



TRICARE HELP E-MAIL SERVICE (THEMS) NEWSLETTER

MAY 2002

Volume 1, Issue 2

TRICARE_help@amedd.army.mil

“Helping to Understand”



TRICARE Help Newsletter

This newsletter is a publication of the TRICARE Help E-mail Service, operated by the US Army Medical Command in San Antonio, Texas.

THEMS

What is THEMS?

THEMS is a free e-mail service that provides quick answers to TRICARE questions. Clinical questions should be referred to your primary care provider. The e-mail address is:
TRICARE_help@amedd.army.mil



Click here to send your TRICARE questions, concerns, or comments.

TRICARE While Traveling

With the vacation season fast approaching, this month's theme is TRICARE while traveling.

Denied claims for care received out of the local area account for many of

the denied or point of service claims. Failure to properly file the claim is one of the most common problems. Here are some pointers to facilitate the processing of your claims: TRICARE claims must be filed to the claims address for the region in which the patient lives on the date of service. For example: providers in Virginia are accustomed to filing claims to Palmetto GBA in South Carolina. If a patient from Texas gets medical care while on vacation in Virginia, the patient needs to make sure the provider mails the claim to WPS in Wisconsin, **not the Palmetto address the provider normally uses.**

Here is a link to a web page with the claims address for each state and overseas area:

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/claims/Wheretofile.htm>

When you give a provider your address, make sure to provide your home address, **not the temporary address where**

you are visiting. A patient address on the claim that does not match the address in DEERS will prevent the claim from processing correctly. Prime and Prime Remote enrollees should always seek prior authorization before seeking care while away from home. The only exception to this rule is an emergency, which a reasonable layperson would believe endangers life, limb, or eyesight. Even in the case of an emergency, the patient or a family member should seek an authorization for treatment as soon as reasonably possible.

When calling for an authorization from outside the local area, it is usually easiest to call the toll free number (a listing of regional toll free numbers is included in this newsletter) and speak to a health care finder. Make sure you get the name of the health care finder to whom you are speaking. It is usually a good idea to call or visit your

TRICARE Service Center before you travel. They can explain pertinent local policies. Please note that you may need to contact your local telephone company to find out how to access a toll free number from outside the United States.

If you do encounter problems with your claims, please contact either a customer service representative at the TRICARE Service Center or the Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator at the nearest military treatment facility. Either can help you, but it is important to seek help in a timely fashion.

If you Need Prescription Medication While Traveling

When you are outside of your TRICARE region, the following guidelines apply: Make sure you bring along enough of your prescription medications to last for the entire trip. If you have to fill a prescription while outside of your TRICARE region, you will have to pay the entire amount out of your own pocket and then seek reimbursement from TRICARE when you return home. If you are

enrolled in Prime, you may be assessed a Point Of Service charge unless you call the health care finder and obtain an authorization. When traveling within your region, pay only the copayment by using a network pharmacy. If you are taking a long vacation and you want to make sure you don't run out of medicine while you are away, the National Mail-Order Pharmacy (NMOP) can help. You can receive up to a 90-day supply when you order your medications through the NMOP. For additional information and to register with the NMOP call (800) 903-4680.

Websites:

- <http://www.merck-medco.com/> (for additional information)
- <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/ClaimForms> (to download claim forms)

Regional Toll Free Numbers

www.tricare.osd.mil/main/tollfree.htm

Northeast (1)
1-888-999-5195

Mid-Atlantic (2)
1-800-931-9501

Southeast (3)
1-800-444-5445

Gulfsouth (4)
1-800-444-5445

Heartland (5)
1-800-941-4501

Southwest (6)
1-800-406-2832

Central (7/8)
1-888-874-9378

Southern California (9)
1-800-242-6788

Golden Gate (10)
1-800-242-6788

Northwest (11)
1-800-404-2042

TRICARE Pacific
Hawaii
1-800-242-6788
WESTPAC
1-888-777-8343

Latin American & Canada
1-888-777-8343

Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands
1-888-777-8343

Europe
1-888-777-8343