

[\[Categorical Listing\]](#) [\[Numerical Listing\]](#)

This policy supersedes HA Policy [94-001](#)



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

APRIL 30, 1997

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MRAI&E)

**SUBJECT:** Policy on Space Available Dental Care

In January 1996, the Tri-Service Dental Chiefs developed a dental readiness metric that allowed the Services and the Department to accurately assess the readiness of our active duty forces. Together we established a formidable goal of maintaining 95 percent of all active duty forces in Dental Class 1 or 2. Quarterly reports received by this office indicate that a concentrated effort will be required to reach our goal, one that focuses our limited resources on our core readiness mission. By law, mission requirements and medical and dental care needs of active duty members take priority over requests for access by other beneficiary groups. Accordingly, further policy guidance on availability of care for other than active duty personnel needs to be established.

Effective immediately, it is Department of Defense Policy that dental care for other than active duty personnel shall be available at a dental treatment facility only when at least 95 percent of active duty personnel assigned to that facility for routine care are in Dental Class 1 or 2. The unavailability of dental care for other beneficiaries in areas where active duty members' needs have not been met does not apply to: Space available care necessary to fulfill training program requirements; care allowed for dentists in the rotation base to maintain their skills; emergency care; the Preventive Dentistry Program for Children; care provided for active duty family members located OCONUS in areas where the TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan is not currently available, or standby care to fill broken appointments unable to be filled by active duty. However, standard priority access rules continue to apply in these cases, and facilities will establish aggressive, detailed plans to ensure that active duty patients are treated whenever possible.

I am confident employment of this guidance will ensure that our limited resources are focused on our highest priority readiness programs. Please ensure this policy is implemented immediately and provide my office with a copy of your guidance to the field on this matter.

This policy letter supercedes DoD(HA) Policy Letter February 16, 1994, [Space Available Dental Care \(94-001\)](#). My point of contact is Colonel Marvin Bennett, Senior Consultant for Dentistry, (703) 697-9181.

*Edward D. Martin*

Edward D. Martin, M.D.  
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense

cc:

Surgeon General of the Army

Surgeon General of the Navy

Surgeon General of the Air Force

**HA POLICY 97-045**

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