

## Beware of Provider Directory Solicitations

**P**lease be aware that private companies are contacting TRICARE providers and asking them to purchase a listing in their professional directories. These companies are claiming that providers will not receive TRICARE referrals unless they purchase a listing, or that they will receive “additional exposure” to the TRICARE population if they do purchase a listing.

Please note that the statements made by these companies are false. TRICARE referrals are not based on listings purchased in any directory. TRICARE network providers are listed in the TRICARE West Region provider directory located at [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) and do not have to pay to be listed.

Military Media is one of the organizations contacting providers, and it is important to note this is not the same organization as Military Media, Inc. based out of Poughkeepsie, NY. Military Media, Inc. offers advertising, marketing and consumer promotions to the military audience. It is not affiliated with the Military Media that has been sending solicitations and does not publish any type of provider directory.

If you are contacted by an organization requesting payment for a provider directory listing, please contact your local network representative or call 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378). ■

## Five Easy Steps to Submit Referrals/Authorizations Online

**N**ow that TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. (TriWest) is offering online referral and authorization request submissions, using this tool is just five easy steps away.

- 1. Register.** You must be a registered user on the secure provider portal. If you're already registered, the tax identification number(s) (TIN) affiliated with your login must be the same as the TIN used for the referrals and authorizations you will enter. Each person in your office submitting requests must be a registered user. If you're not a registered user, go to [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider) and click on “Register Today!” to receive instructions on how to register. Once registered, you may have a 24–48-hour waiting period before being able to use the online tool.
- 2. Access your online account.** Once registered, you can log in to the secure portal by clicking on “My Account.” From there, you will see the “Referrals & Authorizations” section.
- 3. Take the online tutorial.** Click the “Learn to Submit Requests” link for a list of online tools. Then click “Submission Tutorial” for a demonstration on how to use the tool and submit your referrals and authorizations online. You can also use the written tutorial. It's important to review submission instructions!
- 4. Begin entering your referrals and authorizations online.** Once you have completed steps 1–3, you will be ready to submit your TRICARE service requests online. Click on “Submit Request” to launch the application. Remember to provide clinical information with your request.
- 5. Help is only a click away!** Should you experience any issues or need help using the online submission tool, click on “Technical Assistance with Submission Requests” and complete the online form. This form will go directly to your TriWest Support Team and someone will contact you shortly. Note: This assistance is only for functionality of the online tool, not to resolve referral or authorization questions usually handled by the Contact Center staff.

For further information, please refer to [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider) or call 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378). ■



# Clearing Up Confusion about Cosmetic Surgery

## Avoid Claims Denials

**D**ermatologists often perform procedures that are medically necessary in addition to those that are cosmetic in nature, e.g., removing a skin tag. Confusion sometimes occurs regarding which services are covered by TRICARE.

For example, during an office visit for an authorized dermatology procedure, a TRICARE beneficiary wants a skin tag cosmetically removed. The provider removes the skin tag, but there was no medical justification because the removal was purely for cosmetic reasons. Confusion can then result when the services billed exceed the services authorized, and the provider does not receive payment for the non-covered service because he or she hasn't obtained a *Waiver of Non-Covered Services* form from the beneficiary.

This waiver allows a network provider to collect payment from a TRICARE beneficiary for services denied as "non-covered" (i.e., not a TRICARE-covered benefit) when the beneficiary has agreed, in writing, to waive his or her balance-billing protection. **Note:** It is never appropriate to use a *Waiver of Non-Covered Services* form for an active

duty service member (ADSM) or to bill an ADSM for non-covered services.

According to TRICARE policy, the removal of skin lesions should be considered cosmetic and is not a covered benefit unless medically proven otherwise.

Skin tag (achrocordon) removal is always considered cosmetic unless it is on the upper eyelid and hanging into the visual field.

It is important to understand that a referral for evaluation and treatment does not imply that cosmetic surgery services are covered. If a patient receives a referral for an evaluation, it does not mean the treatment will be covered if the services are not a TRICARE-covered benefit. Services that are potentially cosmetic require a medical necessity review and prior authorization per the TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. (TriWest) Prior Authorization List.

If you have any questions, please refer to the TriWest Prior Authorization List at [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider) or call 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378). ■

## Preventing Fraud and Abuse

**H**ealth care fraud and abuse are costly and dishonest, and serious cases may result in criminal investigation and prosecution. Identifying and preventing fraud and abuse helps save valuable benefit dollars and ensures TRICARE beneficiaries receive the quality of care they are entitled to receive.

Fraud is defined as the intentional deception or misrepresentation of facts, resulting in unauthorized benefits or payments. When undetected, fraud can negatively impact patient care. Some examples of fraud include the following:

- Billing for services at a higher level than provided or necessary
- Collecting amounts from TRICARE beneficiaries that exceed the TRICARE-allowable charge
- Failing to disclose coverage under other health insurance
- Falsifying claims or medical records

- Falsifying eligibility
- Misrepresenting the dates, frequency, duration or description of services rendered
- Misrepresenting who provided the services
- Submitting claims for services not rendered

Abuse is practicing improper or inappropriate actions, having less than acceptable standards of professional conduct or performing services that are not medically necessary. Some examples of abuse include the following:

- A pattern of claims for services that are not medically necessary
- A pattern of waiving cost-shares and/or deductibles
- Failure to maintain adequate medical or financial records

- Improper billing practices
- Refusal to furnish or allow access to medical records

To report suspected fraud or abuse by another provider or a TRICARE beneficiary, call the TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. (TriWest) Fraud Hotline at 1-888-584-9378 or contact the TRICARE Program Integrity Office at:

TRICARE Management Activity  
Attn: Program Integrity  
16401 East Centretech Parkway  
Aurora, CO 80011-9066

Fax: 1-303-676-3981

Online: [www.tricare.mil/fraud](http://www.tricare.mil/fraud)  
E-mail: [fraudline@tma.osd.mil](mailto:fraudline@tma.osd.mil)

The TRICARE Management Activity asks for your cooperation in preventing and reporting fraud and abuse. ■

## Understanding Hearing Aid Coverage

Active duty service members should always consult with their primary care managers (PCMs) with questions about hearing loss. A referral from the PCM is required to see an audiologist for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote enrollees. In addition, an authorization from TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp. is needed.

According to the *TRICARE Policy Manual* (Chapter 7, Section 8.2), TRICARE covers hearing aids only for active duty family members who meet the following hearing loss requirements:

- **Profound hearing loss (adult).** An adult (a spouse of a member of the uniformed services on active duty for more than 30 days as defined in 32 CFR 199.3) with a hearing threshold of:
  - 40 dB HL or greater in one or both ears when tested at 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000 Hz; or
  - 26 dB HL or greater in one or both ears at any three or more of those frequencies; or
  - A speech recognition score less than 94%.
- **Profound hearing loss (child).** A child (an unmarried child of an active duty member who otherwise meets the criteria, including age requirements, in 32 CFR 199.3) with a 26 dB HL or greater hearing threshold level in one or both ears when tested at 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000 Hz.

Medically necessary and appropriate services and supplies required in connection with this hearing aid benefit, including hearing examinations provided by authorized providers, are covered.

Hearing aid and hearing aid services for retirees and their family members and implantable hearing aids are excluded from the policy. (**Note:** This is not to be confused with cochlear implants, which are covered by TRICARE.) Retirees may participate in the Retiree-At-Cost Hearing Aid Program (RACHAP) at participating facilities accepting retirees. For more information about RACHAP and participating facilities, visit [www.militaryaudiology.org](http://www.militaryaudiology.org).

For more information about TRICARE's hearing aid coverage, visit [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil). ■

## SSN Reduction Plan Implementation

The Department of Defense (DoD) is taking action to protect DoD identification (ID) cardholders. The recently launched Social Security Number (SSN) Reduction Plan will help prevent identity theft by removing SSNs from DoD ID cards. The effort will occur in three phases:

- **Phase One** (in progress): Remove dependent SSNs; sponsor SSNs remain visible
- **Phase Two** (beginning by the end of calendar year 2009): Remove printed SSNs from all ID cards; Geneva Conventions ID cards retain the last four digits of the SSN

- **Phase Three** (beginning during calendar year 2012): Remove SSNs embedded in ID barcodes

Despite the fact that SSNs are being removed from DoD ID cards, you should continue to use the sponsor's SSN (or former unmarried spouse's SSN when applicable) for TRICARE claims submission and eligibility verification. Make sure the beneficiary provides the sponsor's SSN for these actions. You can verify eligibility online by becoming a registered user at [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider).

For more information on the SSN Reduction Plan, visit [www.cac.mil](http://www.cac.mil). ■

## TRICARE Provider Seminars Coming This Fall

TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp.'s (TriWest's) latest series of TRICARE provider educational seminars begin in September and run through December throughout the 21-state TRICARE West Region.

For those new to TRICARE, these seminars are a great opportunity to learn the TRICARE basics. These seminars can also serve as a good update for those who have previously attended a TRICARE seminar. If you have recently attended a seminar and feel comfortable with the TRICARE program, you may want to encourage another team member from your office to attend. The seminars will also cover the latest TRICARE updates.

Seminars are scheduled for both medical/surgical and behavioral health care providers. By pre-registering for a seminar online, you will receive e-mail confirmation of your registration, a reminder notice prior to the scheduled seminar and eligibility to participate in a drawing for a small prize.

To find out the dates, times and locations of seminars near you, go to [www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider) and visit the "Stay Updated" section. For more information, e-mail [pseminar@triwest.com](mailto:pseminar@triwest.com). ■

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P.O. Box 42049  
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## CONTACTS

**TriWest Customer Service**  
1-888-TRIWEST  
www.triwest.com

**TRICARE Alaska Office**  
1-907-743-1800

**Wisconsin Physicians Service**  
(Electronic claims set up)  
1-800-782-2680  
www.wpsic.com

**Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI)**  
(Pharmacy inquiries)  
1-866-DoD-TRRX  
1-866-DoD-TMOP  
www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE



## ePharmacy Initiatives Progressing

Several ePharmacy initiatives are underway that will facilitate provider and pharmacy efficiencies and enhance beneficiary satisfaction. The ultimate goal is to allow TRICARE providers to send prescriptions electronically to all dispensing locations, including military treatment facilities, the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy and retail pharmacies. Electronic submissions are expected to streamline access to pharmacy benefits and reduce errors and rework of incomplete prescription documentation.

ePharmacy initiatives include the following:

- **Formulary Publication:** TRICARE's Formulary Search Tool at [www.tricareformularysearch.org](http://www.tricareformularysearch.org) is updated weekly to give providers and pharmacies timely and accurate information.
- **MyPHRSC Pilot Project:** My Personal Health Record in South Carolina (MyPHRSC) is a free, secure portal that stores Medicare claims history for 24 months. Updated daily, the portal allows beneficiaries to track their medical history. TRICARE joined MyPHRSC in January 2009 to gauge beneficiary interest and to begin testing the processes

and technologies for managing personal health records (PHRs) online. The pilot project currently includes TRICARE For Life data.

- **Patient-Centric Project:** One of TRICARE's long-term goals is to empower beneficiaries to access PHRs and manage their health care online. This project is currently underway.

TRICARE's ePharmacy initiative is a collaborative effort involving the TRICARE Management Activity, armed services, government agencies and civilian organizations. This initiative will help to empower beneficiaries to make smart health care decisions, decrease administrative burdens on physicians and pharmacists, and ensure that TRICARE beneficiaries get the best possible health care based on accurate and comprehensive information. ■