

“(4) A plan of action to streamline the business practices that underlie the policies and directives described in paragraph (1).

“(5) A plan of action to accelerate and increase the collections or recoupments of amounts owed from third party payers.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘Medicare program’ means the program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

“(2) The term ‘TRICARE program’ has the meaning given that term in section 1072(7) of title 10, United States Code.”

CLAIMS PROCESSING IMPROVEMENTS

Pub. L. 106-398, §1 [[div. A], title VII, §727], Oct. 30, 2000, 114 Stat. 1654, 1654A-188, provided that: “Beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 30, 2000], the Secretary of Defense shall, to the maximum extent practicable, take all necessary actions to implement the following improvements with respect to processing of claims under the TRICARE program:

“(1) Use of the TRICARE encounter data information system rather than the health care service record in maintaining information on covered beneficiaries under chapter 55 of title 10, United States Code.

“(2) Elimination of all delays in payment of claims to health care providers that may result from the development of the health care service record or TRICARE encounter data information.

“(3) Requiring all health care providers under the TRICARE program that the Secretary determines are high-volume providers to submit claims electronically.

“(4) Processing 50 percent of all claims by health care providers and institutions under the TRICARE program by electronic means.

“(5) Authorizing managed care support contractors under the TRICARE program to require providers to access information on the status of claims through the use of telephone automated voice response units.”

DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Pub. L. 106-65, div. A, title VII, §713(c), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 689, provided that the system for processing claims required under subsec. (a) of this section was to be implemented not later than 6 months after Oct. 5, 1999.

§ 1095d. TRICARE program: waiver of certain deductibles

(a) WAIVER AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Defense may waive the deductible payable for medical care provided under the TRICARE program to an eligible dependent of—

(1) a member of a reserve component on active duty pursuant to a call or order to active duty for a period of more than 30 days; or

(2) a member of the National Guard on full-time National Guard duty pursuant to a call or order to full-time National Guard duty for a period of more than 30 days.

(b) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT.—As used in this section, the term “eligible dependent” means a dependent described in subparagraph (A), (D), or (I) of section 1072(2) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 106-65, div. A, title VII, §714(a), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 689; amended Pub. L. 106-398, §1 [[div. A], title X, §1087(a)(7)], Oct. 30, 2000, 114 Stat. 1654, 1654A-290; Pub. L. 108-375, div. A, title VII, §704, Oct. 28, 2004, 118 Stat. 1983.)

AMENDMENTS

2004—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 108-375 substituted “more than 30 days” for “less than one year” in pars. (1) and (2).

2000—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 106-398 substituted “subparagraph” for “subparagraphs”.

§ 1095e. TRICARE program: beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinators

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall require in regulations that—

(1) each lead agent under the TRICARE program—

(A) designate a person to serve full-time as a beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator for beneficiaries under the TRICARE program;

(B) designate for each of the TRICARE program regions at least one person (other than a person designated under subparagraph (A)) to serve full-time as a beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator solely for members of the reserve components and their dependents who are beneficiaries under the TRICARE program; and

(C) provide for toll-free telephone communication between such beneficiaries and the beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator; and

(2) the commander of each military medical treatment facility under this chapter designate a person to serve, as a primary or collateral duty, as beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator for beneficiaries under the TRICARE program served at that facility.

(b) DUTIES.—The Secretary shall prescribe the duties of the position of beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator in the regulations required by subsection (a).

(Added Pub. L. 106-65, div. A, title VII, §715(a)(1), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 690; amended Pub. L. 108-136, div. A, title VII, §707, Nov. 24, 2003, 117 Stat. 1529.)

AMENDMENTS

2003—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 108-136 added subpar. (B) and redesignated former subpar. (B) as (C).

DEADLINE FOR INITIAL DESIGNATIONS

Pub. L. 106-65, div. A, title VII, §715(b), Oct. 5, 1999, 113 Stat. 690, directed that each beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator required under the regulations described in subsec. (a) of this section be designated not later than Jan. 15, 2000.

§ 1095f. TRICARE program: referrals for specialty health care

The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that no contract for managed care support under the TRICARE program includes any requirement that a managed care support contractor require a primary care or specialty care provider to obtain prior authorization before referring a patient to a specialty care provider that is part of the network of health care providers or institutions of the contractor.

(Added Pub. L. 106-398, §1 [[div. A], title VII, §728(a)(1)], Oct. 30, 2000, 114 Stat. 1654, 1654A-189.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 106-398, §1 [[div. A], title VII, §728(c)], Oct. 30, 2000, 114 Stat. 1654, 1654A-189, provided that: "Section 1095f of title 10, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to a TRICARE managed care support contract entered into by the Department of Defense after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 30, 2000]."

§ 1096. Military-civilian health services partnership program

(a) **RESOURCES SHARING AGREEMENTS.**—The Secretary of Defense may enter into an agreement providing for the sharing of resources between facilities of the uniformed services and facilities of a civilian health care provider or providers that the Secretary contracts with under section 1079, 1086, or 1097 of this title if the Secretary determines that such an agreement would result in the delivery of health care to which covered beneficiaries are entitled under this chapter in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner.

(b) **ELIGIBLE RESOURCES.**—An agreement entered into under subsection (a) may provide for the sharing of—

- (1) personnel (including support personnel);
- (2) equipment;
- (3) supplies; and
- (4) any other items or facilities necessary for the provision of health care services.

(c) **COMPUTATION OF CHARGES.**—A covered beneficiary who is a dependent, with respect to care provided to such beneficiary in facilities of the uniformed services under a sharing agreement entered into under subsection (a), shall pay the charges prescribed by section 1078 of this title.

(d) **REIMBURSEMENT FOR LICENSE FEES.**—In any case in which it is necessary for a member of the uniformed services to pay a professional license fee imposed by a government in order to provide health care services at a facility of a civilian health care provider pursuant to an agreement entered into under subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense may reimburse the member for up to \$500 of the amount of the license fee paid by the member.

(Added Pub. L. 99-661, div. A, title VII, §701(a)(1), Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3894; amended Pub. L. 103-337, div. A, title VII, §712, Oct. 5, 1994, 108 Stat. 2801; Pub. L. 108-375, div. A, title VI, §607(b), Oct. 28, 2004, 118 Stat. 1946.)

AMENDMENTS

2004—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 108-375 inserted "who is a dependent" after "covered beneficiary" and substituted "shall pay the charges prescribed by section 1078 of this title." for "shall pay—

"(1) in the case of a dependent, the charges prescribed by section 1078 of this title; and

"(2) in the case of a member or former member entitled to retired or retainer pay, the charges prescribed by section 1075 of this title."

1994—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 103-337 added subsec. (d).

§ 1097. Contracts for medical care for retirees, dependents, and survivors: alternative delivery of health care

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Defense, after consulting with the other administering Secretaries, may contract for the delivery of

health care to which covered beneficiaries are entitled under this chapter. The Secretary may enter into a contract under this section with any of the following:

- (1) Health maintenance organizations.
- (2) Preferred provider organizations.
- (3) Individual providers, individual medical facilities, or insurers.
- (4) Consortiums of such providers, facilities, or insurers.

(b) **SCOPE OF COVERAGE UNDER HEALTH CARE PLANS.**—A contract entered into under this section may provide for the delivery of—

- (1) selected health care services;
- (2) total health care services for selected covered beneficiaries; or
- (3) total health care services for all covered beneficiaries who reside in a geographical area designated by the Secretary.

(c) **COORDINATION WITH FACILITIES OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.**—The Secretary of Defense may provide for the coordination of health care services provided pursuant to any contract or agreement under this section with those services provided in medical treatment facilities of the uniformed services. Subject to the availability of space and facilities and the capabilities of the medical or dental staff, the Secretary may not deny access to facilities of the uniformed services to a covered beneficiary on the basis of whether the beneficiary enrolled or declined enrollment in any program established under, or operating in connection with, any contract under this section. Notwithstanding the preferences established by sections 1074(b) and 1076 of this title, the Secretary shall, as an incentive for enrollment, establish reasonable preferences for services in facilities of the uniformed services for covered beneficiaries enrolled in any program established under, or operating in connection with, any contract under this section.

(d) **COORDINATION WITH OTHER HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS.**—In the case of a covered beneficiary who is enrolled in a managed health care program not operated under the authority of this chapter, the Secretary may contract under this section with such other managed health care program for the purpose of coordinating the beneficiary's dual entitlements under such program and this chapter. A managed health care program with which arrangements may be made under this subsection includes any health maintenance organization, competitive medical plan, health care prepayment plan, or other managed care program recognized pursuant to regulations issued by the Secretary.

(e) **CHARGES FOR HEALTH CARE.**—(1) The Secretary of Defense may prescribe by regulation a premium, deductible, copayment, or other charge for health care provided under this section. In the case of contracts for health care services under this section or health care plans offered under section 1099 of this title for which the Secretary permits covered beneficiaries who are covered by section 1086 of this title and who participate in such contracts or plans to pay an enrollment fee in lieu of meeting the applicable deductible amount specified in section 1086(b) of this title, the Secretary may establish the same (or a lower) enrollment fee for covered bene-