

## Chapter 11

## Section 3

# Beneficiary, Congressional, Media, Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC), and Debt Collection Assistance Officer (DCAO) Relations

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### 1.0 GENERAL

In a service relations program, the contractor's primary responsibilities are to the beneficiaries and the providers. However, in meeting these responsibilities, it is frequently necessary to respond to Congressional Offices or to Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators (BCACs), and Debt Collection and Assistance Officer (DCAO) who are intervening on behalf of a beneficiary or provider.

### 2.0 BENEFICIARY RELATIONS

The contractor shall be invited to attend and participate in beneficiary meetings, such as the retired military associations. These meetings provide opportunities for the contractor to make presentations and distribute educational materials to the beneficiaries.

### 3.0 CONGRESSIONAL AND BCAC/DCAO RELATIONS

The contractor is responsible for performance of the following minimum functions in carrying out a Congressional and BCAC/DCAO relations programs within the region.

#### 3.1 Establish Communications

**3.1.1** The contractor shall establish a working relationship with the Congressional delegation in each state and maintain effective communication with the Congressional office staffs, BCACs, and DCAOs in the region. These individuals can often assist in resolving questions/problems of the beneficiary and provider population. The contractor shall establish procedures and provide staffing to perform all necessary functions.

**3.1.2** The contractor shall provide written notification of the contractor's Point(s) Of Contact (POCs) [name(s), address(es), e-mail addresses and phone number(s)] to all Congressional offices, BCACs, and DCAOs serving the region. The contractor shall provide separate telephone numbers (lines) reserved exclusively for Congressional offices, BCACs, and DCAOs. This service is not required to be toll-free; however, the contractor shall provide sufficient telephone lines and TRICARE-dedicated staff to meet the requirements in [Chapter 1, Section 3](#). In addition, when it is appropriate because of the volume or character of Congressional office inquiries received, a contractor representative may visit a Congressional office to resolve problems and/or educate the staff about TRICARE operations and

requirements. In most Military Treatment Facility (MTF)/Enhanced Multi-Service Market (eMSM) Prime Service Areas (PSAs), a contractor's representative shall have regular, if not daily, interface with the BCACs and DCAOs. In other areas, the contractor shall develop a program of regular BCAC and DCAO contact which includes a contractor representative meeting with the BCACs and/or DCAOs at least semi-annually. When serious problems or other needs arise, more frequent contact shall be required.

#### **4.0 SPECIAL BCAC/DCAO MEETINGS**

Defense Health Agency (DHA) conducts workshops with BCACs/DCAOs in various locations throughout the year. The contractor shall provide representation to participate in the workshops where BCACs/DCAOs from the contractor's region will be present in significant numbers. DHA will provide at least 30 calendar days notice of such a requirement. DHA will also outline the expected nature of contractor's participation. If a contractor has a specific problem or issue which should be addressed at a BCAC and DCAO meeting, DHA shall be notified at least 21 days prior to the scheduled meeting.

#### **5.0 MEDIA RELATIONS**

Media relations programs implemented by the Government and the contractors on behalf of the Government shall have three objectives: educate beneficiaries about changes to their TRICARE benefit, respond to media queries quickly and accurately and inform the American public about Government activities related to the TRICARE program. The contractors shall conduct a media-relations program in accordance with Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines and guidance provided by Defense Health Agency (DHA) Communications. The contractor shall provide regular feedback to DHA Communications regarding their media activities, including coordination of proposed responses to media queries for sensitive and controversial issues. The contractors shall keep DHA Communications and TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) leadership aware of public and beneficiary perceptions regarding TRICARE policies and procedures, and advise DHA on proposed communication strategies for responding to these issues. All published materials shall communicate consistent TRICARE program messages with one voice and tone. Contractors shall perform the following in their media relations program:

**5.1** Establish and maintain effective working relationships with members of the regional and local news media:

**5.1.1** Work directly with the news media to provide information on new programs, changes to the benefit, and other "good news" stories.

**5.1.2** Respond to media questions about contractor roles, responsibilities and actions on behalf of the Government in support of the TRICARE program.

**5.1.3** Work closely with the Government to ensure that information provided to the media is consistent and accurate:

- Coordinate all proposed media activities including new releases, press conferences and other media events with DHA prior to release of the information; and
- Follow-up all media contacts by sending copies of information provided to the media

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and a summary of any discussions to DHA Communications when immediate action was required.

**5.1.4** Contractors shall speak only on issues for which they have direct responsibility and shall not speculate on issues beyond the scope of the support they are providing to the Government.

**5.2** The contractor shall share information, including news releases, fact sheets, talking points, communications plans, and public affairs guidance with DHA Communications to ensure DHA is aware of pending news stories and the information provided to the media.

**5.3** The contractor shall assist DHA Communications in planning, designing, and implementing a comprehensive communications program that incorporates diverse functions and issues, serves numerous distinct and specialized audiences and responds rapidly, in crisis conditions to changing demands.

**5.4** The contractor shall work with DHA to ensure beneficiaries receive unified, timely, accurate, consistent, and effective products and tools that improve their access, understanding, and appreciation of TRICARE.

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