

Fighting the Flu Encourage Patients to Get Vaccinated

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 200,000 people are hospitalized due to flu-related complications each year in the United States, and about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes. Encourage your patients to get vaccinated—it's the best way to fight the flu.

TRICARE covers the flu vaccine based on the CDC's current flu season guidelines. Anyone who wants to decrease his or her chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated, but the CDC recommends that people in certain high-risk categories get vaccinated every year. These include:

- Children ages 6 months through 18 years
- Pregnant women
- People age 50 and older
- People with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu, including health care workers, household contacts of other people at high risk and household contacts and caregivers of children less than 6 months old

The flu shot is approved for people age 6 months and older, and the nasal-spray vaccine (FluMist®) is an option for healthy people ages 2–49 years who are not pregnant. In order to be covered by TRICARE, the flu vaccine and other vaccines must be administered in your office. Vaccines can also be administered at one of the convenient MinuteClinics located in select CVS Pharmacies throughout the South Region. Flu vaccines are **not** covered by TRICARE when provided at other civilian pharmacies, drug stores or supermarkets.

The CDC recommends you should begin vaccinating patients as soon as you have the flu vaccine, and you should continue to offer it to patients throughout the flu season. Flu outbreaks can happen as early as October, but activity usually peaks in January or later.

If your practice doesn't offer the flu vaccination, encourage your TRICARE patients to check with their military treatment facility (MTF) to see if the flu vaccine is being offered. **Note:** Active duty and reserve personnel must receive vaccinations at an MTF. This will ensure their immunization records are complete and their compliance with Department of Defense immunization policy is documented.

For more information about the flu and vaccination guidelines, visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov/flu. ■

Prevention Is Critical for Health Awareness

Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc. (Humana Military) recognizes that prevention is essential to improving health care outcomes for beneficiaries. Humana Military's Health Awareness Letters (HAL) program therefore focuses on preventive care. HALs are sent to beneficiaries during their birth month as a reminder for recommended preventive health care services,

such as vaccinations for kids and breast cancer screenings for women.

After an initial HAL is sent, a six-month claim scan is conducted to see if the recommended preventive health care was rendered. If the health care has not been rendered, Humana Military contacts the beneficiary's primary care manager to ensure follow-up.

Humana Military is committed to providing management of quality health care services. By tracking data every quarter throughout the year and reporting results to a clinical quality management committee, a comprehensive approach to health care delivery follows.

For more information, visit Humana Military's Web site at www.humana-military.com. ■



Military Treatment Facility “Right of First Refusal”

Frequently Asked Questions

Military treatment facilities (MTFs) have the option to exercise what is known as the right of first refusal (ROFR). Beneficiaries referred for care outside of an MTF for specialty care and/or other services requiring a referral or authorization must first be considered for care at the MTF if the services are available there.

Which Beneficiaries Qualify for ROFR?

ROFR applies to TRICARE Prime beneficiaries living in a TRICARE Prime Service Area (PSA) who meet the appropriate access standards, and where the MTF has indicated the desire to receive referral requests based on specialty, diagnosis code, procedure codes and/or enrollment categories. Information about TRICARE Prime and TRICARE PSAs can be found in your *TRICARE Provider Handbook* or on Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.’s (Humana Military’s) Web site at www.humana-military.com.

How Does the ROFR Process Work?

Humana Military’s referral management team will send referral/authorization information to the MTF point of contact (POC). The MTF POC will generally respond within one business day from receipt of the request. If no response is received from the MTF within one business day, Humana Military will process the referral request as if the MTF declined to see the patient.

What Happens When an MTF Exercises ROFR?

When an MTF elects to accept the patient for care (i.e., exercises its ROFR), the MTF POC will advise Humana Military generally within one business day from receipt of the referral/authorization. Humana Military will then notify the beneficiary of the MTF’s acceptance and provide instructions for contacting the MTF to obtain an appointment.

How Can I Ensure the ROFR Process Will Work Well in My Office?

You can ensure this process runs smoothly by taking the following actions:

- Build/request referrals using the options available to your office online at www.humana-military.com or by faxing a referral/authorization request to the MTF using the *Patient Referral Authorization Form*.
- Understand that even if you select a provider for referral, the local MTF may review the referral and override your selection by exercising the ROFR.
- Make the beneficiary aware that the MTF ROFR may take precedence on the referral selection.

For more information, visit www.humana-military.com. ■

TRICARE Pharmacy Program Update

With the beginning of the new TRICARE Pharmacy Program contract on Nov. 4, 2009, Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts) will continue as the program administrator, providing mail-order, retail and specialty pharmacy services for TRICARE beneficiaries. The transition to this new contract will be transparent to your patients. New prescriptions are not required, and your patients can continue to use their current pharmacies.

The objectives of the TRICARE Pharmacy Program are to:

- Provide a uniform, effective and efficient benefit
- Encourage Mail Order Pharmacy use
- Promote patient safety

The new Specialty Medication Care Management program will provide beneficiaries with enhanced education about specialty medications and promote safe use of these medications. These include medications that need special

handling and administration, require frequent dose changes and may require additional clinical monitoring to achieve best results. If you order a specialty medication from the Mail Order Pharmacy for a patient, he or she will receive additional information from Express Scripts about the Specialty Medication Care Management program and how to get started.

You can help your TRICARE patients save time and money by encouraging them to use the Mail Order Pharmacy for medications they take on a regular basis. They can order up to a 90-day supply of maintenance medications at minimal out-of-pocket costs and have them delivered right to their homes. Your patients can call the Member Choice Center at 1-877-363-1433 if they need assistance switching retail pharmacy prescriptions to the Mail Order Pharmacy.

For more information on the TRICARE Pharmacy Program, visit www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/Prescriptions or www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE. ■

TRICARE and the Veterans Health Administration

Partners in Health Care

When the time comes to refer your TRICARE patients to a specialist for care, one option is the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

With 153 medical centers and 765 community-based outpatient clinics, the VA's integrated health care system is one of the largest in the country. Through its many facilities, the VHA offers numerous treatment options for TRICARE beneficiaries.

All of the VA facilities in the TRICARE South Region are currently network providers with TRICARE. VA facilities that are not in the network may not be authorized to receive

payment for health care services received at their facilities. Therefore, when referring a TRICARE beneficiary to the VA for care, it is a good idea to verify that the facility is an authorized TRICARE network provider.

In addition to offering TRICARE beneficiaries access to common medical and surgical services, VHA also plays a significant role in the treatment of spinal cord injuries (SCIs), traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and blind rehabilitation (BR). In the TRICARE South Region, VHA has:

- SCI centers in Augusta, Ga.; Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, Texas; Memphis, Tenn.; and Miami and Tampa, Fla.

- A TBI center in Tampa, Fla.
- BR centers in Augusta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; Waco, Texas; and West Palm Beach, Fla.

The Tampa VA Medical Center has also been designated as a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center, designed to treat polytraumatic injuries and disabilities requiring specialized rehabilitation processes and coordination of care throughout the course of a patient's recovery.

With all of the specialized services offered by various VA facilities, it is important to remember the facility needs to be in the TRICARE network before you refer select TRICARE beneficiaries for services. ■

Depression and Antidepressant Medication Management

Patients diagnosed with depression may stop taking prescribed medication without consulting their physicians. As Humana Military Healthcare Services, Inc.'s behavioral health care partner for the TRICARE South Region, ValueOptions has recently begun an initiative to encourage all TRICARE beneficiaries diagnosed with depression, and who have been prescribed antidepressant medication, to continue taking their medication for the full course of treatment.

Because antidepressants may take several weeks of consistent use to reach therapeutic effect, it is important for you to stress to your patients that they take their medications as prescribed and not discontinue use without contacting you. Once initial antidepressant medication has been started, it may be necessary to change medications or add additional medication(s) until the patient experiences relief. Some patients diagnosed with depression are less likely to have a relapse if they continue the antidepressant medication for up to a year or longer.

ValueOptions is monitoring antidepressant compliance and is encouraging TRICARE beneficiaries diagnosed with depression to remain on a prescribed antidepressant for at least six months. We are also educating beneficiaries that it is important for them to inform their physicians about any side effects, especially those that may result in noncompliance. We will be reinforcing the need for patients to discuss discontinuation of any medication with their doctor rather than deciding to stop taking medications on their own.

Many patients find psychotherapy, in addition to medication management, beneficial in decreasing their symptoms. Many times combination therapy of medication and therapy results in the best outcomes. If you have any questions about how to refer a TRICARE beneficiary for psychotherapy, please contact ValueOptions at 1-800-700-8646. ■



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www.humana-military.com
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Claims
1-800-403-3950
www.myTRICARE.com

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



MILVAX: Your Source for Vaccine Information

The Military Vaccine (MILVAX) Agency is a Department of Defense (DoD) executive agency that works to enhance military medical readiness and protect human health by promoting immunization policy and practice and coordinating military immunization programs worldwide.

As a TRICARE provider, your primary source of information when you have questions about vaccinations should be the MILVAX Agency. It is particularly important when questions pertain to biodefense vaccines like anthrax and smallpox. Since biodefense vaccines are only available to certain military personnel and most civilian providers have limited knowledge of these vaccines, it is essential that you use the MILVAX Agency as the main source for scientific-based immunization information. For the agency's specialized information on these vaccines, visit www.smallpox.mil or www.anthrax.mil.

The MILVAX Agency also has 12 regional analysts throughout the United States and four at overseas locations who are available to assist you if you have questions about vaccinations for your TRICARE patients. To find the regional analyst closest to you, visit the MILVAX Agency's Web site at www.vaccines.mil/map.

For information on current DoD guidance on subjects such as seasonal influenza, visit www.vaccines.mil. The MILVAX Agency also offers on-site and online training. For more information, visit the Immunization University on the MILVAX Agency's Web site. Go to www.vaccines.mil and select "Imz University" from the menu on the left.

In addition to its online services, the MILVAX Agency offers a toll-free information line, 1-877-GET-VACC (1-877-438-8222), and an e-mail question-and-answer service (vaccines@amedd.army.mil), which guarantees you an answer to your questions within 24 hours. ■