

Global service
built around you

North

First Call

Medical assistance
for crew in the USA



FIRST
CALL

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If you're a North Member in need of medical assistance for your crew in the USA, First Call offers fast, reliable and effective support, even for minor ailments.

What is First Call?

First Call is a programme supported by North in collaboration with Hudson Tactix and Shuman Consulting Services. The service is available for North Members disembarking crew for medical treatment in the USA and will arrange medical attention, transport to and from the ship, treatments at a reputable facility and the control and auditing of medical costs.

What are the benefits of First Call?

The costs of medical treatment in the US significantly exceed the cost of equivalent treatment in most other countries in the world. North has noted that the costs of treatment in the US can be successfully controlled if they are properly managed from the outset. This involves sending the ill or injured seafarer to an appropriate clinic for the medical complaint and subsequently monitoring the treatment provided and charges incurred.

On first notification of a new matter, an experienced correspondent will take control of the matter ensuring that an ill or injured seafarer is timeously assessed at an appropriate facility and that the costs of such assessment, treatment and medication, if required, are reasonable.

North's First Call programme has been in operation for ten years and during that period, the programme has saved over US\$7,000,000 for North Members at a rate of almost US\$10,000 saved per claim. The average reduction in medical bills per claim in the US is 46.5%.

Should First Call only be used for significant illnesses or injuries?

We would recommend that our Members make use of First Call for all ailments requiring medical attention in the US, irrespective of the severity.

There is scope for correspondents to make a saving on treatment costs even in the most routine of circumstances. Members should also consider that a situation that may appear apparently minor may unexpectedly develop into something much more serious and expensive.

The appointment of First Call, even for minor ailments, is to ensure that assessment is arranged as soon as possible either minimising the risk of delay to the vessel or of unnecessary repatriation due to delays in arranging treatment.

This 24/7 service is available at the below ports



First Call: Medical assistance for crew in the USA

How does the programme work?

The Master of a vessel approaching a US port or already in port with an ill or injured seafarer on board can contact First Call via a 24 hour dedicated telephone number to request assistance from the correspondent covering the port involved. The correspondent will then notify the port agent that they are instructed to assist a crewmember with a medical referral and make arrangements for swift transfer to an appropriate medical facility for the condition involved.

If safe for the crewmember to do so, they will be provided with any medication prescribed by the assessing doctor and returned to the vessel. The clinic will be requested to submit all invoices to correspondents to audit the same and to agree a negotiated discount where possible. For more serious situations, our correspondents will monitor the ongoing treatment and provide regular updates. The audit process will remain the same with potential for significant savings to be achieved.

How much will First Call cost?

At the conclusion of the claim, correspondents will submit their fee note with two elements to it:

1. Their fee note for the ordinary work they provide as correspondents (monitoring treatment, reporting on discussions with authorities etc);
2. A separate fee of up to 25% of the savings made during the auditing process.

The cost of the auditing process is a percentage of the savings rather than any additional cost. This is a common style of fee charged by many medical auditing firms in the US and it creates an incentive to look for as much of a reduction as possible. If no saving is made, there is no charge for the auditing service.

Case studies:



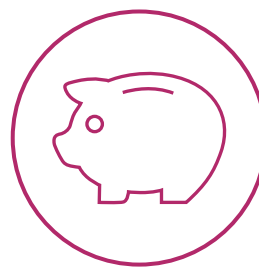
MONEY SAVED

During a call at an east coast port, one of our Members experienced a COVID outbreak. One crewmember was hospitalised for over three months, much of it in intensive care, before being transferred to a rehabilitation facility where he spent a further month. Correspondents appointed via our First Call programme obtained a saving of almost US\$1.5m on an originally presented figure of just over US\$2.8m.



TIME SAVED

During a call in a west coast port, a Chief Engineer on one of our Members' vessels reported a respiratory issue. The Master contacted First Call directly and immediately, arrangements were made for his disembarkation for assessment. Thanks to First Call, he was swiftly disembarked, assessed at an appropriate facility, prescribed medication and returned on board the vessel prior to her scheduled departure, avoiding either an unnecessary repatriation or delay to the vessel.



MISSED SAVING

In 2018, one Member reported a matter involving one of their crew disembarked in Texas with appendicitis. Notification was provided late and only on submitting their claim for reimbursement, by which point, Members had been billed for and paid US\$40,000. As Members had already paid the invoice, there was nothing that could be done but on enquiring with our First Call programme, they advised that they could have made a saving of US\$32,000.

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