



Overview: Ensuring Access to Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care

Background

On October 20, 2022, Secretary Austin signed a memorandum entitled “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” directing the Department of Defense to take a series of actions to ensure Service members and their families can access reproductive health care, DoD health care providers can operate effectively, consistent with federal law, and to establish uniform policies to protect the privacy of reproductive health information.

Command Notification of Pregnancy

- Provides Service members the time and flexibility to make private health care decisions in a manner which is consistent with the responsibility of commanders to meet operational requirements and protect the health and safety of those in their care.
- Extends the timeframe for Service members to inform their command of pregnancy to no later than 20 weeks gestation, with limited exceptions.

Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care

- Service members may be granted an administrative absence in order to access, or to accompany a dual-military spouse or a dependent to access, non-covered reproductive health care without taking leave.
- An administrative absence may be granted for up to 21 days. The period of absence will be limited to the minimum number days essential to receive the required care and travel needed to access the care by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable.
- Service members may need to disclose a minimum amount of health information necessary for commanders to authorize an administrative absence.

Travel for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care Services

- Authorizes travel and transportation allowances for a Service member or an eligible dependent, and for an attendant or escort if a Service member or eligible dependent is incapable of traveling alone, who must travel in order to access non-covered reproductive health care. The non-covered reproductive health care is at the patient’s expense.

KEY FACTS

These policies reflect our commitment to taking care of our people and ensuring that the entire Force remains ready and resilient.

These policies ensure Service members are able to access non-covered reproductive health care regardless of where they are stationed.

Non-covered reproductive health care includes non-covered abortion and Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), which includes, but is not limited to, egg retrieval, IUI, and IVF.

Non-covered reproductive health care is at the patient’s expense.

Commanders will protect the privacy of protected health information they receive, and information shall be restricted to personnel with a specific need to know.