



August 9, 2024

The Honorable Lester Martinez-Lopez, MD
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
1200 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Assistant Secretary Martinez-Lopez

The Military Coalition (TMC) represents more than 5.5 million service members, veterans, their families, and survivors. With the transition to the next generation of TRICARE contracts (T-5) currently underway, TMC urges your office and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to provide guidance and oversight on factors critical to ensuring a smooth transition.

Approximately 4.5 million beneficiaries reside in states impacted by a T-5 contractor transition and/or TRICARE region boundary change. Past TRICARE contract transitions have been rife with challenges, presenting military families with increased barriers to access, disruptions in care, and excessive wait times for customer service to address these issues.

GAO evaluations of past TRICARE contract transitions have highlighted DHA's essential role in transition guidance and oversight. As DHA and managed care support contractors move forward with T-5, we urge you to address the following factors:

- Provider networks are paramount to access and key to minimizing care disruptions. It is critical that contractors establish robust networks and leverage T-5 contract updates to fix network shortfalls in areas where providers exist but aren't currently part of the TRICARE network.
- The TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration and TRICARE Childbirth and Breastfeeding Support Demonstration must be managed to minimize care disruptions for beneficiaries relying on these services.
- Case management warm hand-offs and customer service escalation resources are critical for beneficiaries undergoing treatment for chronic and serious medical conditions during the T-5 transition.
- Communication and call center support are needed for beneficiaries disenrolled due to problems with monthly fee payment transition, Defense Manpower Data Center record adjustments, or other issues.

We appreciate Department of Defense leadership's promise to provide world-class health care to military families. TRICARE is a key component of the compensation and benefits package that sustains the all-volunteer force. TMC agrees that commitments and sacrifices made by servicemembers, retirees, their

families and survivors merit a world-class health care benefit – we appreciate on-going engagement with DHA as we all strive to ensure a smooth T-5 transition. Thank you for your continued support of our military community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack DuTill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "D".

President,
The Military Coalition

CC: Lieutenant General Telita Crosland, Director, Defense Health Agency

See attached list of organizations

The Military Coalition:

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
Air and Space Forces Association (ASFA)
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA)
Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)
Blue Star Families
Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service (COA)
Chief Warrant Officers Association of the US Coast Guard (CWOA)
Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)
Marine Corps League (MCL)
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
National Defense Committee (NDC)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)
Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)
Reserve Organization of America (ROA)
Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
The Independence Fund (TIF)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)