

## State Age Guidelines Dictate Disclosure of Protected Health Information

It may come as a surprise to some parents, but depending on your child's age and where you live, you may not be entitled to know everything there is to know about your child's medical treatment. These restrictions are especially important when it comes to information about behavioral health and substance use treatments.

When responding to your requests for this information, your doctor or other health care provider must adhere to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

(HIPAA) and differing state guidelines governing the release of protected health information (PHI).

Based on your child's age and where you live, ValueOptions TRICARE and providers may need your child's permission before they can provide you with PHI dealing with behavioral health care.

Laws throughout the TRICARE South Region vary greatly from state to state. For example, in Florida health care providers must receive consent from patients 12 years old

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### The Doctor is in...

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Are your child's vaccinations up-to-date? With summer winding down and kids going back to school, August is the perfect time to schedule doctor appointments for your family's immunizations. Some vaccinations may be due at that time and your doctor can also suggest the best time for other recommended immunizations. Recommendations may vary for children in different age groups or for children with certain medical conditions who require additional immunizations.

Children are particularly vulnerable to infection, and immunizations are important for their health and well-being. By staying up-to-date on recommended vaccines, you can protect your children from these diseases: chicken pox, polio, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella (German

measles), diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), Haemophilus Influenzae type B (a bacterial microorganism that causes several serious, often life-threatening illnesses), meningococcal disease, pneumococcal disease, influenza and hepatitis B. Immunizations also contribute to the well-being of everyone by reducing the chance for diseases to spread.

Here's a checklist for your child's back-to-school medical needs:

- Take your child to the doctor for all necessary immunizations.
- Fill out all emergency contact and health information forms for your child's school.
- Tell the school nurse and your child's teacher about any medical conditions or allergies (food, drug, latex, etc.) your child may have.
- Make arrangements with the school nurse to give your child any medications he or she might need.

- Tell your child's teacher about any conditions that may affect how he or she learns, such as attention deficit disorder or a vision problem.

TRICARE knows immunizations are important for your child's health and we provide all age-appropriate vaccines recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices. Recommended vaccines are available at military treatment facilities as well as TRICARE network and non-network providers.

Many schools require immunizations for attendance. By immunizing on time, you can protect your child from being infected and prevent the infection of others at school or day care centers. Schedule your child's appointment for immunizations today! ■

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# Plan Ahead for Potential Natural Disasters

The Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal areas are subject to hurricanes and tropical storms and the Midwest is subject to major thunderstorms and tornados—this means that the TRICARE South Region is vulnerable to catastrophic damage. While we can't stop a natural disaster from occurring, we can help you be more prepared for such an emergency. Along with water and flashlights, you should also be prepared for your health care.

You may already have an emergency plan for your family. If not, here is a list to get you started.

<b>Learn escape routes</b>	It is good to have a primary and an alternate route planned out ahead of time. Review it with your entire family in case you're separated.
<b>Create a family contact card</b>	List family cell phone numbers, nearest out-of-state relatives, and other emergency contacts. Make a copy for everyone in your family.
<b>Know how to safely shut off the utilities</b>	Have this information handy in case you are instructed to turn it off so you are not searching for it later.
<b>Review your insurance</b>	Get copies and review your property and life insurance policies. If you need extra coverage, get it now.
<b>Store your vital records</b>	Store important documents such as insurance policies, deeds, property records, and other important papers in a safe place, like a safety deposit box away from your home. Make copies of these documents (including your military ID card and TRICARE program ID card) to keep in your disaster supplies kit.
<b>Save money</b>	Consider creating a separate emergency savings account that can be accessed at any time.
<b>Know resources if you or a family member has special needs</b>	If you or someone close to you has a disability or special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency. Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community. Register with the office of emergency services or the local fire department for assistance so help can be provided.
<b>Plan for your pet's needs</b>	Gather pet supplies such as food, toys, pet carrier and leash. Store these items with your disaster supply kit. Ensure your pet has proper ID and up-to-date veterinarian records.
<b>Learn safety skills</b>	Learn how to administer first aid and CPR and how to use a fire extinguisher. Some local organizations offer periodic training.
<b>Prepare a disaster kit</b>	Gather the supplies you need in case you are stranded for several days. Visit <a href="http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/index.shtm">www.fema.gov/areyouready/index.shtm</a> for a list of supplies to get you started.
<b>TRICARE contact information</b>	Humana Military's toll free customer service number is 1-800-444-5445, or visit their Web site at <a href="http://www.humana-military.com">www.humana-military.com</a> .



Hopefully, you won't be faced with a natural disaster—but it is reassuring to know your family is prepared, just in case. We also understand that the health of you and your family is important, and we're here for you. Humana Military's toll free customer service number is 1-800-444-5445 and our Web site is [www.humana-military.com](http://www.humana-military.com). These two pieces of information will be your health care lifeline, in any emergency. ■

## Continued Coverage for Transitional Survivors

If your active duty sponsor passes away, you remain eligible for TRICARE as an active duty family member without interruption—meaning your costs will not increase and your coverage will not change unless you change your program option. During this time, you are considered a “transitional survivor.”

After three-years, your benefits will change. You will receive a letter from the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) soon after the death of your sponsor informing you about your survivor benefits. You will receive another letter three years later before your benefits change.

### Transitional Survivor Period

If you are enrolled in TRICARE Prime when your sponsor passes away, your coverage will continue uninterrupted as long as your information is correct in DEERS. Effective May 5, 2006 TRICARE Prime Remote

for Active Duty Family Members also offers the option of continuing the Prime benefit.

### Benefits after Three Years

At the end of the three-year transitional survivor benefit period, your TRICARE coverage continues with some additional changes. If you are currently enrolled in TRICARE Prime, you will be disenrolled—you must re-enroll and begin paying annual enrollment fees to continue TRICARE Prime coverage. You may be able to keep your current primary care manager. If you don’t want to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime, you will be covered by TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra.

If you move within the next three years, be aware that your TRICARE options may change. Humana Military can assist you with the TRICARE health care plan options available to you in your new area. If you move to an overseas location, please call 1-888-777-8343 for further details about TRICARE benefits available overseas. ■

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and up to release information about their behavioral health. But, just next door in Georgia, consent is required from patients 18 years old and up.

HIPAA-covered PHI is information created and obtained by providers as they administer services to beneficiaries. PHI may include documentation of symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses and treatments.

Other personal information also considered PHI includes, but is not limited to:

- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Race
- Social Security number
- Medical records
- Photographs
- Any information that may compromise the privacy of, or prove harmful to, the beneficiary

Regardless of a minor patient’s age, providers must receive that patient’s consent before releasing information involving chemical abuse and alcohol dependency to their parents.

In situations where a non-custodial parent requests information about a child’s treatment, the release of information may not be allowed and is dependent on the divorce decree. ■

State	Age when patient consent is required for release of behavioral health information	Patient consent required for release of chemical and alcohol use information
Alabama	14 or older	Yes
Arkansas	18 or older	Yes
Florida	12 or older	Yes
Georgia	18 or older	Yes
Louisiana	18 or older	Yes
Mississippi	15 or older	Yes
Oklahoma	16 or older	Yes
South Carolina	16 or older	Yes
Tennessee	16 or older	Yes
Texas	16 or older	Yes

# TRICARE HealthMatters

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## TRICARE

### An Excellent Value

- Generous coverage
- Superior health care
- Decisions are health driven, not insurance driven
- High satisfaction with care
- Low out-of-pocket costs
- Easy access

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*Health Matters* is published by the TRICARE Management Activity. Please provide feedback at [www.tricare.mil/evaluations/feedback](http://www.tricare.mil/evaluations/feedback).



## A Word about Adjunctive Dental Care...

**W**hile TRICARE medical coverage does not cover routine dental care, it *does* cover routine adjunctive dental care services. So what is “adjunctive” dental care?

Adjunctive dental care may be one or more of the following:

- Dental care that is medically necessary in the treatment of an otherwise covered medical (not dental) condition
- An essential part of the treatment for such a medical condition
- Required in preparation for, or as the result of, dental trauma caused by medically necessary treatment of an injury or disease

For example, removal of broken teeth or tooth fragments to treat and repair facial trauma resulting from an accidental injury is considered adjunctive dental care. And if you need necessary medical treatment that causes dental trauma, this also qualifies as adjunctive dental care and is covered by TRICARE.

It is important that you obtain prior authorization from Humana Military before receiving any adjunctive dental treatment to ensure the services will be covered.

If you do not obtain prior authorization before receiving the services, Humana Military might not pay the claim even if the services or supplies qualify for benefits.

Your TRICARE Prime health care benefit does not cover non-adjunctive dental care—which refers to any routine, preventive, restorative, prosthetic, periodontic or emergency dental care that is not related to a medical condition.

You may receive these dental services through military dental treatment facilities or by enrolling in one of two TRICARE dental programs, the TRICARE Dental Program or the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program. Visit [www.tricare.osd.mil/dental](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/dental) for more information about enrollment in these programs. ■