TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN #14 – 663 WORDS – 05/07/09

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: MAY IS PATIENT SAFETY MONTH, AND TRICARE URGES PATIENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR MEDICAL CARE. WHEN PATIENTS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND USE A TEAM APPROACH IT BUILDS TRUST IN A CONSTRUCTIVE PROVIDER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP.

THE TEAM UP CHECKLIST IS A DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE THAT WILL HELP BENEFICIARIES COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THEIR PRIMARY CARE MANAGERS. TEAM UP IS AN ACRONYM.

T - **TEAM TOGETHER.** SO CHOOSE TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF YOUR CARE TEAM.

E - EDUCATE YOURSELF. ASK MEMBERS OF YOUR CARE TEAM TO REPEAT THEIR NAMES AND EXPLAIN THEIR ROLES. KNOW THE PLAN FOR TREATMENT AND YOUR ROLE IN IT.

A - **ASK QUESTIONS. LIKE,** WHAT IS GONG ON WITH MY CARE NOW? WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION? WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS TO CONSIDER?

M - MANAGE YOUR MEDICATIONS. PROVIDE A LIST OF MEDICATIONS YOU USE. WRITE DOWN WHAT MEDICATIONS ARE PRESCRIBED AND WHY. READ EACH MEDICATION LABEL CAREFULLY.

U - **UNDERSTAND CHANGES IN THE GAME PLAN.** LISTEN TO HOW THE GAME PLAN HAS CHANGED. ASK QUESTIONS.

AND P - PROVIDE YOUR PERSPECTIVE - SHARE ALL YOUR FEELINGS WITH YOUR CARE TEAM. RAISE CONCERNS IMMEDIATELY.

USING THE TEAM UP APPROACH WILL HELP YOU HELP YOUR DOCTORS KEEP YOU SAFE.

NEXT, TRICARE CHECKS YOUR SATISFACTION, AS ANNMARIE FELICIO REPORTS.

THE LATEST TRICARE QUARTERLY SURVEY FOUND MORE THAN 60 PERCENT OF TRICARE PRIME ENROLLEES IN THE UNITED STATES RATED THE HEALTH PLAN AT AN EIGHT OR ABOVE ON A SCALE OF ZERO TO 10, VERY SIMILAR TO CIVILIAN PLANS WHEN ADJUSTED FOR DIFFERENCES IN AGE AND HEALTH STATUS.

EVERY QUARTER A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF TRICARE BENEFICIARIES ARE ASKED ABOUT THEIR CARE IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS. THESE RATINGS ARE COMPARED WITH AVERAGES TAKEN FROM THE NATIONAL CONSUMER

ASSESSMENT OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND SYSTEMS BENCHMARKING DATABASE. THIS DATABASE CONTAINS RESULTS FROM SURVEYS GIVEN TO USERS OF MOST ACCREDITED CIVILIAN HEALTH PLANS.

TRICARE BENEFICIARIES ARE SURVEYED ABOUT WHETHER THEY HAVE USED THE MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM OR NOT, AND WHETHER THEY USE MILITARY TREATMENT FACILITIES OR CIVILIAN PROVIDERS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SURVEY WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT BENEFICIARY OPINIONS ABOUT THEIR HEALTH CARE BENEFITS.

DATA COLLECTED ON CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CLAIMS PROCESSING FOUND TRICARE'S RATINGS CLIMBED FROM 2006 TO 2008 WITH 63 PERCENT OF RESPONDING BENEFICIARIES GIVING TRICARE AN EIGHT OR ABOVE ON CUSTOMER SERVICE. MORE THAN 88 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS RATED TRICARE AN EIGHT OR ABOVE ON THE TIMELINESS.

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

AND FINALLY, A REMINDER ABOUT TRICARE ACCESS STANDARDS FROM LORRAINE CWIEKA.

TRICARE HAS ESTABLISHED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR ACCESS TO CARE. THESE STANDARDS ARE DESIGNED TO INSURE THAT ALL TRICARE BENEFICIARIES TO GET HEALTH CARE IN A TIMELY MANNER AND WITHIN A REASONABLE DISTANCE. THIS IS TRUE WHETHER THEY ARE ENROLLED IN ONE OF THE TRICARE PRIME OPTIONS OR ARE RECEIVING HEALTH CARE SERVICES UNDER TRICARE STANDARD.

IN GENERAL, ACCESS STANDARDS FOR CARE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING TIMEFRAMES:

THE WAIT TIME FOR AN URGENT CARE APPOINTMENT SHOULD NOT EXCEED 24 HOURS.

THE WAIT TIME FOR A ROUTINE APPOINTMENT SHOULD NOT EXCEED ONE WEEK.

AND THE WAIT TIME FOR A SPECIALTY CARE APPOINTMENT OR WELLNESS VISIT SHOULD NOT EXCEED FOUR WEEKS.
IN ADDITION, AS AN ENROLLED BENEFICIARY YOU SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER WHOSE OFFICE IS WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF YOUR HOME UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SPECIALTY CARE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE WITHIN ONE HOUR FROM YOUR HOME.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCESS STANDARDS IN YOUR AREA, YOU SHOULD DIRECT THEM TO YOUR REGIONAL CONTRACTOR.

FOR THE TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M LORRAINE CWIEKA.

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

TAIL MUSIC (:03)