

COMING HOME FOR HEALTHCARE

New patient enrollment, assignment and distribution in the works

By USA MEDDAC-Fort Carson Public Affairs

There's a new military-wide initiative in the works to create greater patient capacity in military treatment facilities, and the Defense Health Agency wants TRICARE beneficiaries to receive quality, accessible healthcare in these facilities.

"When it comes to the health and wellness of your Family, the Colorado Springs Military Health System wants to be your preferred choice for all your health care needs," said Col. Timothy D. Ballard, director of the CSMHS.

"Right now we have an increased capacity to see patients and want to encourage all TRICARE beneficiaries to consider coming home to military healthcare," said Ballard. "Our system is transitioning from a system focused on administering healthcare to a system for health that integrates healthcare with health promotion."

The commander of the US Army Medical Department Activity-Fort Carson and Evans Army Community Hospital agrees and explained the benefits.

"We understand the unique needs of the military community and want to be our local TRICARE beneficiaries' first choice for all their health care needs," said Col. Dennis P. LeMaster. "Besides the highest quality healthcare, we offer our patients access to on-line appointments, medical test results, prescription refills, and secure messaging that allows them to directly communicate with members of their primary care team."

"Here at Evans hospital and at all of the military clinics in the Colorado Springs area, our patients can be assured of our commitment to providing them the very best healthcare now and in the future."

As a best practice, LeMaster referenced the new model of healthcare being adopted across military healthcare - Patient-Centered Medical Home - and especially within the new community-based healthcare clinics.

"At our recently opened Mountain Post Medical Home, we maintain a team of healthcare providers that partner with our patients to develop a comprehensive, personal healthcare plan that includes prevention screening and services, manages chronic conditions, and promotes a spirit of health and wellness," he said.

Within the past few years, the Army has approved over 25 community-based "Medical Home" healthcare clinics in more than a dozen healthcare markets. The Colorado

Springs market now has two community-based clinics, Premier Medical Home and the Mountain Post Medical Home, that offer a full spectrum of services, including Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Pharmacy, Laboratory and Behavioral Health.

“As a result of our newly established community-based clinics, we are excited to inform the community that we have also increased our capacity to enroll more TRICARE patients in military medicine,” said Lt. Col. Eric E. Poulsen, MEDDAC’s deputy commander for administrative services. “We need to maximize this growth in clinical capacity.”

To support this initiative, the CSMHS is inviting back to military medicine active duty Family members, retirees, and their Family members who are currently enrolled in TRICARE Prime with a civilian, network primary care manager. The letters will go to those who reside within a 30-minute drive time of any military primary care clinic in the Colorado Springs area.

“With the significant military growth that came to this community over the past few years, we have continued to work and expand our capabilities to match. It is important to us that our beneficiaries are able to receive services within the military health system, often closest to where they live and work,” said Poulsen.

Key among the main tenets of quality healthcare are ease of access, continuity of care, and a multi-disciplinary approach to a beneficiaries’ healthcare needs. But these benefits are not limited to TRICARE Prime beneficiaries alone. Military beneficiaries who are in TRICARE Standard can also choose to return to TRICARE Prime and enroll to any of the community’s on- and off-post/base healthcare clinics.

As TRICARE enrollment into military facilities is increased DoD-wide, the Defense Health Agency has also identified potentially significant savings and efficiencies.

“We are referring to this initiative as ‘Welcome Home to Military Medicine’,” said Ballard. “We hope that beneficiaries will take advantage of this opportunity and we are looking forward to them coming home to military healthcare.”

[TRICARE beneficiaries who would like to enroll to Premier or Mountain Post Medical Home or any of the on-post/on-base military treatment facilities can call UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans at 1-877-988-9378 to make the change or visit <http://tricare.mil/Forms/Enrollment/Prime.aspx> and select the “West” form; print it, fill it out and mail it to the address on the form. Clinic personnel will contact the beneficiaries upon completion of the enrollment process.]