



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OCT 29 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Personnel on Medical Hold

This memorandum establishes policy applicable to military personnel placed on "medical hold" while awaiting medical care and/or resolution of their deployment or separation status because of a medical issue.

All active duty personnel, to include Reserve Component members on active duty orders for more than 30 days, have the highest priority for health care appointments. TRICARE has established access to care standards for routine and specialty care – no longer than one week for non-urgent, routine medical care, and no longer than one month for specialty care appointments. These standards represent the *minimum* threshold for access to health care. For all personnel on "medical hold," medical commanders will ensure that specialty care services are available uniformly within two weeks of identifying the need for an appointment.

If health care services are not available within the medical treatment facility according to these standards, medical commanders shall promptly refer patients to other military, Veteran Affairs, or civilian sources of care, to include both TRICARE network or non-network providers.

All members of the Armed Forces who are in a "medical hold" status and are required to reside away from their private residences while in "medical hold" shall be provided uniform lodging in quality and type for the area where they are located. It is particularly important that Reserve Component members on active duty receive the same quality and type of lodging and support including transportation that other active duty members receive. Such accommodations may consist of visiting quarters, temporary lodging facilities, or equivalent rental accommodations on the private economy typically provided to TDY personnel when such visiting quarters or temporary lodging facilities are not available. In all cases, the actual housing provided shall accommodate the medical condition of the member.

Given the significant number of personnel currently on medical hold, I request weekly Service reports be submitted through December 31, 2003 to the Assistant

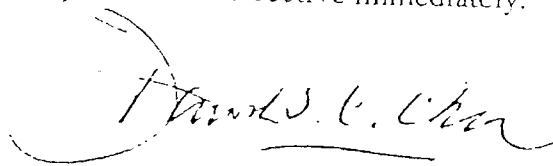


HA POLICY: 03-026

Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) detailing the total number of personnel on medical hold; the number on medical hold for more than 30 days; and the number on medical hold for more than 60 days, displayed by active duty and activated Guard and Reserve Component members. Reporting periodicity will be re-evaluated after this initial 60-day period.

Existing policies for periodic medical and dental assessments and pre- and post-deployment screening must also be adhered to for all active duty and Reserve Component members to ensure individual medical readiness. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) has already requested a quality assurance report on pre- and post-deployment screening from each of the Services.

This policy and reporting requirement is effective immediately.



David S. C. Chu

cc:
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