

POINT OF CONTACT (POC) PROGRAM

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I. DESCRIPTION

The TOP Point of Contact (POC) Program is a liaison service designed to provide beneficiaries and host nation providers assistance with filing TRICARE/TOP/TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) claims to ensure timely overseas claims filing and payment and continued beneficiary access to quality host nation health care. The POC program was established in 1991 and continues to be successful because of the ongoing oversight and support by various Uniformed Services Branches of designated POCs. The POC Program was expanded in 1999 to include TDP overseas claims.

II. GENERAL

A. Designated POCs are established by the Uniformed Services, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), with final approval by TRICARE Management Activity (TMA).

B. A written request from the Commanding Officer of a foreign military base or location, or Defense Attache Offices (DAOs), and Security Assistant Organizations (SAOs) must be submitted to the **appropriate TMA Contracting Officer Representative (COR)**. The request should include, name of the primary POC, name of the alternate POC (if any), 24 hour commercial fax number, commercial phone number, e-mail address, and a valid and secure mailing address (for pouch mail). This same process and information should be followed/ submitted when subsequent changes are made.

C. POC designation is usually limited to one primary POC and one or two alternate POCs. Additional alternate POCs may be designated upon justification from the Commanding Officer. This justification should be included with the request.

D. Upon receipt of the written request, the **appropriate TMA COR** will review the nomination for approval. After the nomination has been approved, the TMA Chief, Claims Operations Office or designee will notify the Managed Care Support Contractor (MCSC) (**hereinafter referred to as the "claims processing contractor"**) of the official POC designation. A copy of the overseas MCSC, **South Region (hereinafter referred to as the "overseas claims processing contractor"**) notification will be sent electronically or faxed to the **TRICARE Area Office (TAO)** Directors, the POC's Command, and the TDP.

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E. POC designation by **the appropriate TMA COR** is “purple suited” and not Uniformed Service specific, nor is designation limited to a specific category of TOP beneficiary (i.e., retiree, ADSM, etc.) or for a specific category of TRICARE benefit (i.e., medical, drug, maternity, etc.).

F. **Updates to POC’s** 24 hour commercial fax number, commercial phone number, e-mail address, and a valid and secure mailing/pouch mail address, shall be e-mailed directly to the overseas **claims processing contractor** responsible for processing overseas claims.

G. POC’s must notify the **appropriate TMA COR** in writing when departing, transferring or being reassigned to a new location. The written notification should state when the designated POC will be leaving, should indicate if a new POC will or will not be designated. If a new POC will be designated, the notification should include the information outlined in **paragraph II.B**. The notification should also list remaining POC’s and should be signed by the POC Commanding Officer.

III. POC RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Assist all Uniformed Services, TRICARE beneficiaries, and active duty **service members (ADSMs)**, regardless of Service affiliation, and host nation providers with completion of and filing TOP and TDP claims with the appropriate claims processor.

B. See also the TOP and TDP **POC Program** booklet at **Chapter 12, Section 12.2, Figure 12-12.2-10** for additional POC duties and responsibilities. This booklet should be used as a guide by TMA designated POCs in the performance of their POC duties.

IV. **OVERSEAS CLAIMS PROCESSING CONTRACTOR** RESPONSIBILITIES

The overseas **claims processing contractor** shall:

A. Maintain a current listing of POCs, in coordination with TMA.

B. Assist the TOP or POCs, Uniformed Services, TRICARE beneficiaries, **ADSMs** where appropriate, and host nation providers with information on the completion of and filing of claims with the appropriate claims processor.

C. Developmental procedures for the coordination, control and tracking of faxed or mailed claims from receipt to final processing. This includes, but is not limited to, storage/maintenance of the claim and all related correspondence, microfilming/imaging of claims upon receipt, the issuance of foreign drafts/U.S. dollar checks/**Explanation of Benefits (EOBs)**, and development procedures for missing information needed to process the claim to completion.

D. Provide a dedicated P.O. box for the receipt of TOP claims.

E. Provide an updated POC list to the **appropriate TMA COR** and to each TOP **TAO** Director, via fax or e-mail as POC updates/changes are made.

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F. Operate a dedicated point of contact telefax/e-mail overseas claims receipt and processing system program for designated Uniformed Services bases and locations, remotely located Defense Attache Offices (DAOs) and Security Assistant Organizations (SAOs) for the purpose of receiving and expediting TRICARE overseas claims and correspondence from all designated POCs.

G. Provide a dedicated fax number for the receipt of POC claims. Ensure the designated POC overseas FAX numbers are commercial and are accessible to receive data 24 hours a day.

H. Use the designated POC telefax/e-mail to request information from all POCs, when additional information is needed to process the TRICARE overseas claim or correspondence. When information has been requested from the POC, the overseas **claims processing contractor** shall pend the claim for 10 calendar days. If the requested information is not received by the overseas **claims processing contractor** from the POC by the close of business (COB) on the 10th calendar day, the overseas **claims processing contractor** shall deny the claim.

I. Accept only faxed claims/inquires/information faxed by an officially designated POC or an alternate POC. Electronic mail may also be used for TOP inquiries/information.

J. Verify beneficiary eligibility for TOP benefits.

K. Follow the inquiry process outlined in this section for POC requests for claims status update and for POC requests for changes to mail, fax numbers, etc.

L. Upon receipt of a POC inquiry and once the inquiry is completed, fax the response back to the person identified as the POC contact. The overseas **claims processing contractor** shall follow the faxed POC inquiry with a phone call, if necessary.

M. Shall report POC fax inquiries as routine correspondence as outlined in the TRICARE Operations Manual (TOM), Chapter 1, Section 3.

N. Review claims to ensure the beneficiary/provider has provided complete and accurate information prior to submitting claims for processing/payment.

O. Process TOP claims using guidelines in this chapter.

P. Be able to translate claims submitted in a foreign language.

Q. Pay claims using the exchange rate in effect on the last date of service listed on the claim.

R. For TOP Claims, make payment as follows:

1. Issue foreign currency drafts for TOP claims. Drafts may not be changed to a U.S. dollar check after the overseas **claims processing contractor** has issued a foreign draft.

2. Issue foreign currency drafts for TOP claims when the sponsor/family member requests payment in local foreign currency at the time the claim is submitted.

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NOTE: Foreign **overseas** drafts (**in local currency**) are good for 190 days and may be cashed at any time. U.S. dollar checks are good for a limited period of time (**per TOM, Chapter 8, Section 3, paragraph 1.1.**) and upon request may be reissued by the **claims processing** contractor upon expiration of the check before the check can be cashed. The expired check must be included with the request for reissuance of the check in order for the contractor to reissue an expired check.

S. Use priority pouch mail for the mailing of foreign drafts/U.S. dollar checks/EOBs to appropriate sponsors/beneficiaries and/or host nation providers for claims submitted via POCs. The priority pouch mail must be sent using the fastest means available to the POC's location. Shall in those locations where a single point of dispersal has been established for all payments sent to that country, the overseas **claims processing contractor** shall batch payments and **TRICARE** EOBs by foreign country and mail the payments and **TRICARE** EOBs in pouches using overnight mail delivery at least once every five working days. The payments and **TRICARE** EOBs in the pouches shall be separated by individual beneficiary/host nation provider and contained in a sealed window envelope for POC distribution. If overnight mail service is not available or is not timely in foreign locations, the **overseas claims processing contractor** shall use the most expeditious address provided by the POC, such as the U.S. Embassy address, or mail service available.

T. Report unresolved claims problems or issues between the POC and the TRICARE **claims processing contractor** for TOP issues to the **appropriate TMA COR.**

U. Pay all beneficiary-submitted health care claims for TRICARE covered services for care received at an overseas embassy health clinic to the beneficiary. The contractor is not to make payments directly to the embassy health clinic.

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