

## Appendix N - Critical Access Hospital Designation (Medicare)

Summary of the criteria for a Critical Access Hospital designation via CMS (Medicare):

- Distance from the nearest hospital is >35 miles (15 miles if mountainous or secondary roads only). [Some states have requested and been granted flexibility in application of this standard - esp. if in a medically underserved area.
- Deemed by the state as a "necessary provider."
- No greater than 15 beds [with up to 25 total beds, with "swing" beds for skilled nursing care - but still no >15 acute beds.
- Hospital LOS is no greater than 96 hours, excluding respite/hospice.
- ICU care not encouraged.
- Must be part of referral hospital network.
- Subject to EMTALA rules.
- May use midlevels for coverage (if MDs available by phone immediately and in person within 30 minutes).
- 24/7 emergency coverage available.
- Observation beds allowed (without counting against the 15 beds, unless they are providing acute care).

### Critical Access Hospitals: A Selective Bibliography

This bibliography is distributed by the Rural Information Center Health Service (1-800-633-7701) located at the National Agricultural Library.

[Reference: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/richs/cah.htm> . In addition, the summary of a related GAO report (1998) may be found at <http://www.gao.gov/> ]

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