



MEMORANDUM

To: Maine EMS Board
From: Maine EMS Office
Subject: Togus VA Hospital, Augusta
Date: October 31, 2025

Situation

The Togus VA Hospital in Augusta, Maine, is seeking to become an approved EMS transport destination, specifically for veterans of the US Armed Forces.

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. Their treatment capabilities are limited, as reflected in the DRAFT transport decision matrix attached

Process

There is no defined process for considering or approving a healthcare destination. With the help of past Director Jay Bradshaw, we understand that the precedent has been for the Board and the MDPB to work together to consider the factors necessary for the success of these projects, and for the State Medical Director and EMS Director to conduct a site visit to evaluate the identified factors. This was accomplished with Vinalhaven Health Center in the mid-1990s and with the Jackman Clinic around 2005; both projects aimed to serve a rural or remote population.

The proposed process for this project is:

1. Receive feedback from the EMS Board on factors that must be considered for approval.
2. Bring the EMS Board's feedback to the MDPB for consideration and additional ideas.
3. Define the factors identified by the Board and MDPB for Togus VA leadership.



- a. The Region Two Management Team will work with Togus VA to understand the factors and prepare for success.
4. Schedule and complete a site visit at Togus VA with the State Medical Director and EMS Director.
5. The MDPB will consider the response from Togus VA and information gathered from the site visit regarding the defined factors to make a recommendation to the Board.
6. The Board will consider approval.

The ask of the Board today is:

1. Consider the proposed process and make any necessary revisions.
2. Provide feedback on factors that must be considered for Togus VA to become an approved transport destination.

Maine EMS Veteran Transport Decision Matrix

Togus VA Medical Center

ALGORITHM:

1. Patient Choice & Eligibility

Patient must verbalize 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 they 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