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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

DEC 19 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Simplifying Enrollment for Active Duty Families

Several of our Lead Agents have asked us to review TRICARE Prime enrollment procedures because they believe this is an area where we can do better. I agree. As a part of our TRICARE redesign efforts, we are making enrollment for active duty families immediate, continuous, and completely "portable." A concept outline is attached for your information.

Our current regulations and contracts mandate annual reenrollment; thus, we cannot make sweeping changes today. We do, however, intend to streamline enrollment for active duty families. For example, as a start, we have made enrollment portable for our active duty families. We have implemented portability for active duty family members so these families can transfer their enrollment when they move to a new location. This eliminates the gap in Prime coverage caused when an enrollee disenrolls from one location and begins a new enrollment at the new duty station. Enrollment portability for retirees and their families will also begin soon.

Current policy does permit the advance enrollment of active duty family members. I strongly encourage medical treatment facilities (MTFs) to promote advance enrollment, which by itself, can help simplify the process tremendously. Sponsor packages should include TRICARE Prime enrollment information for those active duty families who move from a region where TRICARE has not begun to a region where TRICARE has been established. This enables families to select Prime coverage and already be enrolled when they arrive at the new location. A primary care manager (PCM) in the MTF can also be assigned to them.

Another technique currently available to simplify enrollment is "pre-enrollment" in the MTF. Non-enrolled active duty families who do not enroll in advance of their move, and choose TRICARE Prime at the new duty station, may be assigned a PCM in the MTF and be considered pre-enrolled. This will allow them to receive priority access for care with their PCM in the MTF. Of course, TRICARE Prime copayments for civilian care will not apply until they are formally enrolled in TRICARE by the managed care support contractor.

In addition, all of our managed care support contracts allow for retroactive enrollment for family members who have emergent or catastrophic conditions and should be placed under case management. This

requires MTF commander and Lead Agent approval. Consistent with statutory requirements, enrollment remains fully voluntary.

The TRICARE regulation, and all enrollment materials, stress the annual nature of enrollment, so we cannot immediately eliminate the reenrollment requirement. We can, however, make it simpler for Prime enrollees and contractors to reenroll our active duty families. The enrollee's decision to continue enrollment in TRICARE Prime can be simplified by using a return post card, or telephone call, or other mechanism approved by the Lead Agent.

We are initiating the regulatory, contract, and program actions necessary to establish continuous enrollment. Our goal is to streamline the enrollment and reenrollment processes so our active duty families can quickly take full advantage of the many benefits offered under TRICARE Prime. Our point of contact is Lieutenant Colonel Kathy Larkin at (703) 695-3323.



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

Attachment:
As stated

cc:
Surgeons General
TRICARE Support Office
Regional Lead Agents

HA Policy 98-028

**Future TRICARE Enrollment
for Active Duty Families**

Concept Outline

Future Program

- Immediate Enrollment
- Continuous Enrollment
- Portable Benefit

- Enrollment by sponsor or individual

Immediate enrollment:

- Beneficiary's Prime enrollment begins on the date the enrollment application is signed.
- For administrative purposes, the anniversary date of enrollment is the first day of the month in which application is signed.
- Enrollment is by sponsor when he/she checks in at new duty station.
- Enrollment is by family, unless otherwise requested by sponsor or family member.

Continuous enrollment:

- Annual reenrollment requirement is eliminated.
- Preventive benefits, PCM realignments, ability to disenroll without lock-out occur at anniversary date. Disenrollment at any other time, other than during a move, will have a 12-month lock-out. Catastrophic cap accumulations continue to accrue on a fiscal year basis.
- Subsequent HEAR surveys are administered during birth month.

Portable Benefit

- Sponsor may transfer the enrollment of accompanied family members during inprocessing at a new duty location.

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Last update: 1/4/1999