

Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) ISSUE PAPER

Issue Title: TRICARE does not allow inter-regional specialty care referrals for Service Members and their families in advance of relocating due to a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move.

Scope: Obtaining referrals for specialty care in advance of a PCS move is extremely important for military families who have family members with special needs i.e., Exceptional Family Members (EFMs). Allowing primary care providers from the losing installation/station in one TRICARE region to make referrals to specialists at the gaining installation/station in another TRICARE region would significantly reduce the time on waiting lists; facilitate a smoother transition; eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy; and improve the continuity of care for Service Members and their families in advance of a PCS move.

Recommendation(s):

Require TRICARE to establish a program that allows inter-regional referrals to be made 30-90 days in advance of a Service Member's report date to the gaining installation/station.

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Approval Line: LTC Greg Ank, Garrison Commander, Carlisle Barracks. Submission of issue to Headquarters Department of the Army.

Subject Matter Expert Solution:

The Managed Care Office of a local MTF may provide assistance to beneficiaries preparing to move across TRICARE Regions that can mitigate delays in re-establishing specialty care services. Assistance includes determining if a larger MTF in the TRICARE region has the capability of providing the specialty care, and if yes, would they be willing to accept records and schedule appointments in advance of the beneficiary's arrival. Assistance also includes researching and identifying TRICARE Network providers in the TRICARE Region, in order to make direct contact with them for the purpose of determining their projected access for initial appointments for new patients. This assistance does not eliminate the requirement to transfer enrollment or obtain referrals from new PCMs, but it does help to reduce the wait time, as well as the anxiety of not knowing what might be available in the new region. Family members of active duty service members also have the option to dis-enroll from TRICARE Prime and use TRICARE Standard, which eliminates the requirement for referrals to be initiated by new PCMs and processed by a Managed Care Support Contractor.