



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

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

OCT - 5 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Message to the Force on Comprehensive Contraceptive Access

Comprehensive contraceptive care is critical to the readiness, health, and well-being of our Service members, family members, and retirees. This message aims to reinforce the Department's commitment to the reproductive health of our Service members, family members, and retirees by providing enhanced communication, education, and product options to support their reproductive needs.

The events of recent months, including the enactment of restrictive State laws affecting reproductive health care, coupled with the issues raised in the 2022 Women's Reproductive Health Survey, underscore the importance of ensuring improved access to contraceptive services and Department-wide educational platforms to assist with family planning, regulation of menstrual cycles, and management of menstrual-related medical conditions.

In recent months, the Department has taken the following steps to expand contraceptive services:

- Launched an Information Campaign on the Full Range of Contraceptive Services Available:** The Military Health System, through both military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) and TRICARE authorized providers, covers a broad variety of contraceptive health care services, including health screenings, prescription contraceptives, comprehensive contraceptive counseling for family planning, and menstrual management. These services are available at no cost for active duty Service members; however, some out-of-pocket fees may apply for non-Service member beneficiaries.

Service Member Contraceptive Support (zero cost)	
Birth Control Pill/ Patch/ Shot	Emergency Contraception
Vasectomy	Female Tubal Ligation
Walk-in Clinical Services	Intrauterine Device/Implant

- Plan B, a form of emergency contraception, is available at MTF and network retail pharmacies without a prescription and without a charge. The Department has developed additional resources to educate beneficiaries on contraception. For more information on contraceptive services and products for beneficiaries visit: <https://www.tricare.mil/HealthWellness/Public-Health/SexualHealth/Contraception-Chart>.

- e Additionally, the Department has released two mobile applications; the Decide+Bee Ready mobile application provides comparative information on contraceptive methods that can assist users as they make decisions or discuss family planning options with their partner or health care providers. The Deployment Readiness Education for Service Women mobile application provides information on subjects including reproductive health care, contraception, and other topics germane to women's health. These free applications are available on iPhone and Android platforms. To learn more, visit: <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Total-Force-Fitness/Preventive-Health/Womens-Health>.
- e **Expanding Walk-In Contraceptive Services:** By January of 2023, MTFs will have expanded their services to include dedicated hours for walk-in contraceptive care for Service members. Contraceptive services will include education, counseling, and same day access to the full range of non-surgical contraceptives options. MTFs will inform and promote these expanded services as they become available to their respective beneficiaries.e
- e **Waived Contraceptive Copays for Medical Services:** On July 28, 2022, DoD eliminated cost-sharing and copayments for long-acting reversible contraceptive methods like placement, adjustment, or removal of intrauterine devices; subdermal implanted progesterone rods; and intramuscular progesterone injections. This elimination of costs will be fully implemented by November 1, 2022. If a beneficiary paid for these services after July 28, 2022, the beneficiary should visit www.tricare.mil/contactus to determine reimbursement eligibility. Beginning January 1, 2023, DoD will also eliminate cost-sharing and copayments for female surgical sterilization when performed by a TRICARE network provider.e
- e **Further Expanding Educational Efforts and Resources About Contraception:** The Department continues its efforts to increase education and awareness for beneficiaries about the availability of contraceptive care. This information will be communicated through and within our MTFs, to Military and Veterans Service Organizations, and directly to DoD beneficiaries.e

We know that some of the most trusted providers of information are from the people closest to our Service members - first line leaders and commanders. For that reason, I encourage you to ensure leaders at all levels understand and support the importance of contraceptive care to the individual readiness, health, and well-being of our Service members, and to discuss the available resources with Service members. Additionally, I ask you to ensure Service members have access to available resources to discuss their contraceptive health needs, provide them with flexibility to attend necessary appointments or utilize walk-in contraceptive services, and widely disseminate information related to available educational tools, such as the mobile applications.e

Service member readiness is paramount to the Department's mission. Expanding contraceptive care services is just one of the many ways we maintain our commitment to the well-being and readiness of our Service members and their families.

//SIGNED//e

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.