

CHAPTER 12 SECTION 1.1

TRICARE OVERSEAS PROGRAM (TOP) - OVERVIEW

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I. DESCRIPTION

The TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) is the Department of Defense's managed health care program Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). TRICARE overseas blends many of the features of the Department of Defense stateside TRICARE Program while also allowing for the significant cultural differences unique to foreign countries and their health care practices. The TOP consists of three regions, TRICARE Europe, (formerly CHAMPUSEUR), TRICARE PACIFIC (formerly CHAMPUSPAC) and TRICARE Latin America and Canada, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (formerly CHAMPUSSO).

Support for the TOP is the responsibility of the TOP Lead Agents. The Lead Agents have the authority to seek contract support to satisfy TOP related requirements within their jurisdiction. The Lead Agents may contract directly for support services or include this requirement in the Managed Care Support Contract. All provisions of the TRICARE/CHAMPUS Policy Manual and the Operations Manual (TRICARE Operations Manual) apply to the TOP, unless otherwise specifically stated in this Chapter, in the contract or the OPM Manual.

II. TRICARE OVERSEAS PROGRAM (TOP) MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Lead Agents or their designees are responsible for planning and delivering services to meet the health needs of their area of responsibility whether through the available MTFs or the contractor. The Lead Agents or designees are responsible for enrollment of TRICARE enrollees in the TOP, development of a TOP Preferred Provider Network, designation/termination of providers to the TOP Preferred Provider Network, and ongoing beneficiary/provider education. When fully implemented the Lead Agents or their designees also will assist in the development/implementation of a Resource Support Program. The Lead Agents or their designees will serve as a primary contact/facilitator for the contractor for issues relating to enrollment and network. The Lead Agents or their designees are expected to provide ongoing oversight and administration of those tasks for which they are responsible. The Lead Agents or their designees for the TOP will be designated by the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs (ASD(HA)). TOP designated Lead Agents or their designees will not always be physically located within the same region as the contractor responsible for processing TOP claims. TOP will have three (3) Lead Agents.

MTF Commanders are responsible for managing health care delivery for both active duty personnel and TRICARE enrollees who are under the TOP, as well as for providing care to other Military Health Services System beneficiaries who are eligible for care in MTFs. The MTF Commander will work directly with the Lead Agent or designee in network development and local initiatives.

The contractor is responsible for processing all TOP Prime and Standard claims, including OCONUS claims for active duty members within the TRICARE Europe jurisdiction and performs all traditional TRICARE contractor services. The contractor shall provide a designated point of contact to assist each Lead Agent or designee. Additionally, every regional contractor shall offer traveling TOP enrollees use of existing toll free Health Care Finders numbers/services to locate a CONUS TRICARE network provider.

Administrative Personnel - The Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) and the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) are TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) personnel whose job it is to oversee the functions of the contract, with emphasis on claims processing, and to coordinate contract oversight and administration among Lead Agents or their designees.

ASD (HA) - Overall policy for the TOP is established by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Implementation of all aspects of TOP will be in phases. Phased in implementation is necessary to ensure allowance for cultural differences (unique to foreign countries and their health care practices).

III. DUAL OPTION BENEFIT PACKAGE:

TOP Prime Plan offers enrollees clinical preventive services and waiver of co-payments and deductibles.

TOP Standard is identical to the TRICARE fee-for-service program. The benefits and cost-shares are unchanged from CONUS TRICARE Standard Program.

IV. GEOGRAPHIC AVAILABILITY

The TOP is effective in all geographic areas and territorial waters outside the United States.

Claims from TOP for services provided on a ship that is outside the territorial waters of the United States are to be processed as foreign claims regardless of the provider's home address. If the provider is certified within the United States, reimbursement for the claim is to be based on the provider's home address. If the provider is not certified within the United States, reimbursement will follow the procedures for foreign claims.

V. CLAIMS PROCESSING RESPONSIBILITY FOR:

A. TRICARE Overseas adjunctive dental foreign claims, except for TRICARE Europe adjunctive dental claims, shall be referred to the contractor responsible for processing adjunctive dental claims.

B. TRICARE Europe active duty member claims for services provided OCONUS, including all dental claims, shall be processed by the TRICARE contractor responsible for processing TOP claims.

C. **Effective October 1, 1999, TOP** active duty member claims, for services provided in CONUS, including active duty dental claims shall be **processed by the TRICARE contractor responsible for processing TOP claims.**

D. TRICARE Europe adjunctive dental claims shall be processed by the contractor responsible for processing TOP claims.

E. Claims for services from TOP eligible beneficiaries who return to CONUS and receive health care shall be processed by the appropriate contractor as follows:

1. Non-enrolled TRICARE Overseas eligible beneficiary claims for care received in CONUS shall be processed by the contractor responsible for processing claims where services were rendered following existing CONUS TRICARE Standard cost sharing and benefit requirements.

2. TOP Prime enrolled beneficiary claims for care received in CONUS, including adjunctive dental, shall be processed by the contractor responsible for processing TRICARE Overseas claims following existing requirements for TRICARE Prime benefits, including enhanced benefits and cost-shares, without the requirements for referral and authorization. TOP beneficiaries will be encouraged by the Lead Agent or designee to utilize CONUS MTFs and current TRICARE network providers whenever possible.

VI. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for the TOP shall include the following categories of TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligibles:

- A. Active duty members
- B. TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligible TRICARE Prime enrollees
- C. TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligible Standard beneficiaries
- D. TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligible retirees

NOTE: Although all of the above categories of beneficiaries are eligible for the TOP, eligibility for enrollment into TRICARE Overseas Prime will be limited.

VII. ENROLLMENT

Phase-in eligibility for enrollment of the TOP Prime is as follows:

A. Beginning October 1, 1996, for dates of service on or after October 1, 1996, active duty members are automatically enrolled in TOP Prime. For active duty personnel, where available, the MTF will be their primary care manager and the cost of their care in the MTF or by civilian providers will be covered by the MTF.

B. Beginning October 1, 1996, for dates of service on or after October 1, 1996 to September 30, 1997, family members of active duty members who accompany the active duty member in their overseas assignment may enroll in TOP Prime. No other beneficiary categories may enroll in TOP Prime during this period of time.

NOTE: No enrollment fees are required during this period of time.

C. Beginning October 1, 1996, for dates of service on or after October 1, 1996 to September 30, 1997, all other TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligible beneficiaries are eligible to use only the TRICARE Overseas Standard benefit option.

D. Beginning October 1, 1997, for dates of service on or after October 1, 1997, for TOP Prime eligibles, guaranteed enrollment ends. To ensure continuation of the special waiver of cost-share and deductible requirements under TRICARE Overseas Prime, TOP Prime eligibles must take specific action to be enrolled.

NOTE: As continued phase in of the TOP occurs TRICARE Overseas Prime eligibility will be expanded to other categories of TRICARE/CHAMPUS eligible and enrollment fees may be required.

E. TOP Prime beneficiaries may disenroll any time.

F. TOP operating guidelines are contained in the [Policy Manual, Chapter 12, Section 12.1 through 12.3](#).

VIII.EFFECTIVE DATE October 1, 1996

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