

## Network Development

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The contractor shall provide a plan for establishing a provider network throughout the region to support TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Extra and to complement Military Treatment Facility (MTF) capabilities. The network shall meet the standards in [paragraph 2.0](#).

### 1.0 GEOGRAPHIC AVAILABILITY

**1.1** The contractor shall establish and maintain provider networks, supporting TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Extra, in all Prime Service Areas (PSAs), throughout all health care delivery periods of the contract. (See [Chapter 16](#) for TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR) network requirements.) In each area where TRICARE Prime is offered (TRICARE PSA), the contractor shall permit enrollment by beneficiaries under the terms and conditions of [Chapters 6](#) and [11](#). The contractor shall enroll beneficiaries only to MTF Primary Care Managers (PCMs) or to PCMs in the PSA network.

**1.1.1** The contractor shall ensure the network has the capability and capacity to permit each beneficiary enrolled in Prime to a civilian PCM prior to the start of option period one and residing outside of PSAs under this contract to enroll to a PSA PCM, provided the beneficiary resides less than 100 miles from an available network PCM in the PSA and waives both primary and specialty care travel time standards. Beneficiaries enrolled in Prime to a civilian PCM prior to the beginning of option period one who reside outside of PSAs under this contract and are 100 miles or more from an available PCM in the PSA network, shall not be permitted to continue their enrollment.

**1.1.2** The contractor will not be required to establish a network with the capability and capacity to grant new enrollments to beneficiaries who reside outside a PSA. The contractor shall grant a request for a new enrollment to the network from a beneficiary residing outside a PSA provided there is sufficient unused network capability and capacity to accommodate the enrollment, the PSA network PCM to be assigned is located less than 100 miles from the beneficiary's residence, and the beneficiary waives both primary and specialty care travel time standards.

### 1.2 Areas Where Establishment Of TRICARE Prime And TRICARE Extra Is Required

The contractor shall make TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Extra available in all PSAs. PSAs are the entire area of all the zip codes lying within or intersected by the 40-mile radius around enrolling MTFs and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) sites. The contract contains a list of mandatory PSA sites.

## **2.0 NETWORK REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS**

The contractor shall establish, in consonance with the RDs, provider networks through contractual arrangements. Network requirements and standards are listed below.

### **2.1 RDs And MTF Interface In Provider Network Development**

Prior to the contractor finalizing the civilian network, MTF Commanders and the RDs shall be given an opportunity to provide input into the development of the network in their PSAs and the BRAC sites. The contractor shall meet with the RD and all MTF Commanders within 30 calendar days of the award to obtain their network size and specialty makeup input. The contractor shall follow the MTF Commander's directions regarding the priorities for the assignment of enrollees to PCMs.

### **2.2 Standards For Network Providers**

Network and access to care standards are in [32 CFR 199.17](#). Each PSA established is considered to be a separate service area to which the standards apply. The contractor shall develop and implement a system for continuously monitoring and evaluating network adequacy.

### **2.3 Participation On Claims**

All network provider contracts shall require the provider to participate on all claims and submit claims on behalf of all Military Health System (MHS) and Medicare beneficiaries.

### **2.4 Balance Billing**

**2.4.1** Providers in the contractor's network may only bill MHS beneficiaries for applicable deductibles, copayments, and/or cost-sharing amounts; they may not bill for charges which exceed contractually allowed payment rates. Network providers may only bill MTFs/Managed Care Support Contractors (MCSCs) for services provided to Active Duty Service Members (ADSMs) at the contractually agreed amount, or less, and may not bill for charges which exceed the contractually agreed allowed payment amount. The contractor shall include this provision in provider contracts and shall provide the RDs and each MTF Commander with a list of all network providers.

**2.4.2** Network providers shall never bill an MHS eligible beneficiary for more than the contractually agreed amount for TRICARE Prime enrollees with civilian network PCMs. The contractor shall ensure that the amount charged MHS beneficiaries without civilian network PCMs is the same as the amount charged TRICARE Prime enrollees with civilian network PCMs. If the contractor is using different reimbursement mechanisms, the contractually agreed amount shall be equal to or less than the CHAMPUS allowable amount minus the discount the contractor proposed receiving as a result of the approved, alternative reimbursement method agreed to with the provider.

## **2.5 Billing For Non-Covered Services (Hold Harmless)**

**2.5.1** A network provider may not require payment from the beneficiary for any excluded or excludable services that the beneficiary received from the network provider (i.e., the beneficiary will be held harmless) except as follows:

- If the beneficiary did not inform the provider that he or she was a TRICARE beneficiary, the provider may bill the beneficiary for services provided.
- If the beneficiary was informed that the services were excluded or excludable and he/she agreed in advance to pay for the services, the provider may bill the beneficiary. An agreement to pay must be evidenced by written records (“written records” include for example: 1) provider notes written prior to receipt of the services demonstrating that the beneficiary was informed that the services were excluded or excludable and the beneficiary agreed to pay for them; 2) a statement or letter written by the beneficiary prior to receipt of the services, acknowledging that the services were excluded or excludable and agreeing to pay for them; 3) statements written by both the beneficiary and provider following receipt of the services that the beneficiary, prior to receipt of the services, agreed to pay for them, knowing that the services were excluded or excludable). General agreements to pay, such as those signed by the beneficiary at the time of admission, are not evidence that the beneficiary knew specific services were excluded or excludable.

**2.5.2** Certified marriage and family therapists (both network and non-network), in their participation agreements with TRICARE, agree to hold eligible beneficiaries harmless for non-covered care.

**2.5.3** The beneficiary will be entitled to a full refund of any amount paid by the beneficiary for the excluded services, including any deductible and cost-share amounts, provided the beneficiary informed the network provider (or the network or non-network certified marriage and family therapist) that he or she was a TRICARE beneficiary, and did not agree in advance to pay for the services after having been informed that the services were excluded or excludable. In order to obtain a refund, the beneficiary is not required to ask the provider to return the payments the beneficiary has made for excluded services. Instead, the beneficiary will be refunded any payments made by the beneficiary or by another party on behalf of the beneficiary (excluding an insurer or provider) for the excluded services. The beneficiary, or other party making payment on behalf of the beneficiary, must request a refund in writing from the contractor by the end of the sixth month following the month in which payment was made to the provider or by the end of the sixth month following the month in which the Peer Review Organization (PRO), or TMA advised the beneficiary that he or she was not liable for the excludable services. The time limit may be extended where good cause is shown. Good cause is defined as:

- Administrative error, such as, misrepresentation or mistake, or an officer or employee of TMA or a PRO, if performing functions under TRICARE and acting within the scope of the officer’s or employee’s authority.
- Mental incompetence of the beneficiary or, in the case of a minor child, mental incompetence of his or her guardian, parent, or sponsor.

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- Adjudication delays by Other Health Insurance (OHI) (when not attributable to the beneficiary), if such adjudication is required under [32 CFR 199.8](#).

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