

Tricare meets health care bill's standards

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Tricare meets health care bill's standards, Gates says

The Tricare military health plan meets the standards set by the health care reform bill the House of Representatives passed, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said in a statement issued March 22.

Calling their health and well-being his highest priority, Gates reassured servicemembers and their families that the legislation won't have a negative effect on Tricare, which "already meets the bill's quality and minimum benefit standards."

"This was clarified by a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives [March 20], and is expected to be re-affirmed by the Senate," Gates said in the statement.

"The president and I are committed to seeing that our troops, retirees and their families will continue to receive the best quality health care," the secretary said.

The United States Congress has passed major health care reform legislation, the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#), that President Obama signed into law on March 23, 2010.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said in a statement issued March 21, 2010, that the TRICARE military health plan meets the standards set by this legislation.

Secretary Gates reassured service members and their families that the legislation won't have a negative effect on TRICARE, and that their health and well-being are his highest priority.

TRICARE "already meets the bill's quality and minimum benefit standards," affirmed Gates. "The president and I are committed to seeing that our troops, retirees and their families will continue to receive the best quality health care."

Will the new legislation transfer TRICARE into another government health care program?

No. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act leaves TRICARE under sole authority of the Defense Department and the Secretary of Defense, and we are governed by an independent set of statutes. "For the Department of Defense, and specifically for our 9.6 million TRICARE beneficiaries,

this law will not affect the TRICARE benefit. Eligibility, covered benefits, copayments and all other features of our TRICARE program remain in place." – Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)
Dr. Charles Rice

What does deeming TRICARE as "qualifying coverage" mean?

It ensures that TRICARE beneficiaries will not be impacted by the new legislation's requirement that people without qualifying coverage will have to pay a financial penalty.

Is TRICARE For Life considered "qualifying coverage" under the new law?

Yes, TFL is deemed qualifying coverage under the legislation already passed by both the House and Senate.

Can I expect my TRICARE enrollment fee, premiums, deductibles or co-pays to go up because of this legislation?

There is nothing in the legislation that would change any TRICARE fees.

The new health care bill allows adult children to stay on their parent's health care plan until age 26 if their employers don't offer insurance. Will TRICARE adopt this policy?

Many beneficiaries with dependent children are very interested on how the Act will impact their children age 26 and younger. Our current age limits – 21, or age 23, if the dependent is in a full-time school program – are set by statute, so separate legislation would be required to change them. If changes are made to the statutes governing TRICARE, then, like any other legislative initiative, time will be required for us to implement the changes. Until that time, the benefit remains unaffected by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

How can I find out about updates to the TRICARE benefit in the future?

We are committed to keeping our beneficiaries informed about their benefit. We will make new information available on our website, at our call centers, and via all of our educational materials as soon as we have more to share. You can also [sign-up to receive benefit updates via e-mail](#).

For more information visit http://www.tricare.mil/NHCB_default.aspx

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