

# CPAS / OCMW

## How to request an Urgent Medical Aid (i.e. a medical aid for a person without legal stay permit)?

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### Where to request an Urgent Medical Aid?

You need to file for an Urgent Medical Aid (Aide Médicale Urgente, in French) at the CPAS of the commune where you usually stay (i.e. where you live).

CPAS is the French acronym standing for Public Centre for Social Aid. In Dutch, it's OCMW.

In Belgium, there's 1 CPAS per commune. In the Brussels Region, there are 19 communes.

- ▶ **You are homeless?** Then it's the CPAS of the commune where you spend most of the time which will be responsible for the handling of your request. In case of doubt, you can enquire with the CPAS of the commune where you spent the previous night.
  - ▶ **If a CPAS declares itself 'non-competent' and refuses to handle your request, it must nonetheless provide you with an acknowledgement receipt (i.e. a proof that you have launched a request) and must send a copy of this receipt to the 'relevant' CPAS within 5 days.**
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### When can you request an Urgent Medical Aid?

If possible, you must go to the CPAS before the medical care. CPAS's will almost always refuse to pay for the medical bills if they haven't given their consent to the medical aid beforehand.

- ▶ **In case of an emergency?** Please notify the CPAS as soon as possible after the medical care. If you are hospitalized, please request the hospital's social service to notify the CPAS for you.
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### Social enquiry

Once your request is launched, the CPAS must give you a receipt. If not, you must claim it.

The CPAS will then propose an appointment with a social worker.

This appointment is set either for the same day or several days later. During this appointment, you will be able to explain your situation. The social worker will ask you questions and, sometimes, will request you to bring and show some documents.

The social worker will also need to visit your home.

- ▶ **CPAS's normally always make a home visit, however for medical aid, this is not compulsory. If you cannot host a CPAS social worker at your accommodation, please explain the situation to your social worker.**

Once the social enquiry is done, the social worker will submit its report to a group of people within the CPAS (a.k.a. the Council or Committee), who are in charge of taking decisions. This group of people will decide whether you are entitled to a medical aid or not.



### The CPAS' decision

The CPAS will render its decision within a maximum of 30 days after the request launch. It must then communicate this official decision to you, or ship it to you via a registered letter.

If your request is accepted, the CPAS will grant you access to medical aid and, for example, will give you:

- › Either a 'réquisitoire' (i.e. a voucher for a medical consultation or medications).
- › Or, a 'medical card', valid for a few days, weeks or months with a doctor and/or a chemist or pharmacist.
- › Or, a 'Mediprima identification form' with a number which will allow you to receive a medical treatment in a hospital.

If your request is refused, you can ask your social worker, a jurist or a lawyer for advice. He/she may either advise you to contact the CPAS again for a mediation or to file an appeal with the Labour Court.

- ▶ **The time limit for lodging such an appeal with the Labour Court is 3 months!**

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Phone us during our office hours: **02/274 14 33** or **0800/14.960**

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