

## Beneficiary, Congressional, Media, Beneficiary Counselling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC), Debt Collection Assistance Officer (DCAO), And Health Benefit Advisor (HBA) 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 Counselling and Assistance Coordinators (BCACs), Debt Collection and Assistance Officer (DCAO), and Health Benefit Advisors (HBAs) who are intervening on behalf of a beneficiary or provider. To facilitate handling of these contacts, the contractor should establish a working relationship with the Congressional delegations in each state and with the BCACs, DCAOs, and HBAs in the Region. These individuals can often assist in resolving questions/problems of the beneficiary and provider population.

### 2.0 BENEFICIARY RELATIONS

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

### 3.0 CONGRESSIONAL AND HBA RELATIONS

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

#### 3.1 Establish Communications

**3.1.1** The contractor shall establish and maintain effective communication with the Congressional office staffs, BCACs, DCAOs, and HBAs in the Region. To do this, 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 [name(s), address(es), e-mail addresses and phone number(s)] to all congressional offices and BCACs, DCAOs, and HBAs serving the region. The contractor shall provide separate telephone numbers (lines) reserved exclusively for congressional offices and BCACs, DCAOs, and HBAs. 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 MTF Prime Service Areas (PSAs), it is expected that a contractor's representative will have regular, if not daily, interface with the BCACs, DCAOs, and HBAs. In other areas, the contractor shall develop a program of regular BCAC, DCAO, and HBA contact which includes a contractor representative meeting with the BCACs, DCAOs, and/or HBAs at least semi-annually. When serious problems or other needs arise, more frequent contact will be required.

#### **4.0 SPECIAL BCAC, DCAO, HBA MEETINGS**

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

#### **5.0 MEDIA RELATIONS**

Media relations programs implemented by the Government and the Managed Care Support Contractors (MCSCs) on behalf of the Government will 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 MCSCs will conduct a media-relations program in accordance with Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines and guidance provided by TMA/Beneficiary Education and Support Division (BE&SD). The MCSC will provide regular feedback to TMA BE&SD regarding their media activities, including coordination of proposed responses to media queries for sensitive and controversial issues. The MCSCs will keep TMA BE&SD and TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) leadership aware of public and beneficiary perceptions regarding TRICARE policies and procedures, and advise TMA on proposed communication strategies for responding to these issues. All published materials will communicate consistent TRICARE program messages with one voice and tone. MCSCs will 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** Contractors are encouraged to work directly with the news media to provide information on new programs, changes to the benefit, and other "good news" stories.

**5.1.2** Contractors will also be expected to respond to media questions about contractor roles, responsibilities and actions on behalf of the Government in support of the TRICARE program.

**5.1.3** Contractors must work closely with the Government to ensure that information provided to the media is consistent and accurate.

**5.1.3.1** Contractors should coordinate all proposed media activities including new releases, press conferences and other media events with TMA prior to release of the information whenever feasible.

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**5.1.3.2** When immediate action is required, contractors will follow-up all media contacts by sending copies of information provided to the media and a summary of any discussions to BE&SD.

**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** Share information, including news releases, fact sheets, talking points, communications plans, and public affairs guidance with TMA/BE&SD to ensure TMA is aware of pending news stories and the information provided to the media.

**5.3** Assist TMA BE&SD 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** Work with TMA 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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