

TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN – AUGUST 6 - 669 WORDS (612)

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: THE TRANSITION TO TRICARE FOR LIFE SHOULD BE SMOOTH, AS LORRAINE CWIEKA REPORTS.

IF YOU BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE AT AGE 65 OR BECAUSE OF DISABILITY OR END STAGE RENAL DISEASE, YOUR TRICARE COVERAGE WILL CHANGE. WHEN YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR TRICARE AND HAVE MEDICARE PARTS A AND B, YOU ARE COVERED BY TRICARE FOR LIFE, OR TFL.

TFL PAYS AFTER MEDICARE PAYS FOR ALL SERVICES COVERED BY BOTH MEDICARE AND TRICARE. THERE'S NO ENROLLMENT

FOR TFL, BUT THERE ARE STEPS TO FOLLOW TO MAKE SURE YOU REMAIN TRICARE ELIGIBLE.

FIRST, ENROLL IN MEDICARE PART B. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FILING FOR MEDICARE VISIT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AT **WWW.SSA.GOV**.

ONCE YOU HAVE MEDICARE A AND B, VERIFY THAT YOUR RECORD IN DEERS HAS BEEN UPDATED. IF YOU HAVE MEDICARE PART A, YOU MUST ALSO HAVE MEDICARE PART B TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR TRICARE.

THERE ARE A FEW EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE, SUCH AS WHEN YOU HAVE A SPONSOR ON ACTIVE DUTY, YOU ARE ENROLLED IN THE US FAMILY HEALTH PLAN, OR IF YOU ARE A NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVE MEMBER OR FAMILY MEMBER IN TRICARE RESERVE SELECT.

VISIT **WWW.TRICARE4U.COM** AND LEARN MORE ABOUT TFL.

FOR TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M LORRAINE CWIEKA.

NEXT, A RECENT STUDY FOUND FEWER ETHNIC AND RACIAL HEALTH DISPARITIES AMONG TRICARE BENEFICIARIES THAN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

AN ARTICLE IN THE JULY ISSUE OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION" SAID THAT MINORITY TRICARE BENEFICIARIES REPORTED POSITIVELY ON MANY MEASURES OF HEALTH IN EQUAL OR GREATER PROPORTIONS COMPARED TO WHITES. THOSE MEASURES INCLUDED FINDING A DOCTOR, RECEIVING PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES, AND GETTING RESPECT FROM THE DOCTOR.

THERE ARE DISPARITIES IN ACCESS TO CARE, QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE, PERCEPTION OF CARE, AND RATES OF DISEASE IN THE GENERAL POPULATION BETWEEN RACES AND ETHNICITIES, INCOME AND EDUCATION LEVELS AND OTHER FACTORS.

RESEARCHERS USED DATA FROM THE 2006 HEALTH CARE SURVEY OF DOD BENEFICIARIES TO EXAMINE HEALTH STATUS, ACCESS TO AND SATISFACTION WITH CARE, AND USE OF PREVENTIVE CARE. THEY COMPARED TRICARE TO COMMERCIAL HEALTH CARE PLANS AND DATA FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S LATEST REPORT ON HEALTH DISPARITIES.

ASPECTS OF MILITARY CULTURE MAKE DOD A MODEL FOR DECREASING ETHNIC AND RACIAL HEALTH DIFFERENCES. BY PROVIDING HEALTH CARE TO ALL SERVICE MEMBERS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND RETIREES, DOD PROVIDES EQUAL ACCESS TO CARE. ALSO, PHYSICAL FITNESS IS IMPORTANT IN THE MILITARY AND ACTIVE-DUTY PERSONNEL CAN BE COMPELLED TO OBTAIN PREVENTIVE SERVICES.

AND FINALLY, ANN MARIE FELICIO REMINDS US THAT A SIMPLE ITCH CAN BE A REAL PROBLEM.

AUGUST IS PSORIASIS AWARENESS MONTH AND TRICARE WANTS TO MAKE SURE BENEFICIARIES KNOW ABOUT THE SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT.

PSORIASIS IS A SKIN DISEASE DRIVEN BY THE IMMUNE SYSTEM. IT CAUSES SKIN IRRITATION AND REDNESS. NEW SKIN CELLS USUALLY RISE TO THE SURFACE ONCE A MONTH, BUT PSORIASIS CAUSES THE SKIN TO GROW EIGHT TIMES FASTER THAN NORMAL.

ABOUT 7.5 MILLION AMERICANS HAVE PSORIASIS. IT MAY AFFECT SKIN ANYWHERE ON THE BODY BUT ISN'T CONTAGIOUS. IT NORMALLY BEGINS BETWEEN 15 AND 35.

MILD PSORIASIS CAN BE TREATED WITH MEDICATIONS SUCH AS CREAMS, MOISTURIZERS AND OINTMENTS. IN SEVERE CASES, HOSPITAL STAYS OR MEDICINES TO SUPPRESS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM MAY BE REQUIRED.

SYMPTOMS MAY DISAPPEAR FOR YEARS BUT SOME SUFFERERS MAY HAVE FLARE-UPS. BENEFICIARIES WITH PSORIASIS NEED TO BE AWARE OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS THAT MAY TRIGGER OR WORSEN AN ATTACK: DRY AIR OR DRY SKIN, INSECT BITES, SUNBURN, BACTERIAL OR VIRAL INFECTIONS, AND STRESS.

SKIN IRRITATION AND RASHES SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. GET CHECKED OUT BY YOUR PRIMARY CARE MANAGER IF A SKIN PROBLEM LASTS FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS.

FOR TRICARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, I'M ANN MARIE FELICIO.

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

TAIL MUSIC (:03)