

Online or Over Video, TRICARE Reaches Out With Expanded Behavioral Health Care Services

July 30, 2009
No. 09-52

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The stress of military life takes a toll on the well being of some military families – and TRICARE is there to help. Time and distance will no longer be obstacles for active duty families seeking behavioral health care with the introduction of two new programs.

The Web-based TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) and telemental health program use evolving telecommunication technologies to bring counseling assistance and behavioral health care closer to the people who need it most.

Both programs are scheduled for launch Aug. 1, 2009.

TRIAP is a demonstration program available in the United States to active duty service members (ADSMs), those eligible for the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) and members with TRICARE Reserve Select, as well as spouses of any age and other eligible family members 18 years of age or older.

From the security of their homes, or anywhere else for that matter, beneficiaries with a computer, Webcam and the associated software can speak “face-to-face” with a licensed counselor over the Internet at any time of the day or night. Eligible beneficiaries can link to their regional contractor’s TRIAP site and get more information about the program at <http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP>.

“TRIAP will help soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and their family members 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the TRICARE Management Activity. “It augments TRICARE’s many existing counseling assistance benefits by making sure there are more avenues for service members and their families to get the support they need, when it’s needed.”

Eligible service members and family members can logon to TRIAP an unlimited number of times for supportive counseling or advice when dealing with personal problems impacting their work performance, health and well-being. Services include assessments, short-term counseling and, if the TRIAP counselor determines more specialized care is necessary, a referral to a more comprehensive level of care.

TRICARE’s telemental health services, which also begin Aug. 1, 2009, use medically-supervised, secure audio-visual conferencing to link beneficiaries with offsite providers. Available to all TRICARE beneficiaries in the United States, telemental health care will fall under TRICARE’s telemedicine coverage. TRICARE’s regional contractors are establishing networks of telemental health originating sites and networks of offsite providers who can evaluate, treat and refer patients as necessary via video. All aspects of behavioral health services will be available, including psychotherapy and medication management.

“While most service members will still get face-to-face care in a military treatment facility or through the TRICARE network,” Hunter said. “The addition of telemental health care and TRIAP will really help us enhance access to a variety of behavioral health care services.”

For more information about TRICARE’s telemental health options, go to the getting care link at <http://tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/MentalHealthAndBehavior>

Service members and their families have several additional behavioral health resources available either online or by telephone. For more information about TRICARE and the Department of Defense’s many existing behavioral health resources, download A TRICARE Guide: Understanding Behavioral Health at <http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart>.

About TRICARE Management Activity and the Military Health System

TRICARE Management Activity, the Defense Department activity that administers the health care plan for the uniformed services, retirees and their families, serves more than 9.4 million eligible beneficiaries worldwide in the Military Health System (MHS). The mission of the MHS is to enhance Department of Defense and national security by providing health support for the full range of military operations. The MHS provides quality medical care through a network of providers, military treatment facilities, medical clinics and dental clinics worldwide. For more about the MHS go to www.health.mil.