



FACT SHEET

New or Expectant Parents (Including Adoptive Parents)

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Background

- ▶ This fact sheet summarizes benefits relevant to new or expectant parents of newborns or newly adopted children. For additional information, please refer to the resources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Eligibility

- ▶ Benefit eligibility and timelines can vary by circumstances, as summarized below.

Highlights

- ▶ **Leave**
 - **Maternity leave:** Maternity leave is a period of approved sick leave related to pregnancy and postpartum recovery after delivery. PHS officers are authorized 84 consecutive days of maternity leave beginning the day after they are discharged from the hospital¹ for a delivery, regardless of delivery mode (i.e., vaginal or caesarean section). Any leave beyond this limit not taken as annual leave must be justified as sick leave by the officer's actual incapacity to return to full or limited duty.
 - **Paternity/Spousal leave:** Only married PHS officers on active duty are authorized 10 consecutive days of paternity/spousal leave. Paternity/spousal leave is authorized within 45 days after the birth of a child and may be combined with annual leave. Holidays, weekends or other non-duty days are included in this calculation.
 - **Adoption leave:** PHS officers are authorized up to 21 days of leave in a calendar year for the purpose of adopting a child, with the following two caveats:
 - Adoption leave is not authorized when the child already lives with the parent(s), such as in the adoption of a foster child or when one parent is a biological parent and the other is a stepparent.
 - If two PHS officers are married to each other and adopt a child, only one of these officers is allowed adoption leave.
 - **For all parents of newborns or newly adopted children:** All leave requests must be submitted via [eCORPS](#). PHS officers are not eligible for or covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.
- ▶ **Compensation-related benefits**
 - **Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH):** The BAH rate for PHS officers with one or more dependents (e.g., spouse or child) differs from the BAH rate for PHS officers without dependents. Requests to update dependency determinations are submitted to the PHS Compensation Branch (Form [PHS-1637-1](#)).
 - **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) beneficiaries:** TSP is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees and members of uniformed services. Upon a PHS officer's death, that officer's TSP account balance is given to one or more beneficiaries on file with TSP. PHS officers can update their list of beneficiaries (Form [TSP-3](#)).
- ▶ **TRICARE coverage of newborns or newly adopted children less than 21 years old** (adopted children aged 21 years or older might be eligible for TRICARE coverage under certain circumstances, as described [here](#))
 - Newborn children (including adopted children) of **stateside** PHS officers in a Prime Service Area (PSA) are automatically enrolled (i.e., even before registration in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility

¹ Discussion about out-of-hospital births (e.g., home births) is not included in the current [policy on maternity leave](#).

Reporting System [DEERS]) in TRICARE Prime for the first 90 days after birth. Newborn children of stateside PHS officers not in a PSA are automatically enrolled in TRICARE Select. Once PHS officers register these children in DEERS, they have 90 days to change their children's health plans (e.g., to TRICARE Prime Remote). If these children are not registered in DEERS within the first 90 days after birth, their TRICARE claims will be denied starting at age 91 days.

- Newborn children (including adopted children) of **overseas** PHS officers are automatically enrolled (i.e., even before registration in DEERS) in TRICARE Select for the first 120 days after birth. Once PHS officers register these children in DEERS, they have 90 days to change their children's health plans (e.g., to TRICARE Overseas Program [TOP]–Prime or TOP Prime Remote). If these children are not registered in DEERS within the first 120 days after birth, their TRICARE claims will be denied starting at age 121 days.
- Additional information is available [here](#). Required documents to register children in DEERS are described [here](#).

► **Benefits specific to pregnant PHS officers**

- **Medical waivers during pregnancy, postpartum, and/or breastfeeding:** Various time-limited medical waivers can be requested by submitting written documents to the Medical Affairs Branch.
 - **During pregnancy:** Time-limited medical waivers may be requested from the APFT, immunizations required for basic readiness, and deployments ([reference](#)).
 - **During the first 180 days postpartum:** Time-limited medical waivers may be requested from the APFT and some immunizations ([reference](#)); requests for postpartum waiver extensions must be submitted with supporting documentation from the attending physician/health care provider.
 - **During breastfeeding:** Time-limited medical waivers are granted in increments not to exceed 12 months and may be requested for PHS deployments, some immunizations, and all mandatory PHS readiness training except for Officer Basic Course ([reference](#)).
- **Breastfeeding support:**
 - TRICARE covers breast pumps, breast pump supplies, and breastfeeding/lactation counseling. See [here](#) and [here](#).
 - Officer Basic Course: [POM13-003](#) Section 4d states “PHS will provide accommodations for expressing breast milk, storage, and shipment, if necessary.”

► **Benefits specific to adoptive parents**

- **Adoption costs:** PHS officers might be eligible for a reimbursement of adoption costs up to \$2,000 per child. Requests for this reimbursement must be submitted to the PHS Compensation Branch (Form [PHS-7036](#)) within 365 days of the adoption being finalized. Additional information can be found on Form [PHS-7036](#) and [here](#).
- **Breastfeeding support:** TRICARE covers breast pumps and breast pump supplies for mothers who adopt an infant and plan to breastfeed. Additional information is available [here](#).

Resources

- Commissioned Corps Women's Issues Advisory Board Expectant Parents' Guide, available [here](#)
- TRICARE websites on [child health insurance](#) and [breastfeeding](#)
- Commissioned Corps Issuance System, documents on [breastfeeding](#), [maternity leave](#), and [adoption expenses](#)
- PPAC Benefits Subcommittee Fact Sheets on Leave and Thrift Savings Plan, available [here](#)

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

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