

EGLIN AFB RETIREE NEWSLETTER

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1. Walgreens no longer a TRICARE pharmacy provider

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The expiration of the retail pharmacy contract between Express Scripts, Inc. and the Walgreens pharmacy chain means Walgreens is no longer a TRICARE pharmacy network provider as of Jan. 1.

“The majority of beneficiaries have access to another network pharmacy very close to home as our pharmacy contract requires ESI to maintain high-access standards,” said Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, chief of the TRICARE Pharmaceutical Operations Directorate. “There are still 56,000 network pharmacies nationwide -- easily meeting or exceeding our access requirements.”

Besides 56,000 network pharmacies, TRICARE beneficiaries have other pharmacy options including military pharmacies at no cost and TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. Generic medications are available at no cost through Home Delivery.

Beneficiaries who use non-network pharmacies, including Walgreens, pay full prescription costs upfront and submit their own claims for reimbursement. Reimbursement will occur only after the non-network deductible is met. Out-of-network costs include a 50 percent point-of-service cost share for TRICARE Prime, after deductibles are met. All other non-active duty TRICARE beneficiaries pay the greater amount of a \$12 co-pay or 20 percent of the total cost for formulary medications, and the greater of \$25 or 20 percent of the total cost for non-formulary medications, after deductibles are met.

For more on pharmacy costs, visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacycosts [<http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacycosts>].

TRICARE beneficiaries changing from Walgreens pharmacy can simply take their current prescription bottle to their new network pharmacy to have the prescription transferred. To find a nearby network pharmacy, use the “find a pharmacy” feature on www.express-scripts.com/tricare [<http://www.express-scripts.com/tricare>]. Beneficiaries who want help finding a pharmacy, changing

their medications to Home Delivery, or who have other questions can contact Express Scripts at 877-885-6313.

The issues between ESI and Walgreens are not specific to TRICARE. Other employer-sponsored and some Medicare Part D pharmacy plans are also affected. Beneficiaries with questions and concerns about this issue can go to <http://www.tricare.mil/walgreens/> for more information.

"We are committed to ensuring all our pharmacy beneficiaries are aware of the many options that TRICARE makes available to them," said Brig. Gen. Bryan Gamble, TRICARE deputy director. "By now, all of our beneficiaries who use Walgreens to fill prescriptions should have been contacted to advise them of their pharmacy options and to take action to ensure their pharmacy benefit remains uninterrupted." *Release No. 01-02-12*, *Jan. 4, 2012*

2. Club Benefits Change

5/3/2012 - **EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** -- The Air Force Materiel Command Member First Plus program was discontinued here, as of May 1.

This change means Eglin's club members will no longer receive discounts at non-club facilities such as the bowling alley, golf course and barbershop. The termination of the benefit was a result of the [96th Force Support Squadron's](#) base-wide comprehensive assessment of all force support activities to determine the future of their programs.

"This was a tough decision to make, and one that aligns with the choices many other installations either have made or are about to make," said Lt. Col. Jason Delamater, the 96th Force Support Squadron commander. "We realized many of our loyal club members may perceive this action as an erosion of club member benefits. That is why I worked with my staff to develop additional program incentives and benefits, over and above current offerings."

The objective of the new plan is to demonstrate a net gain in benefits and incentives to club members, according to Delamater. FSS personnel specifically crafted the offerings to reward both existing member loyalty and to attract new customers.

Some of the new and existing benefits and incentives are:

New member benefits and incentives

- Free quarterly membership appreciation nights
- "Bayview Bucks" member loyalty program: on the anniversary date of club membership, a \$1 Bayview Buck Club credit will be provided to members for each year of membership
- Bayview Frequent Diner's punch card: a club member can earn two punches per lunch visit (instead of one for non-members). Buy 12 lunches, 13th lunch is free.
- Membership Jackpot: certain club events will be designated a jackpot date and a money pot will be started with \$100. A random club number will be drawn at each event. The member has to be in attendance to win and each event a winner is not selected, another \$100 is added to the pot at the following Membership Jackpot event.
- Drawings for a free month of membership at every Bayview Club First Friday event

Air Force Club Membership benefits:

- Free dues during members' deployment and for 100 percent disabled veterans
- Free access to Air Force clubs worldwide

- Free Air Force club scholarship program
- Free "six months" dues upon retirement from military, GS or NAF
- Pay your club card bill at the club
- Refer a card member specials
- Free check cashing
- Two percent cash back for "on base" purchases using your club card and one percent everywhere else
- Chase Bank "Blue Star" program--zero interest rates and fees while deployed
- 10 percent off food and beverages (not alcohol) for personal catered functions at the club
- \$25 in transfer coupons when you transfer your membership to a new base

The Bayview Club exclusive membership benefits:

- "First Friday" program
- Free weekly social hour appetizers
- "Fish Fry" Membership Appreciation Night
- Free weekly lunch drawing
- Free semiannual Family Fun Daze events
- Free Wine Tasting Event w/special bottle pricing
- Free Bowling Center event for Club Members for entire family
- Free Golf Course event for Club Members for entire family
- Free "Birthday Breakfast" program for member and spouse
- \$2 off daily lunch buffet
- \$1.00 off breakfast or brunch
- \$2 off holiday buffets
- \$5 off monthly "Prime Rib for Two" dinner
- \$2 off monthly "Seafood" buffet
- \$50 club card drawing every Friday
- Annual Football Frenzy contest
- Weekly Bingo program--up to \$4,500 in prizes every Wednesday and Thursday

3. *Defense bill limits retiree health care increases*

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama signed the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act on Dec. 31 which contains a critical initiative to help control spiraling health-care costs within the Defense Department.

Section 701 limits annual TRICARE enrollment fee increases for retirees and their family members to an amount equal to the percentage by which retired pay increases that year.

The act also contains critical initiatives to develop counterterrorism initiatives abroad, build the security capacity of key partners, modernize the force and boost the efficiency and effectiveness of military operations worldwide.

The NDAA also includes:

Section 347 requires DOD to finance an independent assessment of overseas troop basing, advising retention, closure, realignment or establishment of U.S. military facilities outside the United States “in light of potential fiscal constraints on [DOD] and emerging national security requirements in coming years.”

Section 402 reduces authorized Army minimum end strength from 562,000 to 547,000. The other services' authorized minimum strengths are unchanged, with 325,700 for the Navy, 202,100 for the Marine Corps and 332,800 for the Air Force.

Section 512 of the act creates a new member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which currently includes the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff, the chief of naval operations and the Marine Corps commandant. The new member will be the chief of the National Guard Bureau, who will have responsibility for "addressing matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions."

Section 526 extends voluntary separation pay and benefits authority, formerly set to expire Dec. 31, to the end of 2018. Section 530 converts the high-deployment allowance from mandatory to authorized. The allowance currently pays \$100 a day, in addition to all other pay and allowances, to a deployed service member who has been deployed 401 days or more out of the preceding 730 days.

Section 702 sets mental health assessment requirements for service members deployed for contingency operations. The act calls for a series of assessments: one within 120 days before deployment; another during the period between 90 days after a deployment begins and 180 days after it ends; a third within a year after the deployment ends; and a fourth between 18 months and 30 months of redeployment. The act states assessments are intended to "identify post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal tendencies, and other behavioral health conditions ... in order to determine which such members are in need of additional care and treatment for such health conditions." Assessments are not required for service members "not subjected or exposed to operational risk factors during deployment in the contingency operation concerned," the act states.

4. VA Extends Deadlines For Undiagnosed Gulf War Illnesses

WASHINGTON - Officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs extended the deadline Thursday for Iraq veterans with unexplained illnesses to qualify for compensation and survivor benefits, pushing back the deadline to the end of 2016.

That deadline was set to expire Saturday. The move covers veterans from either the just-completed Iraq War or the 1990-1991 Gulf War who have clear service-related illnesses but not a clearly defined diagnosis.

Congress put the rule in place 1994 in response to reports of Gulf War Illness, a set of mysterious and crippling medical symptoms for which experts still have not found a unifying link. The move ensured that veterans would receive disability payments and access to other VA programs while department researchers continued to investigate the cause of the problems. The deadline has been extended by VA officials several times since then.

The policy covers, among other ailments, a host of unexplained skin disorders, neurologic symptoms, respiratory issues and other chronic pain problems experienced by troops who served in the more recent Iraq conflict.

Bradley Flohr, VA assistant director for compensation policy, said the decision to extend the deadline again came because of the continued mysteries surrounding illnesses from both conflicts, and the continued desire to make sure those veterans are cared for.

Veterans or survivors who believe they qualify for these benefits can contact VA at 1-800-827-1000. Further information about undiagnosed illnesses is available online at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/oefoif/index.asp> .

5. Eglin Hospital opens enrollment for TRICARE FOR LIFE eligible retirees

Lois Walsh, Team Eglin Public Affairs

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. -- Retirees 65 or older can look forward to additional medical care if they meet the eligibility requirements of TRICARE for Life.

TRICARE for Life (TFL) is a comprehensive health benefits program that is available to uniformed services retirees, their spouses, and their survivors who are age 65 or older and enrolled in Medicare parts A and B.

Eglin's regional hospital has plans to enroll additional patients in an effort to provide full medical support to include sub-specialty and surgical care.

Col. (Dr.) James Jablonski, 96th Medical Operations Support Squadron commander, said the hospital's goal is to enroll approximately 250 beneficiaries per quarter for a total of 2,000 patients during the next two years. The reason for opening enrollment is to provide the hospital staff with a patient mix that will help maintain the staff's skills. Retirees offer medical challenges not normally seen in the active-duty population. "Peacetime care doesn't always translate into the high level of treatment our staff sees in inpatient battle units," said Jablonski, who saw first-hand the skill sets needed when he deployed to Afghanistan.

Retirees interested in applying for the program must fill out a short application form which asks for current medications, chronic medical problems and hospitalizations. The applicants will be notified within 30 days whether they are accepted, waitlisted for further evaluation, or not accepted into the program.

Jablonski said some medical conditions like dialysis and severe congestive heart failure would be reasons for rejection because the continued inpatient care needed is not currently available at the hospital. "We want to reach people who can be treated in the clinic and then cared for if they need admission to our hospital," he said.

Applications are available at the pharmacy and the refill pharmacies. All applications will be reviewed by the internal medicine staff. Eligible patients will be contacted and offered enrollment with a primary care manager at the medical group.

6. DOD, VA to launch joint electronic health record system

5/22/2012 - **NORTH CHICAGO, Ill.** -- The Defense and Veterans Affairs departments have joined in a unique effort to combine their health records in what will become the world's largest electronic system by 2017, the secretaries of both departments announced here May 21. Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki briefed reporters after a tour of the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, the nation's first fully integrated DOD-VA medical facility treating service members, veterans, military retirees and dependents.

The center -- named for retired Navy captain and former NASA astronaut Jim Lovell, who was in

the audience May 21 -- amounts to a proving ground for the DOD-VA joint operating concept. It incorporates facilities, services and resources from the North Chicago VA Medical Center and the Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes.

"In response to a challenge issued by [President Barack Obama] three years ago, DOD and VA have been working steadily to increase the amount of health information that's shared between our two departments," Panetta said. What Obama envisioned in 2009 was an initiative called the virtual lifetime electronic record, or VLER, for the future of electronic health data sharing. Since that time, Panetta said, the centerpiece of the DOD-VA effort has been an effort to build an integrated electronic health record for service members and veterans that can be accessed at any DOD and VA medical facility.

Such an integrated electronic health record, or iEHR, is "one that is open in architecture and nonproprietary in design to expand information sharing, eliminate gaps between our two robust health care systems," Shinseki said. "This is key to seamlessness, critical to enhancing quality of health care, and essential to controlling costs," he added. "Today," Panetta said, "I want to affirm that we are fully committed to putting this system, which will be the world's largest electronic health record system, in place across the nation in 2017."

The project's first milestone will come in 2014, the defense secretary said. At that time, the departments will field initial operating capabilities of the integrated electronic health record at test sites in San Antonio and in Hampton Roads, Va., where DOD and the VA provide medical care to thousands of service members and veterans. The iEHR will unify the departments' now-separate legacy electronic health records systems into a common, secure system that makes service members' and veterans' health information available to them throughout their lifetimes.

At the news conference, Panetta said implementing and testing the new system over a period of years "will help us make sure that we are doing it right and that we have time to adjust based on experience in the field."

7. **Families list retirement, pay as top issues**

by Lisa Daniel, American Forces Press Service

5/10/2012 - **WASHINGTON (AFPS)** -- Military families regard the possible change of military retirement benefits as their top concern, according to the results of a major survey released in May. The 2012 Military Family Lifestyle Survey also shows that pay and benefits, the impact of deployments on children, operational tempo, spouse employment and education and combat stress and brain injuries are most on the minds of military family members.

Blue Star Families, a nonprofit military family support organization, released the findings of its third annual survey before a Capitol Hill audience of Congress members, military family members and support organizations, and media. "That data in this survey is the story of our lives," said Kathy Roth-Douquet, the chief executive officer of Blue

Star Families. The survey, she said, is conducted by professional researchers who also are military family members.

More than 4,000 family members responded to the survey, representing each of the services -- active, National Guard and reserve, and Coast Guard -- and all areas of the country. Nearly half of the survey respondents have a service member in the senior enlisted ranks, and 64 percent of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 44.

Among the findings:

- Thirty-one percent of respondents listed possible changes to retirement benefits as their biggest concern, followed by 20 percent who cited pay and benefits as their top concern;
- Veterans said their biggest concerns related to separating from the military were employment opportunities, followed by access to health care;
- Seven percent of respondents listed operational tempo as their top concern, and support for staying in the military dropped from 52 percent for families who were separated 13 to 24 months, to 15 percent for those who spent more than 37 months apart;
- Sixty percent of spouse respondents are not currently employed, and of those, 53 percent wanted to be; 57 percent said being a military spouse has a negative impact on their ability to work; 27 percent had problems getting professional licenses to transfer to different states;
- Six percent of respondents listed post-traumatic stress, combat stress and traumatic brain injuries as their top issue; 26 percent said their service member had signs of post-traumatic stress and 3 percent said they had a diagnosis.

Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, said the department and the nation are challenged by economic problems today, but that both must take care of military families. Things changed after the Vietnam War, Gordon said. "We got out of Vietnam and into the all-volunteer force," he said. "Because of that, our force became a married force." Also, Gordon said, the military now is structured so that "the entire military goes to war." Indeed, the survey found that National Guard and Reserve members have spent as much time away from home in the past decade as active duty members. "We're challenged today, and I would say we are up to that challenge," Gordon said. "We have a supportive Congress and a supportive administration, where the first lady and Dr. [Jill] Biden are out pitching for the military" through their "Joining Forces" campaign. "That's why this survey is so important," he said. "We need to know how these families feel. We have to have a better integration of [combat veterans] when they come home -- and they are coming home."

Other findings of the survey show:

- Ninety-two percent of respondents said they could help their children make positive school decisions during a spouse's deployment, but 64 percent said deployment hampered their children's abilities to participate in extracurricular activities;
- Ten percent of family members responded that they had considered suicide, compared to 9 percent for

service members.

- Fifty-seven percent said prevention should be aimed at training frontline supervisors and commanders;
- Eighty-one percent volunteered in the past year;
- Eighty-nine percent are registered to vote;
- Eighty-two percent believe the all-volunteer force works well;
- Seventy percent were satisfied with the military lifestyle, and 60 percent would recommend the military for young people; and
- Seventy-two percent said changing the law to allow gays to serve openly has had no impact on their service members' ability to serve.

8. How to change your address with the Air Force

NOTE TO RETIREES AND ANNUITANTS:

Please DO NOT send change of address information to the Retiree Services Section at the Air Force Personnel Center or to the Eglin AFB Retiree Activities Office. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the agency responsible for maintaining and changing correspondence addresses for retired members and recipients of Survivor Benefit Plan annuities who may receive correspondence (including the Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel) from official Air Force agencies.

Individuals with Internet Access

People with myPay accounts may change their address on the Internet by going to <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>, entering their personal identification number and then changing their correspondence address. Because there are other changes that can be made electronically, retired members and annuitants are encouraged to go this route. Those without a PIN should use the same Web site and request a PIN which will be sent through the mail in a short time.

Another way is to go to Customer Inquiry Request by clicking on <https://ca.dtic.mil/dfas/s-retired/ret1-pay.htm>. The nature of the inquiry would be "Change of Address."

Those people who subscribe electronically to the e-Afterburner and the Air Force Retiree News Service can change their e-mail address by clicking on the "Subscribe" option on the top navigation bar of this page. From there find the Afterburner/Air Force Retiree News Service block. First unsubscribe the old e-mail address, then subscribe with the new e-mail address.

Individuals Without Internet Access

Retirees receiving, or entitled to receive, retired pay, including retirees whose pay (part or all) comes from Veterans Affairs or from Civil Service (because of combined federal service), should send their change of address to:

DFAS
US Military Retirement Pay
PO Box 7130
London KY 40742-7130

This may also be accomplished by calling toll free (800) 321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5534. The fax number is (800) 469-6559. Include your Social Security number and sign your request when mailing or faxing.

Those surviving spouses who are receiving, or entitled to receive, an SBP/Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan annuity (this includes surviving spouses of retirees who were enrolled in SBP but who are receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation in lieu of the SBP) must send a change of address to:

DFAS
US Military Annuitant Pay
PO Box 7131
London KY 40742-7131

The toll-free phone number is (800) 321-1080 or commercial (216) 522-5534. The fax number is (800) 982-8459. If mailing or faxing, include your and the deceased sponsor's Social Security number and sign the request.

Non-SBP/RSFPP Annuitants

Non-SBP/RSFPP annuitants who are registered to receive the Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel (but who may or may not be receiving a DIC pension from the VA), mail the new address and include the sponsor's retired grade and SSN to:

HQ AFPC/DPSIAR
550 C Street West Ste 8
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4713

NOTE:

HQ AFPC/DPSIAR is not staffed to handle changes of address by phone.

Other Agencies to Contact

There may be other agencies you should contact to change your address such as DEERS, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, Tricare and Medicare. See "[Resources](#)" for contact information

9. Program offers paid training for unemployed veterans

by Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

5/16/2012 - **WASHINGTON (AFRNS)** -- Unemployed veterans ages 35 to 60 can apply for up to 12 months of paid training through a new program sponsored by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs. VA officials said the population the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program will serve is particularly in need. Of about 900,000 U.S. veterans who are unemployed, nearly two-thirds are between 35 and 60, according to the Labor Department.

The program, which began May 15, provides 12 months of training assistance equal to the monthly full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program, which currently pays \$1,473 per month. Participants must be enrolled in a community college or technical school program approved for VA benefits. The program must lead to an associate degree, non-college degree or certificate.

To qualify, a veteran also must:

- Be unemployed on the day of application;
- Have a discharge that is not dishonorable;
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery GI Bill;
- Not receive VA compensation for being unemployable;
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job training program; and
- Pursue a program that leads to employment in one of 210 occupations the Labor Department designates as high-demand.

The list of occupations, available on the VA website, includes jobs in construction, machine operation, transportation, preschool education, health care and many other fields.

The program will fund up to 45,000 participants between July 1 and Sept. 30, and an additional 54,000 participants from Oct. 1, 2012 through March 31, 2014. Labor officials said the department will offer employment assistance to every veteran who completes the program. The retraining program is funded under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. The law expanded education and training for veterans, strengthened the Transition Assistance Program for service members returning to civilian life, and provides tax credits for employers who hire unemployed or disabled veterans.

Eligible veterans may call 800-827-1000 to learn more about the program, or click [here](#) to visit the website.
The Veterans On-Line Application is available by clicking [here](#)

This newsletter was produced by the Eglin AFB Retiree Activities Office, 96ABW/CVR. Building 210, Room 165, phone: 850-882-5916, e-mail 96abwcvr@eglin.af.mil