

Clear Lines of Communication Aid Patient Care

One of the cornerstones in your relationship with patients should be open, clear communication that helps them make the most informed health care decisions possible.

TRICARE's 2006 Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries found that doctors' communication was a key component of patient satisfaction. So key, in fact, that communication was ranked ahead of access to care, speed of service, courtesy of staff and customer service.

Most patients want more information and guidance, and are more satisfied with their care when they receive such counsel from their doctors. However, sometimes the information doctors give fails to answer a patient's question or need to know, according to Geoffrey H. Gordon, M.D., FACP, and F. Daniel Duffy, M.D., FACP.*

In "Educating and Enlisting Patients" (*Journal of Clinical Outcomes Management*, Vol. 5, No. 4), Gordon and Duffy suggest that you organize

the information you give patients around the eight questions almost all patients have, no matter how medically sophisticated they are.

Nearly every patient has these three questions about their **illness**:

1. What has happened to me? (diagnosis)
2. Why has it happened to me? (etiology)
3. What is going to happen to me? (prognosis)

In addition, most patients have the following five questions about their **medical care**:

1. What are you doing to me?
2. Why are you doing that (and not something else)?
3. Will it hurt or harm me? How much? For how long?
4. When will you know the results?
5. When will I know the results?

Try to anticipate your patient's concerns. When faced with an illness, an individual often has fears and worries on many different levels. For instance, someone could be anxious about the physical pain associated with an illness, but at the same time be concerned about the economic (How much does it cost?) or social (Will anyone find out that I'm being tested for HIV?) ramifications.

At the end of the visit, take time to assess the patient's grasp of what's been discussed. Gordon and Duffy recommend asking your patients what they plan to tell their loved ones about "what the doctor said." Having them restate the message in their own words will reveal just how well they understand the information, and will give you an opportunity to clarify, if necessary. ■

** Geoffrey H. Gordon, M.D., FACP, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine; and F. Daniel Duffy, M.D., FACP, Senior Vice President, American Board of Internal Medicine, Philadelphia, PA*

From the Desk of the CMO

*John E. Crum, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
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I would like to introduce you to **Achieve Solutions**, an exciting feature that Humana Military and ValueOptions is making available to

all TRICARE beneficiaries through the Humana Military Web site, www.humana-military.com.

Achieve Solutions is a behavioral health online resource, available in both English and Spanish, filled with educational programs and information on behavioral health, employee assistance programs and work/life issues. TRICARE

beneficiaries can access this secure Web site at no cost to them.

Achieve Solutions offers:

- A comprehensive library of educational materials, including information on depression; anxiety; addiction and recovery; stress and relationship issues

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From the Desk of the CMO

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- Self-assessment tools and interactive trainings
- More than 45 quizzes and calculators
- Links to TRICARE behavioral health benefit information
- Regularly updated news briefs and feature stories
- An auto-login feature to improve access

The site features more than 6,000 articles in 200 distinct topic areas, including:

- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Family Care and Education
- Health and Wellness
- Relationships
- Work

The clinical content undergoes a stringent review process annually. Content providers include the Boston College Center for Work and Family; the University of Florida McKnight Brain Institute; Harris, Rothenberg International, LLC; the Stepfamily Association of America and others.

The site and its deep content base have received numerous awards, including the eHealthcare Leadership Award for Best Overall Internet Site and Best Health/Healthcare Content.

Some examples of articles on the site are:

- After Duty, Returning Home: When the Letdown Doesn't Let Up
- Booze and Blues
- Child and Adolescent Depression
- How to Help a Child with Separation Anxiety
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?
- Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder on Relationships
- Active Duty to Civilian Life, How to Ease the Workplace Transition

The Web site is a VeriSign®-secured site, so visitors can be assured that their content explorations remain private. To access Achieve Solutions, visit www.humana-military.com, click on "Behavioral Health," then click on the "Achieve Solutions" button.

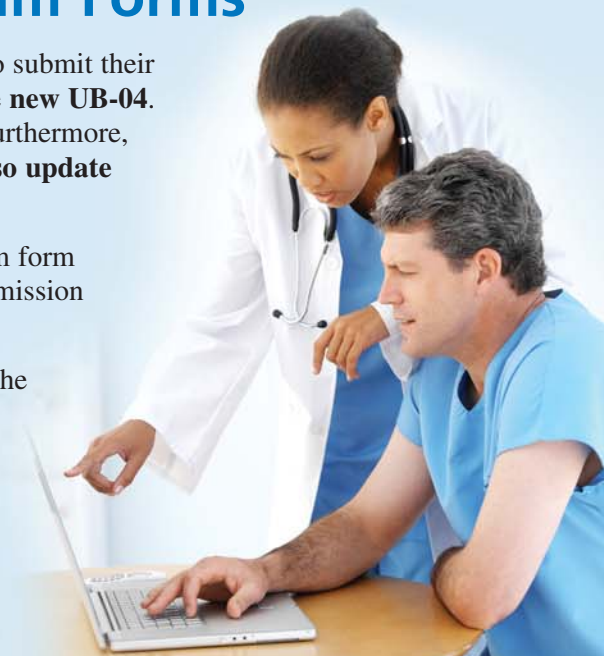
Please feel free to share this valuable information with your TRICARE beneficiaries. Thank you for your assistance and for participating in TRICARE. ■

Reminder: Please Use the New Claim Forms

As of Jan. 1, 2008, providers must use the **new CMS-1500** (version 08/05) to submit their professional claims. Additionally, facilities must submit their claims on the **new UB-04**. TRICARE will no longer accept the old HCFA-1500 and UB-92 claim forms. Furthermore, to prevent claims from being submitted with incorrect information, **you must also update your existing software.**

To ensure timely and proper payment of your claims, please use the correct claim form and update your software! Both the CMS-1500 and the UB-04 allow for the submission of National Provider Identifiers (NPIs). Please submit an NPI when appropriate.

Note: This change applies to providers in the United States only. A decision on the overseas contract is pending. ■



Web Enhancements Make Your Job Easier!

At Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc., (Humana Military) we make every effort to provide the best service to our providers. We've made a number of new enhancements to the secure Provider Web portal, giving you easy access to information that impacts you and your practice.

This article reviews important Humana Military Web site updates in four areas:

- Referrals and Authorizations
- Transparency
- Pharmacy Data Transaction System
- NPI Registration and Maintenance

To access these enhancements, registered users can go to www.humana-military.com, click on "Online Provider Services" and sign in using their user ID and password.

Streamlined Referrals and Authorizations Screens

The Referrals and Authorizations screens on the Humana Military Web site have been streamlined to make both procedures simpler and more efficient. Submitting all of the necessary information online saves you time and allows you to receive an immediate approval. **Note:** At this time, the Referrals and Authorizations screens are not available for behavioral health services.

Web entry for new referral and authorization requests has been simplified to five steps:

1. Entering Patient and Service Information
2. Selecting Procedures to Perform
3. Reviewing Existing Authorization to Update Duplicates
4. Selecting Provider
5. Entering Clinical Data

New Transparency Page

The Transparency page allows network providers to view information about practice affordability and administrative quality. It also provides access to performance measures and underlying data. This initiative is in support of Presidential Executive Order 13410, "Promoting Quality and Efficient Health Care in Federal Government Administered or Sponsored Health Care Programs."

Every provider and office location is evaluated based on two measurement categories: administrative quality and practice affordability. Each provider is assigned a rating of one or two stars for each category, if enough data exists.

Administrative quality is determined by the percentage of claims submitted electronically, the timely return of consultation reports and beneficiary complaints.

Practice affordability is evaluated by examining charges for professional services surrounding specific events of care and comparing a provider's average allowed charges for episodes of care to those of other providers in the same state.

Keep in mind that this information is strictly for providers. There is currently no plan to share it with beneficiaries.

Pharmacy Data Transaction System (PDTS)

This feature allows you to review prescriptions filled by beneficiaries at military treatment facility pharmacies, at TRICARE retail network pharmacies and through the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy. Providers with an approved referral or authorization from Humana Military may access this information. PDTS allows you to conduct a thorough, real-time online assessment that screens



the patient's complete prescription history before you write a new prescription.

New NPI Registration and Maintenance Tool

This new tool makes it easy for providers to review and update their National Provider Identifiers (NPIs) with Humana Military. It allows authorized provider office personnel (administrators) to add and update NPIs for each category: individual, active, in-network providers (Type I) and business organizations (Type II).

Other features include:

- Showing a detailed list of provider names, specialty and NPI (if applied)
- Displaying the total number of providers with and without NPIs applied to their records
- Entering NPIs for all providers and locations under that Tax ID without having to log in again or use multiple usernames
- Checking the accuracy of the list of office locations that are in the Humana Military database
- Flagging office locations that are no longer active, so that Humana Military can update its records

Humana Military's new Web enhancements are designed to help you run your practice more efficiently and effectively. Put the improved Web site to work for you—visit www.humana-military.com today! ■

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1-800-403-3950

ValueOptions (behavioral health)
1-800-700-8646

Pharmacy Customer Service
1-866-DoD-TRRX (retail)
1-866-DoD-TMOP (mail order)
www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE

National TRICARE Web Site
www.tricare.mil

Update DEERS
1-800-538-9552
www.tricare.mil/deers/update-info.cfm

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Generic Drugs: As Good as Brand Names

A Department of Defense Policy Reminder

Considering the amount of advertising that you see for brand-name prescription medications like Allegra®, Prevacid® and Zoloft®, you may be inclined to prescribe a brand-name medication over a generic substitute.

Yet, in many cases, there is a lower-cost generic medication that will work just as well for your patient. Furthermore, Department of Defense policy mandates that TRICARE providers prescribe generic drugs whenever a generic equivalent exists.

Like brand-name medications, generic drugs must meet the same rigorous standards established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for safety and quality. Therefore, in most patients,

generic drugs will work just as well because they are virtually identical in terms of dosage, performance, usage and strength.

There are some instances in which TRICARE providers may prescribe a brand-name drug over a generic one. These include:

- When the patient is likely to experience adverse effects from taking the generic equivalent
- If the generic has previously resulted in therapeutic failure, or has the potential to do so
- When the patient has had a favorable response to the brand name in the past and switching to the generic is likely to cause an unacceptable clinical risk

If you determine that a brand-name medication will work best for your patient and there is a generic equivalent, you must obtain prior authorization before the prescription can be filled. Once approved, the authorization may be applied to prescriptions filled through both the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy and retail network pharmacies.

For instructions on obtaining prior authorization for brand-name medications, visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacy/prior_auth.cfm.

Additional pharmacy information and tools can be found on the Provider portal of the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.mil/provider. ■