

TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN #09 – 660 WORDS – 04/01/09

LEAD MUSIC (:03)

THIS IS THE TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN, AN UPDATE ON THE LATEST NEWS TO HELP YOU MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TRICARE BENEFIT. I'M AUSTIN CAMACHO (:10)

FIRST UP: A LOOK AT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION. APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH, AND ALCOHOL ABUSE HAS LONG BEEN A CONCERN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

ACCORDING TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE IS LINKED TO 79,000 DEATHS EACH YEAR.

AWARENESS BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING ALCOHOL CONTENT. IT'S NOT THE TYPE OF ALCOHOLIC DRINK, BUT THE AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL CONSUMED THAT AFFECTS A PERSON.

A STANDARD DRINK CONTAINS SIX TENTHS OF AN OUNCE OF PURE ALCOHOL. GENERALLY, THERE'S THAT MUCH ALCOHOL IN 12 OUNCES OF BEER OR A WINE COOLER, 8 OUNCES OF MALT LIQUOR, 5 OUNCES OF WINE, OR AN OUNCE AND A HALF OF 80-PROOF LIQUOR.

NEARLY 17.6 MILLION AMERICAN ADULTS ARE ALCOHOLICS OR HAVE ALCOHOL PROBLEMS.

THE FOUR MAIN SYMPTOMS OF ALCOHOLISM ARE:

THE CRAVING, LOSS OF CONTROL, PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE AND TOLERANCE – THAT IS, THE NEED TO DRINK MORE AND MORE TO FEEL THE EFFECTS.

ALCOHOLISM IS A DISEASE THAT LASTS A LIFETIME. ALCOHOL ABUSE IS DIFFERENT FROM ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE. ABUSERS MAY NOT BE ADDICTED TO ALCOHOL, BUT THE DRINKING AFFECTS THEIR HEALTH, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OR ABILITY TO WORK. ABUSE INCLUDES HEAVY DRINKING, BINGE DRINKING OR BOTH.

HEAVY DRINKING IS MORE THAN TWO DRINKS PER DAY FOR MEN, OR MORE THAN ONE FOR WOMEN. BINGE DRINKING IS FIVE OR MORE DRINKS DURING A SINGLE OCCASION FOR MEN OR FOUR OR MORE DRINKS FOR WOMEN.

DOD DEVELOPED A WEB SITE AND CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BINGE DRINKING AT WWW.THATGUY.COM. TRICARE LAUNCHED AN INFORMATIONAL WEB PAGE THIS MONTH AT TRICARE.MIL/ALCOHOLAWARESS TO FOCUS ON BINGE DRINKING, ALCOHOLISM AND UNDERAGE DRINKING.

NEXT, TRICARE HAS INCREASED PAYMENTS FOR BENEFICIARIES WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS, AS ANNMARIE FELICIO REPORTS.

EFFECTIVE APRIL FIRST, TRICARE HAS INCREASED THE AMOUNT IT WILL PAY FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS IN THE EXTENDED CARE HEALTH OPTION, OR ECHO PROGRAM. THE ECHO PROGRAM

ASSISTS ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS OF ACTIVE DUTY SPONSORS WHO ARE DIAGNOSED WITH MODERATE OR SEVERE MENTAL RETARDATION, OR A SERIOUS PHYSICAL DISABILITY. THE INCREASE INCLUDES THE TRICARE ENHANCED ACCESS TO AUTISM SERVICES DEMONSTRATION BENEFIT. CHANGE

SPECIFICALLY, THE COST SHARE FOR TRAINING, REHABILITATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES WAS INCREASED TO 36 THOUSAND DOLLARS PER FISCAL YEAR. THE INCREASE ALSO COVERS INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN PRIVATE NONPROFIT, PUBLIC, AND STATE INSTITUTIONS AND FACILITIES AND, IF APPROPRIATE, TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THEM.

BEFORE THIS, ALL ECHO BENEFITS EXCEPT ECHO HOME HEALTH CARE WERE SUBJECT TO A GOVERNMENT COST-SHARE LIMIT OF 2,500 DOLLARS PER MONTH. THE ECHO INCREASE WAS SIGNED INTO LAW ON OCT. 14, 2008. SO TRICARE URGES ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES TO SUBMIT CLAIMS FOR ANY OUT-OF-POCKET PAYMENTS FOR THE IDENTIFIED ECHO SERVICES RECEIVED ON OR AFTER OCT. 14, 2008.

FOR THE TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M ANNEMARIE
FELICIO.

AND FINALLY, TRICARE WANTS NEW FAMILIES TO STAY
CONNECTED. SINCE 2006, TRICARE HAS FUNDED
ECARECONNECT, A NEWSLETTER SERVICE THAT HELPS DOD
HOSPITALS COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH
EXPECTANT PARENTS AND NEW FAMILIES. E-CARE-CONNECT
GIVES THEM IMPORTANT RESEARCH-BASED HEALTH
INFORMATION CUSTOMIZED TO THEIR STAGE OF PARENTHOOD.
MORE THAN 20,000 BENEFICIARIES HAVE BENEFITED FROM THIS
E-MAIL-BASED COMMUNICATION SERVICE AT 18 ARMY AND
NAVY HOSPITALS.

MILITARY HOSPITALS WITH MORE THAN 500 BIRTHS ANNUALLY
CAN CUSTOMIZE THE NEWSLETTER FOR THEIR PATIENTS. THE
STANDARD WEEKLY E-MAIL NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE TO
EVERYONE AND TRICARE PROVIDES IT FREE FOR ALL NEW AND
EXPECTANT PARENT PATIENTS IN THE MILITARY.

THE PARENT REVIEW, THE COMPANY THAT PRODUCES ECARECONNECT, SAYS THAT DOD NOW HAS MORE THAN 21 THOUSAND ACTIVE SUBSCRIBERS TO THE WEEKLY E-MAILS. TRICARE ENCOURAGES PREGNANT BENEFICIARIES TO SUBSCRIBE TO THIS SERVICE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VALUABLE INFORMATION INCLUDED. YOU CAN GET DETAILS AT YOUR NEAREST MILITARY TREATMENT FACILITY OR SIGN UP AT WWW.THEPARENTREVIEW.COM/DOD.

AND THAT'S TODAY'S TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN. WE'LL HAVE MORE NEWS YOU CAN USE NEXT WEEK. (:03)

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