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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

Jan 7 1998

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 For Specialty Care Consultants

In this era in which we are gaining prominence for providing excellence in healthcare, it is imperative that primary care managers receive timely and professional feedback on the results of specialty care for which their TRICARE Prime enrollees are referred. Some military treatment facilities (MTFs) do well at providing specialty consult feedback to referring primary care providers. Some facilities do not, resulting in a lack of professional interchange regarding their patient's condition and prescription for further care, often disrupting the necessary continuity to care.

In the effort to better meet the needs of primary care managers and our patients, it is the Department's policy that MTFs provide clearly legible specialty care consult notes from the referral specialist to the military and/or network referring TRICARE Prime primary care manager. To meet this policy, the MTF commander may utilize existing transcription arrangements or develop other capabilities to meet the requirement.

The Department expects MTFs to provide a clearly legible specialty care visit results from the specialist to the primary care manager within seventy-two (72) hours of the specialty encounter. Measures must be established to safeguard this flow of information to meet privacy act requirements. I expect actions to meet this policy requirement to be in place in all MTFs no later than April 1, 1998. Please provide me a report not later than February 10, 1997 on how your organizations will accomplish this task.

My point of contact for this matter is Major Terry Walsh, TRICARE Operations Policy, who may be reached at (703) 614-4705.

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

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