

HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH SERVICES AND RIGHTS IN BULGARIA

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

All persons on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria are entitled to free emergency medical services regardless of their health insurance status. Emergency medical services include all medical activities for treatment of acute life-threatening disorders and for maintaining the vital functions of the body. All state-led health services provide such relevant care to all individuals that may need it, regardless of their citizenship, residence or health insurance status. The costs of pre-hospitalisation emergency medical services are borne by the state.



For urgent or emergency care, call the **emergency telephone number 112** or go to the relevant health service. Depending on the severity of the condition, the patient can be transported with a special vehicle equipped for emergencies (ambulance) and a medical team.

A European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is required in order to have emergency medical care in any EU member state. The issuance of the card is free of charge.

STRENGTHENING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH STATUS

IN SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE


for every child



Co-funded by
the Health Programme
of the European Union

This brochure is part of the Project Strengthening Refugee and Migrant Children's Health Status in Southern and South Eastern Europe, Co-funded by the Health Programme of the European Union. The content of this publication represents the views of the author(s) only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

HOW CAN I ACCESS HEALTH CARE AS AN INDIVIDUAL SEEKING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION?

There is no special procedure for getting health care for asylum-seekers. Individuals who are with a pending residence determination procedure are entitled to the same public health insurance, access to health care and free medical services as Bulgarian citizens are. Basic health care for individuals seeking international protection is responsibility of the State Agency for Refugees, and this health care is provided through a network of international and Bulgarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



HOW DO I GET MEDICAL CARE UPON BEING GRANTED INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION?

Beneficiaries of international protection are responsible for paying their public health insurance contributions themselves, following specific steps once they get an ID card.

- A copy of the ID card is to be provided to the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) at the Registration and Reception Centre, with the relevant International Protection Proceedings Department of registration, so that SAR can issue a certificate.
- The certificate is to be submitted to the National Revenue Agency (NRA); the NRA then transfers the public health insurance of the individual from an account based on a Foreigner's Identification Number (FIN) to one based on Personal Identification Number (PIN).
- A sample form No. 7 is to be filled in at the relevant local NRA office corresponding to the registered address of the individual.

In case of failure to observe the procedure, there is a risk that NRA will report non-existent liabilities for prior years.



HOW DO I PAY PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS IF I AM EMPLOYED?

In case of employment contract or contract for service, 60% of public health insurance contributions shall be borne by the employer, and 40% shall be paid out of the salary of the employee. The employer is required to deduct automatically and transfer the relevant amounts.

Unemployed or self-employed individuals (e.g. traders, freelancers such as photographers, artists, etc.) are responsible for paying their public health insurance contributions themselves at a branch of a bank at the premises of the NRA office with which they are registered. A sample form is completed in two copies; the sample form is available at the NRA offices. The relevant bank account is to be entered correctly in the sample form and can be obtained at the bank.

In case of failure to pay public health insurance contributions for more than 3 months, the individual will have his/her 'health insurance rights suspended' in the NRA system. The individual becomes health-insured again once the outstanding amounts are paid. On the NRA website you can check for any outstanding public health contributions by entering a PIN.

If the person has his/her health insurance rights suspended, he/she must only pay for the health services needed.



WHAT DO THE SERVICES OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM COVER?

Until the person who has signed an integration agreement with the municipality gets a general practitioner, Regional Health Inspectorates are required to provide him/her with:

- Information on the protocol for mandatory vaccinations and revaccinations and to prepare a schedule for them;
- Information on routine check-ups and to prepare a schedule for them;
- Information on the right to access to health activities under national and regional health programs;
- Information on the health requirements for admission to kindergartens and schools; conducting of anti-epidemic measures when necessary.

Every health-insured person with no outstanding public health insurance contributions is required to select a General Practitioner as soon as possible after the status acquisition procedure finishes. The General Practitioner conducts routine check-ups, provides referrals to specialist physicians, issues medical certificates for starting work, etc.

The physician of children is different, as he/she needs to be specialised in treating only children – i.e. in paediatrics.



WHAT DOES THE HEALTH SYSTEM CONSIST OF?

There are three main types of health establishments:

- Outpatient clinics providing primary (basic) medical care, including general practitioners, different types of physicians and physical therapists.
- Hospitals providing secondary and tertiary medical care; hospitals oftentimes are specialised in the treatment of particular conditions or serve a given region.
- Urgent and emergency medicine centres that can be part of a hospital or outpatient clinic alike.



IS HEALTH CARE FREE IN BULGARIA?

Health services are free, and certain fees apply for:

- hospital stay (per day);
- examination by a general practitioner or dentist (children are exempt, while retired persons pay a lower fee);
- Out-of-pocket payments are required for services not covered by the National Health Insurance Fund; these may include expenses for surgeries, non-specific diagnostics and treatment, costs of treatment of a number of conditions not covered by the free system.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria

<http://crw-bg.org/>

E-mail: office@crw-bg.org

Tel.: +359 898 136 231; +359 876 126 803

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/crwbg>