



FACT SHEET

Benefits Issues for Officers with Dependent Parents

Last Reviewed: May 18, 2018

Background

Dependents of PHS officers are eligible for certain military benefits. Some family members, such as a spouse or child, are automatically entitled to dependency status; they are considered “primary dependents.” Other family members are considered secondary dependents and require special review. Examples of secondary dependents are parents and siblings. This fact sheet focuses on benefits for dependent parents only. For additional information on other secondary dependents, please refer to the resources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Eligibility

A parent, parent-in-law, step-parent, parent by adoption, or any person who stood “in-loco parents” (in the place of a parent) to an officer for at least five years prior to the officer’s emancipation may be considered a secondary dependent if all of the following criteria are met:

- ▶ The parent’s monthly income, not counting the PHS officer’s contribution, must be <50% of the parent’s monthly living expenses.
- ▶ The officer’s contribution must be more than the parent’s income from all sources.
- ▶ The officer’s contribution must be more than one-half the parent’s monthly living expenses.
- ▶ The parent must reside in the officer’s household or a household maintained for or by the officer.

Highlights

- ▶ Benefits for which dependent parents or officer are eligible
 - Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) with dependents – if the sponsoring officer doesn’t already have the dependent-based BAH rate (from having claimed other dependents previously), the officer will receive this rate once the parent’s dependency status request is approved by PHS.
 - Uniformed Services Identification and Privileges Card
 - Travel allowances – for relocation to the PHS officer’s duty station, if needed (must submit [PHS-2988](#), voucher for reimbursement of travel dependents).
 - Limited healthcare benefits – primary care only (no specialized care) at military treatment facilities on a space-available basis or through TRICARE Plus.
 - TRICARE Plus allows beneficiaries who normally are only able to get care on a space-available basis at military treatment facilities to enroll at the military facility **for primary care only**.
 - TRICARE Plus is only available at some military hospitals and clinics, and the local Commander may limit enrollment to specific categories of beneficiaries.
 - Enrollment into TRICARE Plus at one military facility does not automatically extend TRICARE Plus enrollment to another.
 - TRICARE Plus alone does not provide [minimum essential coverage](#) as defined by the Affordable Care Act.
 - Medicare Part B is not required to enroll in Tricare Plus, but any civilian care your parent receives may not be covered unless he/she is enrolled in Part B.
 - Prescription drugs
 - With TRICARE Plus, dependent parents may [fill prescriptions at military pharmacies for free](#).
 - Once they are eligible for Medicare and accept Medicare Part B, dependent parents may be eligible for the [TRICARE pharmacy program](#), which provides prescription drugs through

[network pharmacies](#) or through [home delivery](#). If the dependent parent also has Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage), Medicare will be the primary payer and TRICARE will serve as supplemental coverage for prescription drugs.

- ▶ Requirements for requesting an initial dependency determination for a dependent parent
 - Follow [instructions for submitting request for enrollment in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System \(DEERS\)](#); instructions for dependency determination of a parent are on page 4 of the document. Note that the mailing address for submission of the request in the aforementioned instructions may be different from the older address information on the individual required forms ([PHS-1637-1](#), [DD Form 137-3](#), [DD Form 1172-2](#)). The correct address can always be found in the [DEERS Enrollment Instructions](#).
 - In addition to the required forms and supporting documents specified in the instructions mentioned above, the PHS officer's birth certificate and/or other documents establishing the relationship between the officer and the parent should be included with the request. (For questions about your specific situation, please contact your military pay technician in the [Compensation Branch](#)).
- ▶ Once the dependency determination is approved, a recertification of dependency is needed
 - Annually with the Compensation Branch
 - Every 4 years with DEERS

Resources

- ▶ USPHS Commissioned Corps Officer DEERS Enrollment/ID Card Issuance Instructions: https://dcp.psc.gov/ccmis/PDF_docs/DEERS_cover_memo.pdf
- ▶ The DEERS Project Officer in the Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support: For specific questions, send email to phsdeersgibill@hhs.gov
- ▶ [The Compensation Branch](#): Contact your military pay technician or the general phone number (to be directed to your military pay technician)
- ▶ TRICARE website:
 - Dependent parents and parents-in-law: https://tricare.mil/Plans/Eligibility/DepParentsParentsInLaw?sc_database=web
 - TRICARE Plus information: https://tricare.mil/Plans/SpecialPrograms/Plus?sc_database=web
 - TRICARE Plus enrollment form (DD-2853): <http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd2853.pdf>
- ▶ <http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/SecondaryDependency/SDC.html>: Not specific to PHS officers, but a good site for general information on dependent parents and other secondary dependents
- ▶ <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/>: MilConnect website (DoD-sponsored), good general information about DEERS and benefits

Note: Feedback and suggestions for this fact sheet are welcome and may be sent to PPACBenefitsSC@gmail.com.

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