

Critical Access Hospital Requirements

The information below is available directly from CMS here:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/health-safety-standards/certification-compliance/critical-access-hospitals>

The following providers may be eligible to become CAHs:

- Currently-participating Medicare hospitals;
- Hospitals that ceased operations on or after November 29, 1989; or
- Health clinics or centers (as defined by the State) that previously operated as a hospital before being downsized to a health clinic or center.

A Medicare-participating hospital must meet the following criteria to be designated by CMS as a CAH:

- Be located in a State that has established a State Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program;
- Be designated by the State as a CAH;
- Be located in a rural area or an area that is treated as rural;
- Be located either more than 35 miles from the nearest hospital or CAH or more than 15 miles in areas with mountainous terrain or only secondary roads; OR prior to January 1, 2006, were certified as a CAH based on State designation as a “necessary provider” of health care services to residents in the area.
- Maintain no more than 25 inpatient beds that can be used for either inpatient or swing-bed services;
- Maintain an annual average length of stay of 96 hours or less per patient for acute inpatient care (excluding swing-bed services and beds that are within distinct part units);
- Demonstrate compliance with the CAH CoPs found at 42 CFR Part 485 subpart F; and
- Furnish 24-hour emergency care services 7 days a week.



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