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Hangar Flying Newsletter

A Publication of the JBLM McChord Field Retiree Activities Office for Air Force Retirees, their spouses and survivors. Department of the Air Force, 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, Customer Service Mall Rm 1001, JBLM McChord Field WA 98438-1114; Phone (253) 982-3214 (Voice Mail 24 hours a day) Fax 253-982-5234. Email – retaffairs@us.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday - Friday

Take Command to Make a Smooth Transition with TRICARE in 2018: You may be wondering what action you need to take, if any, to ensure you continue [TRICARE coverage in 2018](#). If you're currently enrolled in or eligible for TRICARE coverage on Dec. 31, 2017, you'll transition to your respective TRICARE plan on Jan. 1, 2018. If you want to enroll in a TRICARE plan or change coverage after Jan. 1, 2018, you'll need to take action to enroll in the plan of your choice.

All beneficiaries should take action by making sure their information is current in the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System](#) <https://tricare.mil/Plans/Eligibility/DEERS> . If you've experienced any changes (for example, marriage, birth, divorce and death), update DEERS as soon as possible to ensure continuous TRICARE coverage.

TRICARE is Changing. Here is what you need to know: *Automatic Transition for Current Enrollees*
Beneficiaries enrolled in [TRICARE Prime](#), either stateside or overseas, as of Dec. 31, 2017 will remain enrolled in TRICARE Prime on Jan. 1, 2018. If you have TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra as of Dec. 31, 2017, you'll transition to [TRICARE Select](#). TRICARE Select replaces TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra on Jan. 1, 2018.

If you're enrolled in any [TRICARE premium-based plan](#) on Dec. 31, 2017, you'll remain enrolled in your plan on Jan. 1, 2018 as long as you continue to make your premium payments. These premium-based plans include:

- TRICARE Young Adult
- TRICARE Reserve Select
- TRICARE Retired Reserve

On Jan. 1, 2018, TRICARE will transition its stateside [regional contractors from three to two](#). Beneficiaries who pay [premiums or enrollment fees](#) by electronic funds transfer or recurring debit/credit card payment will be contacted to update their payment information. If you currently pay through a Defense Finance and Accounting Service allotment, your payments will automatically transfer.

If your current TRICARE health plan coverage doesn't automatically transition, [contact the TRICARE contractor](#) for your region. There are no changes to the TRICARE For Life (TFL) benefit. TFL beneficiaries will not have to take any action.

Automatic Enrollment of New Enrollees: New active duty service members are [automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime](#) or [TRICARE Prime Remote](#) if they live in remote areas in the U.S. Stateside active duty family members (ADFM) who become eligible for TRICARE on or after Jan. 1, 2018 will also be automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime if they live in a [Prime Service Area](#). If family members live outside a Prime Service Area, they'll be automatically enrolled in [TRICARE Select](#). ADFMs who are automatically enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select have up to 90 days after the eligibility date to change health plans. *(Continued on next page)*

TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) ADFMs will be automatically enrolled in TRICARE Select. They will also have 90 days to change their enrollment to TOP Prime or Prime Remote if they are command sponsored. **This is Your Benefit! Are You Ready? Enroll by Nov. 20, 2017 for Coverage Beginning Jan. 1, 2018:** By Nov. 20, 2017, beneficiaries should complete any and all enrollment actions. During December 2017, there will be an enrollment freeze for TRICARE Prime enrollments, and a delay for primary care manager changes. You'll still be able to receive care during the enrollment freeze. If you have a problem accessing care, [contact your regional contractor](#).

For all other stateside beneficiaries, you'll also need to complete any and all enrollment actions by Nov. 20, 2017 to ensure continued health coverage in 2018. As long as your regional contractor receives your completed enrollment application by the [20th of the month](#), your coverage will begin on the first day of the next month. The 20th of the month rule doesn't apply to beneficiaries overseas, and will go away for everyone starting in 2018.

Enrolling is easy. You can enroll in certain TRICARE plans over the phone, email or mail. Check out how to [enroll or purchase a plan](#).

Visit the [TRICARE Changes](#) page to stay informed with the latest information. You can also [sign up for email alerts](#) to get an email anytime new updates are available. Staying informed will help you take command of your health and prepare for changes in 2018. (Source: *Tricare*)

Express Scripts Annual Consent for Automatic Prescription Refills

As of the 1st September 2017, Express Scripts will need annual consent from patients who want to receive automatic refills of their maintenance medications enrolled in TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery.

This means that just before one of your prescriptions runs out of refills, Express Scripts will reach out to you to know if you would like your doctor to be contacted to renew the prescription and if you'd like to continue in the Automatic Refill program. (Source: *Health.mil*)

Coming to Madigan on October 21st

Madigan is the first large Department of Defense military treatment facility to use the DoD's new electronic health record, MHS Genesis. It will provide enhanced, secure technology to manage your health information with world-wide 24/7 access. MHS Genesis will provide your team with a complete electronic view of your health records, including medical and dental (for active duty only) information in one location.

As Madigan transitions to MHS Genesis, here's what Madigan patients should know:

- **Wellness Checks:** Appointments will be temporarily reduced as they transition to MHS Genesis. Please schedule annual exams and regular checkups before Oct. 21st.
- **Pharmacy:** Madigan pharmacy will be busier than usual after Oct. 21st and during the few weeks after. Avoid longer wait times and get your medications refilled before Oct. 21st.
- **Referrals:** Since Madigan will be switching systems, if you get a referral now and it is valid past Oct 21st, Madigan suggest that you keep a hard copy of your referral during the transition.
- **Patient Portal:** MHS Genesis provides patients access to their records online and includes a new secure messaging system replacing RelayHealth. The Patient Portal requires patients to have a DS Login. Instructions on how to get your DS Logon is available for Madigan Patients <https://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/registration.do?execution=e4s1>
- **RelayHealth:** If you expect to someday move away from Madigan and become a patient at some other DoD medical facility, please stay enrolled in RelayHealth. The Military Treatment you go to after Madigan will most likely still be using RelayHealth. Use the Patient Portal secure messaging system while you are here, and RelayHealth again after you move. Visit the Madigan website www.mamc.amedd.army.mil & Facebook #Madigan Health for the latest Madigan MHS Genesis news. (Source *Madigan Army Hospital*)

Be There, Be Aware: Help Prevent Suicide When we focus on our health, it's easy to pay attention to physical health versus mental well-being. Ignoring mental health concerns like anxiety and depression can lead to worsening symptoms and more serious issues. For some people, these issues may include an increased risk of suicide. But everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention. Whether you're a friend, family member or the person in crisis, learn how to recognize the signs of a mental health crisis. After this recognition, it's important to act quickly to stop the escalation of the crisis.

"Many resources are available to help you or those suffering through difficult times," said Dr. Patricia Moseley, a senior policy analyst for military child and family behavioral health at the Defense Health Agency. "TRICARE offers robust [mental health services](#), including newly expanded outpatient and inpatient care and a continuum of care."

When to Seek Help Although everyone feels ups and downs in life, sometimes we need help to get through challenging times. Signs that you may need to see a mental health provider include:

- Anxiety or agitation
- Anger or rage
- Hopelessness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Thoughts or feelings about death or dying
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends and family

If you or a loved one is thinking or talking about death, suicide or other self-destructive behavior, seek immediate care. Call 911 or go to the nearest [emergency room the hospital department that provides emergency services to patients who need immediate medical attention](#). You never need prior authorization to get emergency help. Also, you don't need a referral or prior authorization for most outpatient mental health and substance use disorder care. This includes therapy and counseling. More information on [mental health care](#) is available on the [TRICARE website](#).

Additional Resources: There are a number of other resources available to beneficiaries. The [Military Crisis Line](#) provides confidential help 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 (option 1). In addition, [#BeThere](#) is a Department of Defense campaign with a peer support call and outreach center (1-844-357-7337) for Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve members and families. The phone line is staffed with peers — veterans who understand the military community because they've been there.

Part of "being there" for one another is realizing that everyday connections play a big role in preventing suicide. [We can all prevent suicide](#). Take command of your health by paying attention to your mental health, which is essential to your overall health. Strive for mental and physical wellness. Learn more about how your [TRICARE](#) coverage can help support your mind and body.

To learn more about suicide prevention, view the [TRICARE monthly tips](#). Return each month for new monthly tips on a variety of topics. (*Source: TriCare Communications*)

VA to Increase Access to Safe and Effective Lung Screening Programs

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced a new partnership to increase access to lung screening for Veterans. Sponsored by the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, <https://www.bms.com/about-us/responsibility/bristol-myers-squibb-foundation.html>

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the project brings together experts from within and outside VA to develop the VA-PALS Implementation Network (VA-Partnership to increase Access to Lung Screening). Its goal is to develop early-detection programs for lung cancer, a malignancy with an 80 percent cure rate when caught early.

This new project will launch lung-screening services at the Phoenix VA Health Care System by December 2017, and then extend these services to nine additional VA medical facilities starting in 2018. Once fully implemented, the project has the potential to become even more widely available throughout VA.

The VA-PALS lung screening initiative demonstrates the VA's priority to work together with outside organizations to provide more efficient care aimed at addressing serious health concerns for veterans.

The VA-PALS initiative builds upon lessons learned from currently available screening programs, including those of VAs Office of Rural Health, which is supporting the projects goal to reach Veterans living in rural areas. It also adds to a portfolio of other major VA lung cancer initiatives, which include the VALOR Trial (Veterans Affairs Lung Cancer or Stereotactic Radiotherapy) and the APOLLO Network (Applied Proteogenomics Organizational Learning and Outcomes).

Research shows that with comprehensive lung screening programs, early identification of lung cancer leads to more effective treatments and, ultimately, saves lives. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation is proud to partner with the VA-PALS Implementation Network in this important step to increase access to state-of-the-art screening for Veterans at risk of lung cancer. *(Source: Department of Veteran Affairs)*

VA Disability Ratings Under Review: The VA's Schedule for Rating Disabilities guides claims processors on the assessment of the severity of a disability related to military service. While the VA has routinely updated parts of the VASRD, for the first time since 1945, the VA is updating the entire rating schedule to more accurately reflect modern medicine.

This September, 2017, the VA began the modernization of the first of 15 body systems. This review concerned the disabilities related to dental and oral conditions. The review contained updated medical terms, including diagnostic codes for conditions previously rated under other conditions, added or changed disability levels where needed, and combined some diagnostic codes. No existing dental or oral conditions were removed.

If you have a pending claim or appeal for a dental or oral condition filed before Sept. 10, 2017, the VA will consider both the old and new rating criteria when making a decision. Any claim for dental or oral conditions received by the VA after Sept. 10, 2017 will be rated under the new criteria. Existing disability ratings will not change because of the update to the ratings.

In the following months, each of the remaining body systems will be updated. This modernization process will, ensure that the VA claims review process will provide the most accurate disability ratings possible for disability compensation based on modern medicine. *(Source: VA Media Summary)*

VA Unveils Claims Submission Option That Promises to Complete Claims within 30 Days

As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continued efforts to improve timeliness of services for Veterans and their families, VA unveiled the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) initiative, a disability claims submission option with accredited Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) that promises to deliver faster claims decisions to Veterans and their families.

The DRC initiative is a collaborative effort between VA and VSOs to help Veterans receive faster decisions on disability claims. VA works closely with participating VSOs to make sure they are properly trained in this new process and given the tools they need to participate successfully in the program on behalf of the Veterans they serve.

Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a decision within 30 days from the time VA receives the claim. VSOs will ensure all supporting evidence such as medical exams, military service records, etc. are included with the claim submission. This advance preparation by the VSOs allows claims to be assigned immediately to claims processors for a quick decision.

DRC was first implemented May 1, 2017, at the St. Paul (Minn.) Regional Office, and is now available at all VA regional offices. While DRC is currently limited to claims for increased compensation (commonly known as claims for increase), and requires Veterans to work with VSOs, VAs goal is to expand the types of claims accepted under the initiative and allow Veterans other ways to submit their claim under DRC.

DRC is another key step in aggressively modernizing VAs benefits delivery to Veterans in a fully digital operating environment. With electronic claims processing as a foundation, VAs innovation will improve service to Veterans, their families, and survivors. *(Source: VA News Release)*

Flu Season is here! Veterans protect yourselves and get a NO COST flu shot!

The cold and flu season is upon us and the Department of Veterans Affairs has once again teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to be able walk into any of the over 8000 Walgreens nationally to receive a vaccination at no cost. Vaccinations will be available through March 31, 2018.

Veterans wishing to receive the no cost vaccination simply need to present a Veterans Identification Card and a photo ID, at any participating Walgreens to receive the vaccination. The Group ID is: VAFLU

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine Walgreens will transmit that information securely to VA where it becomes part of the patient's electronic medical record.

VA is committed to keeping Veteran patients healthy, and during this flu season, vaccination is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. No matter where you live, visit your local VA clinic or Walgreens to get a no cost flu shot. *(Source: Department of Veterans Affairs)*

Volunteers Welcomed!!! Volunteering is a rewarding experience. There are many programs and activities within the military community that could not exist if it were not for the many volunteers doing the work to make things happen.

Be a Volunteer at the RAO, If you have been looking for a fun, a creative and rewarding way to stay involved in the McChord Military Retiree community, then volunteering is the answer. At the McChord Retiree Activities Office, you can easily join our volunteer staff. Hands on training will be provided and you will be working with a great team of volunteers who are military retirees and spouses providing their time, skills, talents and wisdom towards helping the military community. For more information you can contact us at 253-982-3214

There are many opportunities for volunteers, if you are a retired aircraft mechanic the McChord Heritage Museum can use your help restoring and maintain the museum's heritage aircraft, contact Mr. Jordon at 253-982-2485. The USO, the Red Cross, the base clinic and the American Lake VA Hospital also need volunteers.

HELPFUL LINKS

To find your state representative:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

To find your state senators:

<http://www.senate.gov>

To find the VA:

<http://www.va.gov>

To find DFAS:

<http://www.dfas.mil>

To find Tricare:

<http://www.tricare.mil>

To schedule appointment to renew ID Card

<https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>

Link to Retiree Publications

Army Echoes:

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Shift Colors:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner:

www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:

[www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/Semper Fidelis](http://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/Semper+Fidelis)

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

List of businesses who give military discounts

<http://www.rather-be-shopping.com/blog/2014/05/29/veteran-military-discounts/>

VA benefits book available

The Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents & Survivors handbook is available – with 18 pages of new information. The book can be found at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2014_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans_English.pdf.

Veterans Crisis Hotline

1-800-273-8255 press 1

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thank you for your support of the Hangar Flyer newsletter. If you have questions about anything pertaining to military retiree benefits and services, email us at; retaffairs@us.af.mil or call us at the RAO. Hours are 9 to 12 Monday through Friday. After 12 please leave a message and we will call you back. The phone number is 253-982-3214