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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

APR 4, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR: SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Current Policy for Dispensing Prescriptions in Military Pharmacies

Recently there has been confusion with respect to restrictions of pharmacy services based on beneficiary classes. This memo clarifies current policy regarding restrictions and use of the Tri-Service Formulary (TSF).

The Tri-Service Formulary is managed by the DoD Pharmacoeconomic Center (PEC). The TSF is a list of core agents that must be available at all Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) to eligible beneficiaries presenting a valid prescription. Selection of agents for the TSF is based primarily on the most cost effective therapy in the context of overall DoD healthcare costs. The TSF includes drugs that have been determined to be first line therapy for particular disease states based on pharmacoeconomic analysis. Use of the TSF is mandatory, and TSF agents may not be deleted from local formularies. In order to capitalize on the benefits of this analysis, it is incumbent upon you and your commanders to enforce this policy.

MTFs may establish local formularies by expanding the TSF, depending upon local requirements and the scope of care provided. MTF pharmacies will fill all prescriptions for formulary drugs, independent of beneficiary category. Therefore, restrictions are permitted only for valid clinical reasons, specialty care, or protocols published by the Pharmacoeconomic Center.

In those cases when a nonformulary product(s) is needed for a specific patient or a special treatment protocol, prior approval by the MTF commander is required to validate special clinical circumstances. To assure appropriate management of the authority to obtain nonformulary drugs to non-active duty beneficiaries, this authority is limited to prescriptions written by MTF providers. For active duty patients, the facility must obtain the medication.

As the National Mail Order Program (NMOP) is implemented across the TRICARE regions in June 1997, the policy for providing both formulary and nonformulary medications is subject to change to maximize the benefits of that program. Any changes to this current policy will be published at that time. nonformulary

Sincerely,

Edward D. Martin

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

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