



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

JUL 25 2007

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

Reference: HA Policy Memorandum 97-045

This policy memo supersedes and cancels HA Policy memo 97-045, dated April 30, 1997, Policy on Space Available Dental Care.

Since 1996, the Tri-Service Dental Chiefs have implemented and tracked a dental readiness metric that allowed the Services and the Department to accurately assess the readiness of our active duty forces. In January 2006, my office issued a Policy on Oral Health and Readiness (06-001) reaffirming the formidable goal of maintaining 95 percent of all active duty forces in Dental Class 1 or 2. Given our limited resources, a concentrated effort will be required to reach our goal and preserve 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, this policy on availability of care for other than Active Duty personnel is established.

This policy maintains that the dental care for other than Active Duty personnel shall be available at a military 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. Under certain exceptions, dental care for other than Active Duty personnel can be provided regardless of the percentage of Active Duty personnel in Dental Class 1 or 2. These exceptions include:

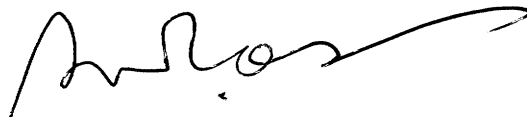
1. Space available care necessary to fulfill training program requirements.
2. Care allowed for dentists in the rotation base to maintain their skills.
3. Emergency care.
4. Preventive Dentistry Program for Children.
5. Care provided for Active Duty family members located OCONUS in areas where the TRICARE Dental Program is not currently available.
6. Standby care to fill broken appointments unable to be filled by Active Duty.

HA POLICY: 07-011

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. To promote additional access to dental care resources, information on the TRICARE Dental Program and the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program should be made available.

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.

My point of contact on this subject is Col Gary Martin, Senior Consultant for Dentistry, who may be reached at (703) 681-0039 or gary.martin@tma.osd.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Ward Casscells', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

S. Ward Casscells, MD

cc:
Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force