### KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HEALTHCARE – Consumer Guidance

*If your symptoms are **life-threatening**, call 911 immediately.

*If your symptoms are **not life-threatening**, call your primary care provider first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Hospital Emergency Department</th>
<th>Urgent Care Center</th>
<th>Retail Clinic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What it is?</strong></td>
<td>A hospital department equipped to treat life-threatening medical emergencies</td>
<td>A stand-alone walk-in medical center</td>
<td>A medical clinic located in a drugstore, supermarket, or department store with on-site pharmacy</td>
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<td><strong>Who works there?</strong></td>
<td>Emergency medicine physicians, nurses, physician assistants, medical and surgical specialists</td>
<td>At least one physician, usually a family or emergency medicine specialist. Might also have physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, or radiologists</td>
<td>Advance practice registered nurses, physician assistants</td>
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</table>
| **What conditions may be treated there?** | A situation that threatens “life or limb”, examples may include:  
- chest pain  
- compound fracture  
- coughing up or vomiting blood  
- difficulty breathing  
- eye trauma  
- facial drooping  
- head trauma  
- high fever in immune compromised person  
- injury with chance of significant scarring  
- limb weakness  
- loss of consciousness  
- possible drug overdose  
- seizures  
- serious burns  
- severe allergic reactions  
- severe unexplained headache  
- severe bleeding  
- slurred or incoherent speech (other than routine alcohol use)  
Examples may include:  
- Broken bones  
- cuts requiring stitches  
- flu  
- food poisoning  
- other conditions more serious than what a doctor’s office can handle but not requiring an ambulance ride to an ED  
- Common, non-life-threatening ailments, examples may include:  
- bronchitis  
- colds  
- flu  
- ear infections  
- sinusitis  
- strep throat  
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)  
- minor sprains and abrasions  
- vaccinations  
Typically don’t treat children younger than 18 months. |
| **When is it open?** | 24 hours a day, 7 days a week                                                                 | Generally, 7 days a week, occasional evening hours                     | 7 days a week, occasional evening hours                                         |
| **What equipment do they have?** | Full array of medical equipment available                                                  | They may have X-ray machines or on-site labs                           | Generally no specialized testing or treatment equipment available              |
| **Can they prescribe medications?** | Yes                                                                                       | Yes                                                                   | Yes                                                                          |
| **What forms of payment are accepted?** | All payor types accepted                                                                 | Some accept all payor types; others are limited. Check in advance if possible. | Some accept all payor types; others are limited. Check in advance if possible. |
| **Who oversees this facility?** | Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)                                              | DPH (licensed under a physician’s license, as an outpatient clinic, or a satellite hospital facility) | Retail clinics are not licensed, unless hospital affiliated                   |