

*This is an ongoing series of health and wellness articles for Ft. Carson Tricare beneficiaries.
Dr. Patrin invites you to submit medical topics and health care questions to be addressed in future issues.*



Let's Talk About . . .

The Army's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

This week's article discusses important EFMP facts every soldier/sponsor needs to know!

1. **MOST SOLDIERS DO NOT KNOW THE FACTS BEHIND THE EFMP. It is a program designed to assist personnel in making assignments, as often as possible, where the sponsor can serve accompanied by his or her family members. Personnel in Army Community Services (ACS) and the Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) work diligently to make the program work for you! Read the entire article carefully.**
2. Fact: Enrollment in the EFMP is mandatory, not a right or request, and is based on specific qualification definitions. Anyone who needs medical services that can't be provided by a Family Practitioner in an outpatient clinic should be enrolled. However, enrollment in the program does not guarantee extra services will be provided at the gaining assignment location, but works to ensure they are available at that site BEFORE personnel assigns the sponsor to that location.
3. Fact: Soldiers enroll through their local MTF, completing enrollment forms with the assistance of their TRICARE PCM (Primary Care Manager) and medical and/or educational specialists, which are then reviewed by the EFMP Team. Forms are then sent to the regional EFMP team at Brooke Army Medical Center for review and forwarding to PERSCOM. Consideration for enrollment should be initiated, or updated if already enrolled, at a minimum of every three years by the soldier and every year by their PCM.
4. Fact: ALL sponsors need to know who their dependent's PCM is! If a dependent currently sees multiple providers without clear continuity, they should talk to the head nurse or chief of the clinic they are enrolled in to determine what they can do to resolve this situation! Failure to make their PCM knowledgeable about ALL medical care, especially mental health treatment, can delay the screening process and result in separation of family members from the sponsor at reassignment time!
5. Fact: All soldiers desiring accompanied dependent travel should initiate family member screening at least one year before reassignment/PCS. Do NOT wait until within 30 days of receipt of assignment instructions (as recommended by personnel)! For this process to work efficiently ALL medical care needs to be documented in the Army medical record. This includes any TRICARE referrals done in the network by downtown providers, especially for mental health need. ALWAYS ask your consultant for a copy of the report to be forwarded to the records department!

6. The EFMP is based on Public Law 94-142, Education of Handicapped Children Act of 1978, which entitles handicapped children to free education and all medically related services in pursuit of education. However, enrollment in the EFMP includes family members of all ages with special medical needs as well. The governing regulation is AR 608-75, Exceptional Family Member Program, dated May 1996.
7. Fact: When a soldier with enrolled family members is nominated for assignment, PERSCOM coordinates with the gaining command ASAP to determine if services are available. When services are not available, PERSCOM considers alternative assignment locations based on existing assignment priorities, to include sending the soldier on an "all others tour" (unaccompanied status) to meet Army mission requirements. This is why ALL sponsors, regardless of family needs or EFMP enrollment status, need to have an alternate family plan! The EFMP program is designed to be an assignment consideration, if pre-enrolled, and not an assignment limitation.
8. Fact: Enrollment in and of itself is not a detriment to a soldier's career. EFMP information is not maintained in local or DA level files viewed by selection boards for schools or promotions. Sponsors who have complied with enrollment instructions have been shown to go further in their careers with the U.S.A.
9. Fact: Soldiers who try to circumvent enrollment can adversely affect their career! A General Officer Letter of Reprimand can be given to any sponsor who does not enroll his or her family in the program or withholds information on the LEVY forms, thinking enrollment will adversely affect their career or assignment wishes.
10. Fact: Deletion from assignment instructions is not granted solely because of family member enrollment in the EFMP, and so cannot be used to get, or get out of, a certain assignment!
11. Fact: Once a soldier's family is enrolled they remain in the program until medical or education needs warrant case closure or the soldier is separated from the Army. Disenrollment, again, would be initiated by the dependent's PCM.
12. Fact: Soldiers are advised to request retention at the losing station until family EFMP screening, which may include consults to specialists, is completed. If a soldier agrees to go to their new station, deferring travel for family members until screening is completed, it is quite possible they will be required to take an unaccompanied assignment if family member screening shows their needs can not be met at the gaining site.
13. Questions should be directed locally to Dr. Patrin (C., EFMP) or Martha Herron (Nurse Medical Screener) at 526-7653. Official point of contact for questions at PERSCOM is Mrs. Cates at DSN 221-4810, COML: (703) 325-4802, or e-mail TAPCEPCS @ Hoffman-EMH1.Army.Mil. or www-perscom.army.mil/enlist/efmp2.htm