



COVID-19 FAQ

26. Regarding a Physician's office as a covered destination, does the treatment have to be COVID-19 related?

Date Added: 05/15/20

Answer: Based upon our reading of the regulation, 42 CFR § 410.40(f)(5), and the preamble to the interim final regulations, it is our opinion that the Medicare beneficiary transported to one of the permitted alternative destinations during the Public Health Emergency (including a physician's office) other than the Medicare covered destinations when the Public Health Emergency does not exist, does **not** need to be a COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patient. Nothing in 42 CFR § 410.40(f)(5) nor in the preamble expressly, nor in our opinion, implicitly, restricts the Medicare beneficiaries who may be transported to those alternative sites during the Public Health Emergency to only COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patients.

However, assuming our opinion is correct, to be covered for reimbursement by Medicare the ambulance transport of the Medicare beneficiary, whether or not a COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patient, may be to one of these alternative destinations only if authorized by state or local EMS law and protocols that govern an acceptable destination to transport a patient. So, for example, if a state statute, regulation, protocol or executive order directed that a non-COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patient be transported to one or more of these alternative locations only in a designated area of the State (perhaps an area in which hospitals were overrun with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patients), Medicare would reimburse the ambulance transport of the non-COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 patient to the alternative destination only if the transport occurred in the designated area. Also, remember that all Medicare coverage criteria (signature for claim submission, medical necessity, reasonableness, etc.) must also be met when transporting a patient to these alternative destinations.