

TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN – JANUARY 21, 2011 – 776 WORDS

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 DAVE HAFT. (:10)

FIRST UP: TRICARE'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REAR ADMIRAL CHRISTINE HUNTER RECENTLY SHARED HER THOUGHTS ON THE NEW PATIENT-CENTERED "MEDICAL HOME" CONCEPT. ANNEMARIE FELICIO NOW REPORTS HOW THIS CONCEPT CAN HELP PATIENTS RECEIVE MORE COMPREHENSIVE CARE AND A BETTER OVERALL HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE.

WOULDN'T IT BE FANTASTIC TO GET THE OLD-FASHIONED KIND OF HEALTH CARE, IN WHICH THE DOCTOR KNEW YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND KEPT TRACK OF YOUR MEDICAL CONDITION, BUT WITH THE ADDED CONVENIENCE AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE INFORMATION THAT MODERN TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES?

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT TRICARE IS WORKING TO PROVIDE AS IT ROLLS OUT THE NEW PATIENT-CENTERED "MEDICAL HOME" TO AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ITS BENEFICIARIES.

REAR ADMIRAL CHRISTINE HUNTER RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE CONCEPT WITH THE AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE (AFPS) AND DEFINED THE MEDICAL HOME AS A TEAM OF DOCTORS CONSISTING OF A PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN , A PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT, A NURSE AND MEDICAL TECHNICIANS. SHE EXPLAINED THAT WHEN YOU VISIT A HOSPITAL OR CLINIC OR CALL IN WITH A QUESTION OR CONCERN, YOU CAN SEE OR TALK TO A MEMBER OF THAT TEAM --

RADM HUNTER

"YEARS AGO TRICARE RECOGNIZED THE VALUE OF PATENTS BEING ASSOCIATED WITH A PRIMARY CARE MANAGER, SOMEONE WHO IS SORT OF A QUARTERBACK OF YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM. IF A PRIMARY CARE MANAGER, YOUR CLINICIAN AND SOMETIMES FOR PEOPLE THAT'S A PHYSICIAN AND SOMETIMES FOR PEOPLE THAT MIGHT BE A NURSE PRACTITIONER, YOUR SORT OF PRINCIPLE

CLINICIAN, IF THAT'S PERSON IS THE CENTER OF YOUR MEDICAL TEAM THEN COULD WE CRAFT A TEAM BASED APPROACH THAT ALLOWS US TO GET THAT ACCESS ALL THE TIME TO AT LEAST A MEMBER OF THE TEAM EVEN IF YOUR PRINCIPLE PROVIDER WASN'T IN'

THE TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY BEGAN INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT LAST YEAR. ALREADY, 655,000 OF ITS 9.6 MILLION BENEFICIARIES ARE ENROLLED IN A MEDICAL HOME. HUNTER'S GOAL IS TO INCREASE THAT NUMBER TO 2 MILLION BY THE END OF 2011. WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, SHE HOPES TO SEE AS MANY AS 3 MILLION BENEFICIARIES ENROLLED IN A MEDICAL HOME.

FOR TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M ANNEMARIE FELICIO.

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THE SIGNING OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA) OF FISCAL YEAR 2011 INTO LAW ENABLES TRICARE TO EXTEND COVERAGE TO ELIGIBLE ADULT CHILDREN UP TO AGE 26.

BEGINNING LATER THIS SPRING, QUALIFIED, UNMARRIED TRICARE DEPENDENTS UP TO AGE 26 WILL BE ABLE TO PURCHASE TRICARE COVERAGE ON A MONTH-TO-MONTH BASIS – AS LONG AS THEY ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THEIR OWN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED HEALTH COVERAGE.

INITIALLY, THE TRICARE YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM (TYA) WILL BE A PREMIUM-BASED TRICARE STANDARD BENEFIT. ELIGIBLE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO RECEIVE HEALTH CARE BETWEEN NOW AND THE DATE THE PROGRAM IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED MAY WANT TO PURCHASE TYA RETROACTIVELY AND SHOULD SAVE THEIR RECEIPTS. PREMIUMS WILL HAVE TO BE PAID BACK TO JAN. 1, 2011 IN ORDER TO OBTAIN REIMBURSEMENT.

THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT OF 2010 REQUIRED CIVILIAN HEALTH PLANS TO OFFER COVERAGE TO ADULT

CHILDREN UNTIL AGE 26. TRICARE PREVIOUSLY MET OR EXCEEDED KEY TENETS OF NATIONAL HEALTH REFORM BUT DID NOT INCLUDE THIS EXPANDED COVERAGE FOR ADULT CHILDREN. DEPENDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR TRICARE PREVIOUSLY ENDED AT AGE 21 OR AGE 23 FOR FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS.

FINALLY: NICK ROEDER REPORTS ON FLU CASES RISING NATIONALLY AND WHAT BENEFICIARIES NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLU VACCINE OPTIONS.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT FLUVIEW REPORT RELEASED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC), SEVERAL STATES - ALABAMA, ARIZONA, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, LOUISIANA, NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA – ALREADY HAVE WIDESPREAD REPORTS OF FLU. WITH FLU SEASON WELL UNDERWAY, TRICARE BENEFICIARIES WHO HAVE NOT GOTTEN VACCINATED SHOULD DO SO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BENEFICIARIES 6 MONTHS OF AGE AND OLDER SHOULD ALSO GET VACCINATED, ACCORDING TO THE CDC. OLDER, PREGNANT AND YOUNG BENEFICIARIES ARE ESPECIALLY AT HIGH RISK FOR SERIOUS

FLU COMPLICATIONS. IMMUNIZATION IS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY FOR PREGNANT BENEFICIARIES, BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO MAY BECOME PREGNANT DURING FLU SEASON. THE INJECTABLE SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE IS SAFE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN ANY TRIMESTER.

THE 2010-2011 FLU VACCINE PROTECTS AGAINST THREE DIFFERENT FLU VIRUSES: H3N2, INFLUENZA B AND THE H1N1 VIRUS THAT CAUSED SO MUCH ILLNESS LAST SEASON.

TRICARE BENEFICIARIES CAN GET THE FLU VACCINE AT NO COST FROM MILITARY TREATMENT FACILITIES (MTFS), TRICARE-AUTHORIZED PROVIDERS OR AT ANY OF THE 50,000 PARTICIPATING NETWORK PHARMACIES.

FOR TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M NICK ROEDER.

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

TAIL MUSIC (:03)