

Part 199.8

Double Coverage

Revision: C-6, May 4, 2020

Rule: Technical Amendment/FR Vol 82, No 188

(a) Introduction. (1) In enacting TRICARE legislation, Congress clearly has intended that TRICARE be the secondary payer to all health benefit, insurance and third-party payer plans. 10 U.S.C. 1079(j)(1) specifically provides that a benefit may not be paid under a plan (CHAMPUS) covered by this section in the case of a person enrolled in, or covered by, any other insurance, medical service, or health plan, including any plan offered by a third-party payer (as defined in 10 U.S.C. 1095(h)(1)) to the extent that the benefit is also a benefit under the other plan, except in the case of a plan administered under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 *et seq.*).

(2) The provision in paragraph (a)(1) of this section is made applicable specifically to retired members, dependents, and survivors by 10 U.S.C. 1086(g). The underlying intent, in addition to preventing waste of Federal resources, is to ensure that TRICARE beneficiaries receive maximum benefits while ensuring that the combined payments of TRICARE and other health and insurance plans do not exceed the total charges.

(b) Double coverage plan. A double coverage plan is one of the following:

(1) *Insurance plan.* An insurance plan is any plan or program that is designed to provide compensation or coverage for expenses incurred by a beneficiary for medical services and supplies. It includes plans or programs for which the beneficiary pays a premium to an issuing agent as well as those plans or programs to which the beneficiary is entitled as a result of employment or membership in, or association with, an organization or group.

(2) *Medical service or health plan.* A medical service or health plan is any plan or program of an organized health care group, corporation, or other entity for the provision of health care to an individual from plan providers, both professional and institutional. It includes plans or programs for which the beneficiary pays a premium to an issuing agent as well as those plans or programs to which the beneficiary is entitled as a result of employment or membership in, or association with, an organization or group.

(3) *Third-party payer.* A third-party payer means an entity that provides an insurance, medical service, or health plan by contract or agreement, including an automobile liability insurance or no-fault insurance carrier and a workers' compensation program or plan, and any other plan or program (e.g., homeowners insurance, etc.) that is designed to provide compensation or coverage for expenses incurred by a beneficiary for medical services or supplies. For purposes of the definition of "third-party payer," an insurance, medical service or health plan includes a preferred provider organization, an insurance plan described as Medicare supplemental insurance, and a personal injury protection plan or medical payments benefit plan for personal injuries resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle.

(4) *Exceptions.* Double coverage plans do not include:

- (i) Plans administered under title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid);
- (ii) Coverage specifically designed to supplement CHAMPUS benefits (a health insurance policy or other health benefit plan that meets the definition and criteria under supplemental insurance plan as set forth in Sec. 199.2(b));
- (iii) Entitlement to receive care from Uniformed Services medical care facilities;
- (iv) Certain Federal Government programs, as prescribed by the Director, OCHAMPUS, that are designed to provide benefits to a distinct beneficiary population and for which entitlement does not derive from either premium payment or monetary contribution (for example, the Indian Health Service); or
- (v) State Victims of Crime Compensation Programs.

(c) Application of double coverage provisions. CHAMPUS claims submitted for otherwise covered services or supplies and which involve double coverage shall be adjudicated as follows:

(1) *TRICARE last pay.* For any claim that involves a double coverage plan as defined in paragraph (b) of this section, TRICARE shall be last pay except as may be authorized by the Director, TRICARE Management Activity, or a designee, pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section. That is, TRICARE benefits may not be extended until all other double coverage plans have adjudicated the claim.

(2) *TRICARE advance payment.* The Director, TRICARE Management Activity, or a designee, may authorize payment of a claim in advance of adjudication of the claim by a double coverage plan and recover, under Sec. 199.12, the TRICARE costs of health care incurred on behalf of the covered beneficiary under the following conditions:

- (i) The claim is submitted for health care services furnished to a covered beneficiary; and,
- (ii) The claim is identified as involving services for which a third-party payer, other than a primary medical insurer, may be liable.

(3) *Primary medical insurer.* For purposes of paragraph (c)(2) of this section, a "primary medical insurer" is an insurance plan, medical service or health plan, or a third-party payer under this section, the primary or sole purpose of which is to provide or pay for health care services, supplies, or equipment. The term "primary medical insurer" does not include automobile liability insurance, no-fault insurance, workers' compensation program or plan, homeowners insurance, or any other similar third-party payer as may be designated by the Director, TRICARE Management Activity, or a designee, in any policy guidance or instructions issued in implementation of this Part.

(4) *Waiver of benefits.* A CHAMPUS beneficiary may not elect to waive benefits under a double coverage plan and use CHAMPUS. Whenever double coverage exists, the provisions of this Section shall be applied.

(5) *Lack of payment by double coverage plan.* Amounts that have been denied by a double coverage plan simply because a claim was not filed timely or because the beneficiary failed to meet some other requirement of coverage cannot be paid. If a statement from the double coverage plan as to how much that plan would have paid had the claim met the plan's requirements is provided to the CHAMPUS

contractor, the claim can be processed as if the double coverage plan actually paid the amount shown on the statement. If no such statement is received, no payment from CHAMPUS is authorized.

(d) Special considerations. (1) *CHAMPUS and Medicare--(i) General rule.* In any case in which a beneficiary is eligible for both Medicare and CHAMPUS received medical or dental care for which payment may be made under Medicare and CHAMPUS, Medicare is always the primary payer except in the case of retroactive determinations of disability as provided in paragraph (d)(1)(v) of this section. For dependents of active duty members, payment will be determined in accordance to paragraph (c) of this section. For all other beneficiaries eligible for Medicare, the amount payable under CHAMPUS shall be the amount of actual out-of-pocket costs incurred by the beneficiary for that care over the sum of the amount paid for that care under Medicare and the total of all amounts paid or payable by third party payers other than Medicare.

(ii) *Payment limit.* The total CHAMPUS amount payable for care under paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this section may not exceed the total amount that would be paid under CHAMPUS if payment for that care was made solely under CHAMPUS.

(iii) *Application of general rule.* In applying the general rule under paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this section, the first determination will be whether payment may be made under Medicare. For this purpose, Medicare exclusions, conditions, and limitations will be based for the determination.

(A) For items or services or portions or segments of items or services for which payment may be made under Medicare, the CHAMPUS payment will be the amount of the beneficiary's actual out of pocket liability, minus the amount payable by Medicare, also minus amount payable by other third party payers, subject to the limit under paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section.

(B) For items or services or segments of items or services for which no payment may be made under Medicare, the CHAMPUS payment will be the same as it would be for a CHAMPUS eligible retiree, dependent, or survivor beneficiary who is not Medicare eligible.

(C) For Medicare beneficiaries who enroll in Medicare Part D, the Part D plan is primary and TRICARE is secondary payer. TRICARE will pay the beneficiary's out-of-pocket costs for Medicare and TRICARE covered medications, including the initial deductible and Medicare Part D cost-sharing amounts up to the initial coverage limit of the Medicare Part D plan. The Medicare Part D plan, although the primary plan, pays nothing during any coverage gap period. When the beneficiary becomes responsible for 100 percent of the drug costs under a Part D coverage gap period, the beneficiary may use the TRICARE pharmacy benefit as the secondary payer. TRICARE will cost share during the coverage gap to the same extent as it does under Section 199.21 for beneficiaries not enrolled in Medicare Part D plan. The beneficiary is responsible for the applicable TRICARE pharmacy cost-sharing amounts (and deductible if using a retail non-network pharmacy). Part D plan sponsors may offer a defined standard benefit, or an actuarially equivalent standard benefit. Part D plan sponsors may also offer alternative prescription drug coverage, which may consist of basic alternative coverage or enhanced alternative coverage. Therefore depending on the Part D plan that a beneficiary chooses, monthly premiums, coinsurances, co-pays, deductibles and benefit design may vary from plan to plan. TRICARE payment of the beneficiary's initial deductible, if any, along with payment of any beneficiary cost share count towards total spending on drugs, and may have the effect of moving the beneficiary more quickly through the initial phase of coverage to the coverage gap. Irrespective of the phase of the benefit in which a beneficiary may be, if a beneficiary is accessing a pharmacy under contract with his or her Part D plan, the provider will bill the Part D plan first, then TRICARE. If the beneficiary chooses to use his or her TRICARE pharmacy benefit during a coverage gap under Part D, the beneficiary may do so, but the

beneficiary is responsible for the TRICARE cost-shares.

(iv) *Examples of applications of general rule.* The following examples are illustrative. They are not all-inclusive.

(A) In the case of a Medicare-eligible beneficiary receiving typical physician office visit services, Medicare payment generally will be made. CHAMPUS payment will be determined consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(A) of this section.

(B) In the case of a Medicare-eligible beneficiary residing and receiving medical care overseas, Medicare payment generally may not be made. CHAMPUS payment will be determined consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(B) of this section.

(C) In the case of a Medicare-eligible beneficiary receiving skilled nursing facility services a portion of which is payable by Medicare (such as during the first 100 days) and a portion of which is not payable by Medicare (such as after 100 days), CHAMPUS payment for the first portion will be determined consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(A) of this section and for the second portion consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(B) of this section.

(v) *Application of catastrophic cap.* Only in cases in which CHAMPUS payment is determined consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(B) of this section, actual beneficiary out of pocket liability remaining after CHAMPUS payments will be counted for purposes of the annual catastrophic loss protection, set forth under Sec. 199.4(f)(10). When a family has met the cap, CHAMPUS will pay allowable amounts for remaining covered services through the end of that calendar year.

(vi) *Retroactive determinations of disability.* In circumstances involving determinations of retroactive Medicare Part A entitlement for persons under 65 years of age, Medicare becomes the primary payer effective as of the date of issuance of the retroactive determination by the Social Security Administration. For care and services rendered prior to issuance of the retroactive determination, the CHAMPUS payment will be determined consistent with paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(B) of this section notwithstanding the beneficiary's retroactive entitlement for Medicare Part A during that period.

(vii) *Effect on enrollment in Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MA-PD) plan.* In the case of a beneficiary enrolled in a MA-PD plan who receives items or services for which payment may be made under both the MA-PD plan and CHAMPUS/TRICARE, a claim for the beneficiary's normal out-of-pocket costs under the MA-PD plan may be submitted for CHAMPUS/TRICARE payment. However, consistent with paragraph (c)(4) of this section, out-of-pocket costs do not include costs associated with unauthorized out-of-system care or care otherwise obtained under circumstances that result in a denial or limitation of coverage for care that would have been covered or fully covered had the beneficiary met applicable requirements and procedures. In such cases, the CHAMPUS/TRICARE amount payable is limited to the amount that would have been paid if the beneficiary had received care covered by the Medicare Advantage plan. If the TRICARE-Medicare beneficiary enrolls in a MA-PD drug plan, it generally will be governed by Medicare Part C, although plans that offer a prescription drug benefit must comply with Medicare Part D rules. The beneficiary has to pay the plan's monthly premiums and obtain all medical care and prescription drugs through the Medicare Advantage plan before seeking CHAMPUS/TRICARE payment. CHAMPUS/TRICARE payment for such beneficiaries may not exceed that which would be payable for a beneficiary under paragraph (d)(1)(iii)(C) of this section.

(viii) *Effect of other double coverage plans, including medigap plans.* CHAMPUS is second payer to other third-party payers of health insurance, including Medicare supplemental plans.

(ix) *Effect of employer-provided insurance.* In the case of individuals with health insurance due to their current employment status, the employer insurance plan shall be first payer, Medicare shall be the second payer, and CHAMPUS shall be the tertiary payer.

(2) *CHAMPUS and Medicaid.* Medicaid is not a double coverage plan. In any double coverage situation involving Medicaid, CHAMPUS is always the primary payer.

(3) *TRICARE and Workers' Compensation.* TRICARE benefits are not payable for a work-related illness or injury that is covered under a workers' compensation program. Pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section, however, the Director, TRICARE Management Activity, or a designee, may authorize payment of a claim involving a work-related illness or injury covered under a workers' compensation program in advance of adjudication and payment of the workers' compensation claim and then recover, under Sec. 199.12, the TRICARE costs of health care incurred on behalf of the covered beneficiary.

(4) *Extended Care Health Option (ECHO).* For those services or supplies that require use of public facilities, an ECHO eligible beneficiary (or sponsor or guardian acting on behalf of the beneficiary) does not have the option of waiving the full use of public facilities which are determined by the Director, TRICARE Management Activity or designee to be available and adequate to meet a disability related need for which an ECHO benefit was requested. Benefits eligible for payment under a state plan for medical assistance under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid) are never considered to be available in the adjudication of ECHO benefits.

(5) *Primary payer.* The requirements of paragraph (d)(4) of this section notwithstanding, TRICARE is primary payer for services and items that are provided in accordance with the Individualized Family Service Plan as required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and that are medically or psychologically necessary and otherwise allowable under the TRICARE Basic Program or the Extended Care Health Option.

(6) *Prohibition against financial and other incentives not to enroll in a group health plan--(i) General rule.* Under 10 U.S.C. 1097c, an employer or other entity is prohibited from offering TRICARE beneficiaries financial or other benefits as incentives not to enroll in, or to terminate enrollment in, a group health plan that is or would be primary to TRICARE. This prohibition applies in the same manner as section 1862(b)(3)(C) of the Social Security Act applies to incentives for a Medicare-eligible employee not to enroll in a group health plan that is or would be primary to Medicare.

(ii) *Application of general rule.* The prohibition in paragraph (d)(6)(i) of this section precludes offering to TRICARE beneficiaries an alternative to the employer primary plan unless:

(A) The beneficiary has primary coverage other than TRICARE; or

(B) The benefit is offered under a cafeteria plan under section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code and is offered to all similarly situated employees, including non-TRICARE eligible employees; or

(C) The benefit is offered under a cafeteria plan under section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code and, although offered only to TRICARE-eligible employees, the employer does not provide any payment for the benefit nor receive any direct or indirect consideration or compensation for offering the benefit; the employer's only involvement is providing the administrative support for the benefits under the cafeteria plan, and the employee's participation in the plan is completely voluntary.

(iii) *Documentation.* In the case of a benefit excluded by paragraph (d)(6)(ii)(C) of this section from the prohibition in paragraph (d)(6)(i) of this section, the exclusion is dependent on the employer maintaining in the employer's files a certification signed by the employer that the conditions described in paragraph (d)(6)(ii)(C) of this section are met, and, upon request of the Department of Defense, providing a copy of that certification to the Department of Defense.

(iv) *Remedies and penalties.* (A) Remedies for violation of this paragraph (d)(6) include but are not limited to remedies under the Federal Claims Collection Act, 31 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.

(B) Penalties for violation of this paragraph (d)(6) include a civil monetary penalty of up to \$5,000 for each violation. The provisions of section 1128A of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1320a-7a, (other than subsections (a) and (b)) apply to the civil monetary penalty in the same manner as the provisions apply to a penalty or proceeding under section 1128A.

(v) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this paragraph (d)(6):

(A) The term "employer" includes any State or unit of local government and any employer that employs at least 20 employees.

(B) The term "group health plan" means a group health plan as that term is defined in section 5000(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 without regard to section 5000(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(C) The term "similarly situated" means sharing common attributes, such as part-time employees, or other bona fide employment-based classifications consistent with the employer's usual business practice. (Internal Revenue Service regulations at 26 CFR 54.9802-1(d) may be used as a reference for this purpose). However, in no event shall eligibility for or entitlement to TRICARE (or ineligibility or non-entitlement to TRICARE) be considered a bona fide employment-based classification.

(D) The term "TRICARE-eligible employee" means a covered beneficiary under section 1086 of title 10, United States Code, Chapter 55, entitled to health care benefits under the TRICARE program.

(vi) *Procedures.* The Departments of Defense and Health and Human Services are authorized to enter into agreements to further carry out this section.

(e) Implementing instructions. The Director, OCHAMPUS, or a designee, shall issue such instructions, procedures, or guidelines, as necessary, to implement the intent of this section.

[51 FR 24008, Jul 1, 1986, as amended at 62 FR 35097, Jun 30, 1997; 62 FR 54384, Oct 20, 1997; 63 FR 59232, Nov 3, 1998; 64 FR 46141, Aug 24, 1999; 66 FR 40607, Aug 3, 2001; 67 FR 18827, Apr 17, 2002; 68 FR 6618, Feb 10, 2003; 68 FR 23032, Apr 30, 2003; 68 FR 32361, May 30, 2003; 69 FR 44952, Jul 28, 2004; 69 FR 51569, Aug 20, 2004; 74 FR 55775, Oct 29, 2009; 75 FR 18054, Apr 9, 2010; 77 FR 38176, Jun 27, 2012; 82 FR 45447, Sep 29, 2017; **85 FR 26355, May 4, 2020**]