Togus VA Hospital, Augusta
Date: November 25, 2025

Situation

The Togus VA Hospital in Augusta, Maine, is planning to begin accepting patients who are veterans of the US Armed Forces by ambulance transport starting January 1, 2026.

This project is driven by a directive from the federal government, which requires that if the VA hospital has an emergency department, it must receive patients by ambulance. If they don't receive patients by ambulance, they must become a level 2 Urgent Care, which would eliminate their OR and inpatient capability.

Important Information

1. The hospital is aiming for readiness by January 1, 2026
2. The hospital will only take veterans (no spouses or other family, no MCI)
3. The Togus VA emergency department is open 24/7/365
4. Their treatment capabilities are limited, as reflected in the DRAFT transport decision guidance attached

Actions

This information is provided for the Board's awareness; no action is required.

Staff will work with the Regional and Associate Regional Medical Directors to review and publish the transport decision guidance as appropriate for each of the four EMS Regions in accordance with Maine EMS Pre-Hospital protocols, including, but not limited to Brown 2: Regional Destination, Blue 11 Transport Destination, Red 2/Lavendar 1/Gray 14 Hospital Consult for Appropriate Destination, and Red 3 Destination Guidance.

Maine EMS Veteran Transport Decision Guidance

Togus VA Medical Center

ALGORITHM:

1. Patient Choice & Eligibility

Patients must verbalize that they are a veteran and eligible for VA care and desire to be cared for at Togus VA Medical Center.

2. Togus VA Capability

Togus VA medical center has some limitations to the care it can provide. A patient should not be transported to Togus VA in the event the patient has STEMI, trauma, Ob/gyn emergency, or if they are a dialysis-dependent patient. Please call Togus VA prior to departure to establish if Togus VA is the most appropriate destination.

Decision Points

- Confirm veteran status before considering Togus VA destination
 - Call Togus VA to determine if Togus VA is the most appropriate destination
 - Exclusion criteria include STEMI, trauma, OB/GYN emergencies, and dialysis dependence
 - Stable veterans without exclusion conditions may be transported safely to Togus VA
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Key Guidance

- Maine EMS field units should contact the receiving facility before departure, specifying veteran eligibility, patient complaint/condition, and discuss whether the patient meets exclusion criteria.
- MaineGeneral provides 24/7 emergency coverage for cardiac, trauma, OB/GYN, and dialysis patients.
- Togus VA provides emergency evaluation and stabilization but lacks hemodialysis capacity for emergent care.

- These guidelines ensure proper destination selection under Maine EMS's 2025 prehospital protocols to optimize outcomes and regulatory compliance.
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Ideal patient candidates for transport to Togus VA

- Psychiatric/Mental/behavioral health conditions/Suicidal ideation
- Substance use disorder (detox)
- General Illness (nausea, vomiting, general weakness, chronic or acute non- or non-recent traumatic pain, wound infection, ear and toothache, STD)
- Breathing problems related to chronic conditions
- Eye problems or injury (non-penetrating)
- GI or GU problems (non-hemorrhagic)
- Medical device complaint/malfunction