

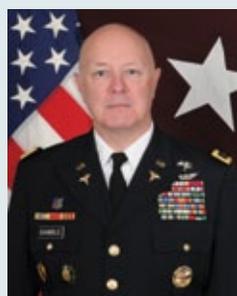
The Doctor is in ...

Electronic Health Records and You

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Health professionals have long known the promise of electronic health records. For more than two decades, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have been working together to apply the benefits of this fast evolving technology. The Departments already share more clinical health information than any

two health care systems in the world and, together, will comprise the largest integrated health network in the world, with more than 18 million total members worldwide.

The new DoD/VA Interagency Program Office (IPO), where I serve as Director, is responsible for implementing an integrated Electronic Health Record (iEHR) for the DoD and VA. When operational, the iEHR will follow you from the first day of your military career, throughout your lifetime. It will be the single source for service members, veterans and beneficiaries to access their medical history. Additionally, it will ensure the seamless transition of care when service members go from active duty to veteran status.

Your complete medical record will follow you when you move, switch medical providers or need emergency care while traveling. Your family medical history and medical allergies will be immediately available to every doctor or nurse who treats you within DoD and VA health systems. With the ability to view consistent and comprehensive patient data, medical providers will be able to give you better care.

Researchers will also be able to study trends, securely and privately, across the large population in the system. This can lead to new medical breakthroughs that benefit everyone. For example, we can develop a registry of diabetes patients to measure the outcomes of current treatments to improve treatment protocols and quality of care now and for generations to come. A diabetes patient registry could help us minimize the number of amputations or instances of blindness.

The iEHR is a key component of the President's Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) initiative—a groundbreaking vision for the future of electronic data sharing among federal agencies and the private sector. If you receive private sector health care, VLER Health is a way to send those requests for care out to the private sector and, most importantly, to bring that data back. This ensures you have a complete medical record that captures all the information about all the care you receive.

We are committed to a fully operational iEHR no later than 2017, with clinical capabilities deployed in Hampton Roads, Va., and San Antonio by 2014—a significant challenge, but one that is critical for our nation's service members, veterans and beneficiaries.

For more information about the DoD/VA IPO, visit www.tricare.mil/tma/ipo. To learn more about the role of electronic health records in today's medicine, go to www.healthit.hhs.gov. ■

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An Important Note About TRICARE Program Information: At the time of printing, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended. **Military treatment facility guidelines and policies may be different than those outlined in this publication.** For the most recent information, contact your TRICARE regional contractor, TRICARE Service Center, or local military treatment facility.

Stay Healthy for the Holidays

Throughout the holiday season and into the new year, you may face many choices that impact your overall health, from what you eat to how you exercise to whether you go to the doctor.

Food choices, physical activity, sleep, stress, tobacco use, alcohol use and behavioral health all impact your well-being. For instance, unhealthy eating and little exercise over the holidays can lead to higher blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose, plus weight gain. These are major risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

You can reduce your risk of serious health problems by making good decisions during the holiday season and throughout the year, including:

- **Eating a balanced diet.** Choosing healthy meals and snacks can help you maintain a healthy weight. Even when holiday treats are in great supply, don't skip your vegetables, fruits and healthy sources of protein, including poultry and fish. A well-balanced diet will give you the vitamins and nutrients you need to keep up your energy, immunity and overall health. Ask your doctor if you think you may need to change your diet by reducing salt intake, eating fewer calories, adding supplements or making other changes.
- **Enjoying holiday treats in moderation.** For most people, it is difficult to avoid the rich foods of the holiday season. You can help prevent overindulging by eating healthy snacks before holiday meals or parties. Watch your portion sizes—try using a small plate, or filling more than half of your plate with vegetables.

- **Exercising regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and help lower your blood pressure and cholesterol. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults get two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., brisk walking) every week and do muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week.¹ You can make small changes to move more, including taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking farther from your destination at the office or shopping mall.
- **Not using tobacco.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease, lung disease, cancer and other diseases. Smokeless tobacco use can also cause life-threatening problems including cancer.
- **Limiting alcohol consumption.** Alcohol use can cause high blood pressure and contribute to weight gain. Limit your intake of alcohol and any other high-sugar or high-calorie beverages. If you drink alcohol, do so responsibly and in moderation.
- **Managing stress.** Don't let the holiday season get the best of you. Stress contributes to health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Make time for stress-relieving activities such as exercise, yoga or meditation.
- **Seeing your doctor regularly.** Your doctor can conduct tests to see if you need to change your diet or exercise, and may prescribe medications to help you control cholesterol, blood pressure or blood glucose.

Visit www.tricare.mil/healthyliving for healthy living tips. ■

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>

Fight the Flu: Get Vaccinated

As the flu season begins, TRICARE encourages you to get a flu vaccine. There are two forms of influenza vaccines distributed in the United States: a shot and a nasal spray. Both versions of the flu vaccine are available without copayments or cost-shares to all TRICARE beneficiaries.

While TRICARE recommends that all beneficiaries get vaccinated, it is important to remember that certain people are at a higher risk from the flu, including:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months old
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel

- Everyone between the ages of 6 months and 24 years
- People ages 25–64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems
- Older people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma or HIV

During flu season, avoid close contact with sick people and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

For more information about military treatment facilities, providers and pharmacies that offer the flu vaccine, please visit www.tricare.mil/flu. ■

Know the Signs of Serious Head Injuries in Children

No matter how careful parents are, head injuries are common in children. They can happen at any time at any age—while taking first baby steps, learning to ride a bike or participating in a sport or other activity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports an increase in the number of emergency department visits for traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), including an increase in youth visits for TBIs from sports and recreation-related injuries.¹ Part of the reason for the higher number of visits is an increased awareness of TBIs and concussions. The American Academy of Pediatrics® recommends that you call your child's doctor for anything more than a light bump on the head. If your child is unconscious, call 911 immediately.

The effects of brain injuries are not always outwardly visible. Paying attention to your child's behavior, especially within the first 24 hours after a head injury, is very important. The table on the right lists signs of a more serious injury. Here are some tips to prevent or minimize head injuries:

- **Wear protective gear.** Make sure your child wears a helmet and safety equipment, especially during riding activities and contact sports. Helmets should be fitted to your child's head and in good condition.
- **Buckle up.** Make sure your child is in a safety seat or uses the seatbelt appropriately while riding in a car.
- **Childproof your home.** Rearrange furniture that can cause tripping, install safety gates near stairways and store away items that could easily topple from high areas.
- **No rough play or activities after a head injury.** Make sure your child takes it easy until his or her doctor tells you otherwise.

Signs of Serious Head Injury

- Difficulty waking up or excessive sleepiness
- An obvious, serious wound
- Seizure
- Slurred speech or confusion
- Abnormal breathing
- Neck pain or stiffness
- A constant headache, particularly one that gets worse
- Dizziness that doesn't go away or repeatedly occurs
- Difficulty recognizing familiar people
- Bleeding or fluid from the nose, ears or mouth
- Vomiting repeatedly
- Weakness or paralysis
- Difficulty walking
- Constant ringing in the ears
- Double or blurred vision
- Unusual paleness that lasts for more than an hour
- Unequal size of the pupils (the dark center part of the eyes)
- High irritability or abnormal behavior

For more kid-friendly information about head injuries, visit www.kidshealth.org and www.healthychildren.org. To learn more about patient safety, visit the Health Net Federal Services, LLC website at www.hnfs.com and select "I'm a Beneficiary," then click "Resources" and "Patient Safety." ■

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6039a1.htm>

Why Take a Health Risk Assessment?

Do you know how healthy you are? You can learn more by taking a health risk assessment (HRA) from Health Net Federal Services, LLC (Health Net). An HRA gives you an overall evaluation of your health, showing you areas where you are doing well and areas where you can improve. It offers suggestions to help you take charge of your health and reduce your disease risk factors.

Completing an HRA is simple and only takes 15–20 minutes. The HRA will ask basic questions, including your age, gender, height, weight and waist measurement. It will ask for your cholesterol and blood glucose measurements. The HRA will also ask you questions about your health behaviors as they relate to nutrition, physical activity, stress, alcohol and

tobacco use, skin protection, injury prevention and age- and gender-related health screenings.

Within seconds of entering your information in the online HRA, you will receive a personalized action plan that rates your health and identifies your health risks. With this risk information, the HRA goes on to suggest changes you can make to live healthier. Along with your personalized action plan, you'll have access to health information and resources including videos, recipes and a medical library. You can also take Health Net's online programs and teleclasses. Talk with your doctor about your results and any concerns you may have.

Visit www.hnfs.com and click on "I'm a Beneficiary," then select "Wellness" to get started. ■

TRICARE HealthMatters

Health Net Federal Services, LLC
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TRICARE

An Excellent Value

- Generous coverage
- Superior health care
- Decisions are health driven, not insurance driven
- High satisfaction with care
- Low out-of-pocket costs
- Easy access



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Using TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery

If you fill prescriptions at retail pharmacies, you can reduce your out-of-pocket costs by switching to TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. Rarely, TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery may be unable to fill your prescription. There are steps you can take to avoid having your prescription returned:

- Ask your doctor to send prescriptions electronically to Express Scripts Mail Pharmacy. Electronic prescriptions are less likely to have missing or illegible information.
- If you do submit a prescription via mail, make sure your name, your sponsor's Social Security number or 11-digit Department of Defense Benefits Number, your date of birth and your address are clearly written on the back of the prescription.

- If you receive a message from Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts), call back within two business days to help fill your prescription quickly. The customer service department is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your prescription may also be returned or denied if the medication is not covered. If you are prescribed a new medication and you are not sure whether it is covered, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or check the formulary search tool online at http://pec.ha.osd.mil/formulary_search.php.

For more information, visit www.tricare.mil/homedelivery or Express Scripts at www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE. You can also call the Member Choice Center at 1-877-363-1433 to transfer existing prescriptions to home delivery. ■

Fee for Insufficient Funds

Effective Oct. 1, 2012, Health Net Federal Services, LLC is assessing a \$20 administrative fee for enrollment fee payments that are unsuccessful because of insufficient or unavailable funds. Beneficiaries will be billed the \$20 administrative fee along with the outstanding payment amount, and payment received will be first applied to the \$20 fee, with the remaining amount applied to the enrollment fee. ■