

# TRICARE® West Region

HNFS/THP Joint Newsletter – Q3 (September 2024)

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## Our Commitment to You: A Message from HNFS

Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) remains fully committed to providing exceptional health care during the remainder of the T2017 TRICARE contract. Our focus for 2024 will continue to be on fulfilling contract requirements for our service members, their families, and the retirees we serve. We are proud to continue partnering with you to serve military families throughout 2024.

## New TRICARE Contracts to Begin in 2025

TRICARE managed care support (MCS) contracts, known as T-5, will start on Jan. 1, 2025. MCS contractors manage administrative support services for the TRICARE benefit. This includes managing enrollment services, maintaining civilian provider networks, operating call centers, and processing referral and pre-authorization requests and TRICARE claims.

How beneficiaries get health care won't change for the rest of 2024. The same regional contractors – Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) in the West Region and Humana Military in the East Region – will continue managing beneficiary health plans through Dec. 31, 2024.

The T-5 contractors – TriWest Healthcare Alliance (TriWest) in the West Region and Humana Military in the East Region – will start delivering health care on Jan. 1, 2025.

It's important that TRICARE beneficiaries check the [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System \(DEERS\)](#) to confirm their information is current. This will help make sure they don't miss important communications about their TRICARE benefit and upcoming changes. Beneficiaries will hear more about any actions they may need to take ahead of TRICARE Open Season.

Get answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ):

1. Visit [www.tricare.mil/FAQ](http://www.tricare.mil/FAQ).
2. Visit HNFS' website to read West Region-specific FAQs:
  - For beneficiaries: [www.tricare-west.com/go/transition](http://www.tricare-west.com/go/transition)
  - For providers: [www.tricare-west.com/go/transition-out](http://www.tricare-west.com/go/transition-out)

## 2024 Customer Service Community Annual Seminar

The 2024 Customer Service Community (CSC) Annual Seminar took place July 30-August 1 in Colorado Springs, CO. This year's theme was "Exploring the T-5 Galaxy - Going Where No One Has Gone Before" and the seminar's focus was the T-5 transition, TRICARE policy and benefits changes, and the patient experience within military hospitals/clinics.

The seminar began with our three distinguished guests, Ms. Seileen Mullen, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (HA); Ms. Regina Julian, Deputy Assistant Director for Health Care Operations, Defense Health Agency (DHA); and Dr. David Krulak, Director, TRICARE Health Plan, DHA providing keynote presentations.

In addition to the keynote presentations there were many other topics presented during this 3-day seminar, including T-5 communications plan, Reserve Component Line of Duty process, TRICARE Prime Remote, and the Disruptive and Abusive Behavior Prevention and Management Program.

Seminar attendees included Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators (BCAC), Health Benefits Advisors (HBA), Patient Experience Officers, Family Support Staff, National Guard/Reserve Unit Representatives, and other members of the Customer Service Community. In-person attendance at the seminar provided an opportunity for health care professionals to learn about upcoming changes in the TRICARE Program while catching up with colleagues and making new connections.

Planning for next year's seminar has already begun and we look forward to seeing you there.



## Customer Service Community Training Update

The TRICARE Health Plan (THP) Customer Support Liaison (CSL) Team together with subject matter experts throughout the Military Health System are hosting recurring Sustainment Training targeting Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators (BCAC), Debt Collection Assistance Officers (DCAO), Health Benefits Advisors (HBA) and others serving our TRICARE population.

Our next session, Foreign Force Health Care Benefits, will provide an in-depth presentation on the health care benefits afforded to our foreign military guests. The Department of Defense (DOD) provides health care benefits for over 14,000 Foreign Force Members and their authorized family members. The type of care and the cost of that care varies based on the type of agreement between the member's country and the DOD.

If you have questions related to Foreign Force benefits or just want to learn more, please consider attending this sustainment training session on Oct. 16, 2024, 1330-1500 Eastern time. To register, send an email with your name, phone number and duty location to the CSL Team at [dha.san-diego.healthcare-ops.mbx.thp-csl-team@health.mil](mailto:dha.san-diego.healthcare-ops.mbx.thp-csl-team@health.mil).

# TRICARE Open Season – Nov. 11 through Dec. 10, 2024

It's almost TRICARE Open Season, the time for TRICARE beneficiaries to consider whether to make changes to current health coverage. During this time, eligible TRICARE beneficiaries have the option to enroll in or change their TRICARE Prime or Select health plan. Open Season is the only time beneficiaries can switch or enroll in a TRICARE Prime or Select plan unless they experience a qualifying life event (QLE). This is the first TRICARE Open Season that falls within the transition-in period of the T-5 managed care support contracts, scheduled for a Jan. 1, 2025 start of health care delivery.

## Key things you need to know:

1. In the TRICARE West Region, Open Season will be managed by TriWest Healthcare Alliance, (TriWest), the incoming T-5 West Region contractor.
2. Six states are moving from the East Region to the West Region – Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wisconsin. TriWest will handle Open Season for beneficiaries who live in these states.
3. In the East Region (except for the six states listed above), Humana Military will manage Open Season.
4. The T-5 regional contractors' network provider directories will post to their respective websites on Nov. 2, 2024. This will allow beneficiaries the ability to check the network status of their providers ahead of Open Season.
5. TriWest's customer service line will go live on Nov. 11, 2024, the first day of Open Season.
6. Due to the T-5 transition, Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) will not be available to already-enrolled TRICARE beneficiaries this Open Season. From Oct. 28-Dec. 31, 2024, only those who are eligible but not already enrolled in a TRICARE plan will be able to use BWE to enroll.
7. Even if beneficiaries don't make any changes to their TRICARE plan, beneficiaries who will be in the T-5 West Region beginning Jan 1, 2025, and pay enrollment fees or premiums by recurring credit card or electronic fund transfer (EFT) from a bank account, will have to change their payments to TriWest. This is to ensure enrollment fees or premiums will be paid after Jan. 1, 2025. Those who make payments by a military pay system allotment do not need to take any action. TriWest's beneficiary portal will be available for entering recurring payment information beginning Oct 4, 2024. Beneficiaries should look for an email or letter from TriWest with detailed instructions.

As a reminder, Open Season does not apply to TRICARE beneficiaries enrolled in the following plans: TRICARE Young Adult, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, Continued Health Care Benefit Program, Transitional Assistance Management Program, and TRICARE For Life. **Note:** See #7 above for information on transferring payments.

The Federal Benefits Open Season for dental and vision coverage is managed by the Office of Personnel Management. Visit [www.BENEFEDS.com](http://www.BENEFEDS.com) to learn more.

Beneficiaries who are eligible for TRICARE but not enrolled in a plan will only be eligible for direct care, meaning care at a military hospital or clinic, if space is available.

Visit [www.tricare.mil/openseason](http://www.tricare.mil/openseason) for additional details.

### Important!

Beneficiaries should only contact Health Net Federal Services about West Region enrollment changes that are effective before Jan. 1, 2025 (such as after a QLE).



## Military Health Care Coverage of Foreign Forces on Official Duty in the United States

Foreign Force Members (FFM) assigned to the United States under the sponsorship or invitation of the Department of Defense (DOD) are eligible to receive care at military hospitals and clinics, or MTFs. The type of agreement between the member's host country and the DOD determines the type of care allowed and the cost of that care.

FFMs from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) nations, and Partners for Peace (PfP) countries with a current Reciprocal Health Care Agreement (RHCA) can receive care at MTFs at no cost. These members will be listed in the Defense Enrollment and Eligibility System (DEERS) as "Reimbursable Direct Care for DOD Affiliates (CONUS ONLY)." All primary care must be from an MTF provider. If private sector care is needed, a referral is required, which must be submitted to the MTF's referral management center for review and further processing. The referral process for NATO/SOFA/PfP countries with an RHCA should follow the same procedures as for American active duty service members.

Foreign service members whose host countries do not have an RHCA also can receive care at MTFs, but on a reimbursable basis. The MTF's Uniformed Business Office must be notified when a patient encounter may generate reimbursable costs. Non-NATO/SOFA/PfP countries are totally responsible for private sector care costs.

Inpatient care for FFMs is not covered by the TRICARE program.

See p. 2 for an upcoming training opportunity about FFM care.





# Enrollment Changes Via the Beneficiary Web Enrollment Website

## Understanding Contractor Responsibilities



### Important!

Due to the T-5 transition, from Oct. 28-Dec. 31, 2024, BWE will only be available to eligible beneficiaries not yet enrolled in a TRICARE plan. Currently enrolled beneficiaries must contact the appropriate regional contractor to make enrollment changes.

The Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) website at [milConnect](#) is maintained and managed by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) reviews enrollment and primary care manager (PCM) changes submitted via BWE and will either approve or redirect the request based on enrollment guidelines.

HNFS offers answers to frequently asked questions about changes made through BWE and HNFS' responsibilities as a TRICARE contractor.

### Q. How long does HNFS have to review BWE PCM change requests?

A. HNFS is allowed six business days to process PCM change requests.

### Q. What type of PCM can the beneficiary choose in BWE?

A. Beneficiaries can choose any military hospital or clinic PCM with availability, or they can choose a civilian PCM, if eligible.

### Q. Does BWE allow active duty service members (ADSM) to enter their unit identification code (UIC)?

A. No. BWE was created by DMDC based on language in the TRICARE Operations Manual (TOM). UIC-based assignments are not required by the TOM and are not part of the BWE application.

### Q. Does BWE allow ADSMs to enter their special status (PRP, Flyer, Arming Use of Force, etc.)?

A. No. HNFS does not receive special status information on BWE submissions.

### Q. Are beneficiaries notified if their requested PCM change was rejected by HNFS?

A. All PCM changes trigger a beneficiary notification, either by a DMDC postcard or HNFS letter, depending on the situation.

### Q. What happens if the beneficiary sees the requested PCM, but HNFS later reviews and denies the PCM change?

A. Depending on the provider type and care received, beneficiaries may have higher out-of-pocket costs. PCM changes are not effective until the contractor processes the request.

BWE displays the following statement: *"Your enrollment is being processed and a confirmation letter will be mailed to you within 5-7 business days after processing. Please do not seek provider care until the confirmation letter is received. Please print this page and keep it for your records."*

### Q. Will BWE indicate whether the beneficiary had a qualifying life event (QLE)?

A. No. However, beneficiaries must acknowledge that they are following all TRICARE enrollment procedures when using BWE. Enrollment changes must be made within 90 days following the QLE.

### Q. Are beneficiaries required to make a payment for their enrollment through BWE?

A. Depending on sponsor status and plan type, beneficiaries who use BWE for new enrollments, plan changes, or contractor/region changes may be directed to make enrollment fee or premium payments. HNFS encourages beneficiaries to contact us to verify whether a payment is required.



## Lifestyle Change Resource for West Region Beneficiaries

Health Net Federal Services' (HNFS) next [Making Healthy Changes for Life](#) webinar is on Nov. 13, 2024. Whether beneficiaries want to manage stress, eat healthier, exercise more, sleep better, stop smoking, or improve their health in any way, this live webinar will provide the skills needed to help them make a change and continue healthy habits for life. Registration is required. For those who prefer self-paced classes, HNFS offers an [Assessing Your Readiness for Healthy Change](#) online program or one of the many other health programs in our [Learning Center](#).

# Benefit Corner

## Lipectomy, Platelet-Rich-Plasma, Botox

Retroactive to May 28, 2021, TRICARE may cover lipectomy (liposuction) for the treatment of lipedema when specific conditions are met. Patients must have a clinical diagnosis of lipedema stage I, II or III; be 18 years of age or older; have a body mass index less than 30; and meet the clinical guidelines specified in TRICARE Policy Manual (TPM), Chapter 1, Section 6.1 and Chapter 4, Section 2.1. Pre-authorization is required.

Separately, TRICARE will not cover the following services as they have been identified as unproven:

- Platelet-rich-plasma (PRP) for all indications, effective Oct. 1, 2024
- Botulinum toxin A (Botox) for the treatment of myofascial pain dysfunction syndrome (also known as temporomandibular joint [TMJ] syndrome), already in effect.

Find full details in the TPM, available at [manuals.health.mil](https://manuals.health.mil).

## Hearing Aids

To be implemented on Sept. 30, 2024, and retroactive to Dec. 22, 2023, TRICARE has expanded coverage of hearing aids to children of certain former members of the uniformed services. Eligible beneficiaries must have a profound hearing loss as defined in TPM, Chapter 7, Section 8.2. Previously, this coverage was limited to active duty service members and their families.



## 2024 CareRadius Training Sessions and Self-Paced Option

### Online learning

Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) offers CareRadius trainings via teleconference every other month. Refer to HNFS' 2024 registration flyer at [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com) > Government in the "MTF Education" box. The last training session HNFS is hosting will be on Nov. 14.

The two-hour teleconference trainings (12 noon-2 p.m. PT) will focus on the following CareRadius topics:

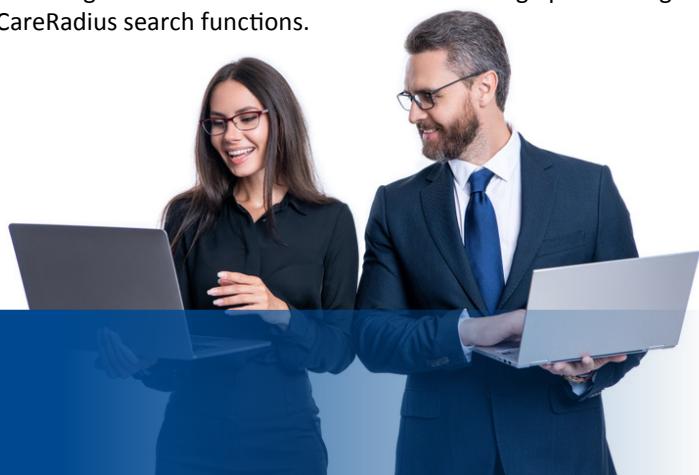
- Authorizations and referrals
- Documentation
- Letters
- Case and disease management modules
- Medical Management dashboard
- Other tutorials as time permits



If you are unable to register using the link in the registration flyer due to system firewalls, try forwarding the flyer to a personal computer/email.

### CareRadius Basics Self-Paced Training!

Before you attend a teleconference training, please review HNFS' new online module, *CareRadius Basics*. This self-paced training offers a general overview and walks users through performing key CareRadius search functions.



You also can access online learning materials 24/7 at [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com) > Government. HNFS provides tutorials with step-by-step instructions on using CareRadius tools and related functions, such as looking up beneficiaries, searching for referrals and authorizations, and viewing determination letters. Log in to the Government portal at [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com) and click on the "CareRadius Training" link to get started.

**Interested in learning more?** Please contact your local HNFS TRICARE customer liaison or regional Field Operations manager for additional information.

# Prescription Drug Monitoring Support

Health care professionals are the strongest line of defense in preventing prescription drug misuse. Two essential tools to assist in prevention are the Military Health System (MHS) Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP).

## MHS Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

The MHS PDMP provides access to review a patients' controlled substance prescription history, including the quantity and strength of the medication regardless of where the medication is prescribed or dispensed.

To use this tool:

- Navigate to <https://mhs.pmpaware.net/> and select Create an Account.
- Use your .mil email address to register and create a password.
- Select your user role under the health care professional list.
- Complete the required demographics for your account.
- Once complete, you will receive an email to verify your registration.
- Contact the PDMP team at Express Scripts for additional information or questions at [MHSPMP@express-scripts.com](mailto:MHSPMP@express-scripts.com)

Registered MHS prescribers and pharmacists can register delegates – individuals assigned to help providers with providers with prescriptions – to create and review patient reports.

## Prescription Monitoring Program

The PMP supports military providers and TRICARE regional contractors by identifying beneficiaries who are potentially at risk for prescription drug misuse and providing an opportunity to implement restrictions to prevent or decrease the risk of overutilization.

Providers have the option to:

- Initiate restrictions on prescriptions (enrollment, maintenance, removal) by submitting an MTF Restriction Form through Express Scripts' MTF Provider Portal.
- View reporting (identification, current restrictions, non-compliance, etc.) accessible via Express Scripts' MTF Provider Portal.
  - The PMP Utilizer Report (Q060), available on the 15<sup>th</sup> day after each quarter of the calendar year, is generated to identify beneficiaries potentially at risk for misuse of prescription drugs.
  - The Prescription Monitoring Report (M230), available on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, contains monthly restriction activity and PMP program compliance.

The PMP team at Express Scripts can provide training and support. To learn more, contact: [TRICARE111@express-scripts.com](mailto:TRICARE111@express-scripts.com).



# Summary

## Beneficiary and Provider Education Summary (July–September 2024)

This list includes email, fax and U.S. mail education that Health Net Federal Services' (HNFS) Communications team issued to West Region beneficiaries and providers. Some items also may have posted as web articles, but not all web articles are listed below. Visit the "News and Updates" boxes on the beneficiary and provider home pages at [www.tricare-west.com](http://www.tricare-west.com) for complete web article archives.

Note: This summary does not include beneficiary web articles published on [tricare.mil](http://tricare.mil).

What	Audience	Date	Distribution Method
"In Case You Missed It:" Stay Safe This Summer	Beneficiaries	07/09/2024	Email
July 2024 "In Case You Missed It"	Beneficiaries	07/18/2024	Email, web
TRICARE Coverage for Your Children: What You Need To Know	Beneficiaries	08/02/2024	Web
In Case You Missed It: Opioid Misuse Awareness	Beneficiaries	08/13/2024	Email, web
Care Options for Those Exposed to 2021 Red Hill Fuel Spill in Hawaii	Beneficiaries	08/13/2024	Web
Learn About TRICARE Qualifying Life Events	Beneficiaries	08/16/2024	Web
August 2024 "In Case You Missed It"	Beneficiaries	08/20/2024	Email, web
Know How TRICARE Regions Are Changing in 2025	Beneficiaries	08/30/2024	Web
Health Matters Issue 3 Newsletter	Beneficiaries	09/10/2024 (web) 09/17/2024 (email)	Email, web
09/17/2024 (email)	Email, web	09/25/2024	Email, web
Autism Care Demonstration Access-to-Care Standards	Providers	07/02/2024	Email, fax, web
Reimbursement Changes for Disposable Negative Pressure Wound Therapy	Providers	07/02/2024	Email, fax, web
Help Your Patients Stay Safe This Summer	Providers	07/08/2024	Email
Naval Hospital Bremerton Provider Open House	Providers	07/09/2024	Email, fax
Consult Report Requirements for Mental Health Care Providers	Providers	07/17/2024	Email, fax
July 2024 "In Case You Missed It"	Providers	07/23/2024	Email, web
Tips for Submitting Autism Care Demonstration Treatment Plans	Providers	07/23/2024	Email, fax, web
Kirtland Air Force Base Provider Open House	Providers	07/23/2024	Email, fax
Changes to TRICARE's Childbirth and Breastfeeding Support Demonstration	Providers	07/24/2024	Email, fax
August 2024 TRICARE Provider News	Providers	08/01/2024	Email, web
Health & Wellness 2024 Teleclass Schedule	Providers	08/06/2024	Email, fax
Whiteman Air Force Base Provider Open House	Providers	08/06/2024	Email, fax
Care Options for Patients Exposed to 2021 Red Hill Fuel Spill in Hawaii	Providers	08/13/2024	Web
In Case You Missed It: You Can Help Prevent Opioid Misuse	Providers	08/13/2024	Email, web
TRICARE Benefit Updates: Liposuction, Platelet-Rich-Plasma, Botox	Providers	08/19/2024	Email, fax
Reimbursement for Certain Services or Items Without Established Rates	Providers	08/19/2024	Email, fax, web
Confidentiality of Network Provider Agreements	Providers	08/21/2024	Email, fax, web
Naval Branch Clinic Oak Harbor Provider Open House	Providers	08/21/2024	Email, fax
Autism Care Demonstration: Discharge Summaries	Providers	08/29/2024	Email, fax
September 2024 "In Case You Missed It"	Providers	09/19/2024	Email, web
Autism Care Demonstration: Progress Notes	Providers	09/24/2024	Email, fax, web