

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



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

11 July 97

MEMORANDUM FOR: Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force

SUBJECT: Policy for Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) Eligibility Checking Requirement

This memorandum promulgates revised policy guidance for the implementation of increased DEERS eligibility checks performed prior to health care encounters. The current policy, not updated since 1983, states that 25 percent of ambulatory health care encounters will be preceded by a DEERS check. These requirements were mandated when eligibility checks were a labor intensive, manual process.

Effective October 1, 1997, eligibility checks will be performed prior to each outpatient healthcare evaluation at Military Health Services System (MHSS) facilities with capability for electronic validation. The check will be made automatically between the Ambulatory Data System, the Composite Health Care System and DEERS, transparent to the user unless the system reports an eligibility issue requiring intervention and patient notification. This requirement is not mandatory for medical facilities at training locations that treat accessions not entered in the DEERS system. Current policy requiring 100 percent checks of all patients being admitted to MHSS hospitals, all prescriptions written by civilian providers, and all nonactive duty dental visits will continue.

The DEERS eligibility checking mission is vital to ensure only eligible beneficiaries receive care at our facilities. Treatment of patients with emergency conditions shall not be delayed in the event automation systems fail to provide timely feedback.

The point of contact for this action is Major Terry Walsh, TRICARE Operations Policy, extension (703) 614-4705.

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HA Policy 97-057

[\[Top\]](#)

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