

# Provider Updates

## In Case You Missed It | March 2021

1. **COVID-19 vaccines.** TRICARE continues to cover age-appropriate vaccines in accordance with CDC guidelines. Visit our [Benefits A–Z](#) for benefit details and updates. TRICARE covers vaccines at no cost to the beneficiary; however, an office visit copayment may apply if other services are rendered. You can direct TRICARE patients to [www.tricare.mil/COVIDVaccine](http://www.tricare.mil/COVIDVaccine) for details. Please note, we are temporarily deferring claims for vaccine administration as we await updated pricing information from the government. *Are you interested in becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider?* [Find out how.](#)
2. **Submitting referrals and authorizations only when required.** Not all covered TRICARE services require a referral or authorization. In fact, most diagnostic laboratory tests and radiology services do not require Health Net Federal Services, LLC (HNFS) approval. Avoid extra work by only submitting requests to HNFS if they are needed. [Familiarize yourself with the requirements](#) in order to help your TRICARE patients get the care they need without delay.
3. **Hospital value-based purchasing for DRG hospitals.** TRICARE recently adopted the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) [Hospital Value-Based Purchasing \(HVBP\) Program](#) for hospitals under the Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS). The HVBP Program rewards acute care hospitals with incentive payments based on the quality of care they deliver.
4. **TRICARE and VA dual coverage.** Some TRICARE beneficiaries may also be eligible for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. In this instance, they have the option to use either [TRICARE or VA benefits](#). There is no coordination of benefits between TRICARE and VA, so claims should not be submitted to both programs. The rules and costs for the chosen program apply accordingly. Keep in mind, once treatment has started, the patient must continue care under the same program for that episode of care.
5. **Limit on TENS supplies.** On Feb. 17, 2021, we updated our claims processing systems to impose a [limit of two/four units per month for TENS supplies](#) billed under A4595. Currently, TRICARE policy does not specify a unit limit for A4595; however, contractors, such as HNFS, are given discretion to set limits where none exist, based on best business practices.
6. **Checking patient eligibility.** Verifying patient eligibility is a provider responsibility that helps ensure you get paid for services rendered, the patient's coverage is valid, and both you and your patient understand copayment and other costs that may be incurred. Check eligibility by using our [Eligibility & Deductible tool](#), using the self-service prompt when calling 1-844-866-WEST (9378), or by submitting an electronic data interchange (EDI) transaction.
7. **Online webinars to help you understand TRICARE basics.** Are you a new TRICARE provider or just want to review some TRICARE basics? We've got you covered. Attend an online, live webinar presented by one of our TRICARE educators. [View our current schedule today!](#)
8. **Has your information changed?** Having accurate provider data is important to ensure timely, quality care to TRICARE beneficiaries. Most updates can be made using our online [Update Demographics tool](#) or [TRICARE Provider Roster](#). If you need to update your specialty information, use our [Update Specialty tool](#). Please note, HNFS is no longer accepting demographic updates submitted on Provider Information Forms.
9. **Colonoscopy screening guidelines from *Choosing Wisely*®.** The [American Gastroenterological Association](#) recommends providers not repeat colonoscopy screenings for at least five years for patients who have one or two small (<1cm), low-grade dysplasia adenomatous polyps that have been completely removed via a high-quality colonoscopy. Learn more about this and other related guidelines at [Choosing Wisely](#)®.
10. **March is National Nutrition Month.** Your patients can learn about good nutrition, eating healthy and cooking, meal planning, weight management skills and strategies, and more with our [Healthy Weighs for Life](#) online program. They'll have access to videos and presentations, online resources and interactive forms and activities to make learning fun. If this is their first attempt at weight loss, our [Basics for Reaching a Healthy Weight](#) program is a great place to start. Don't delay – provide more to get your patients living healthier today.

**COVID-19 Updates: Go to [www.tricare-west.com/go/COVID19](http://www.tricare-west.com/go/COVID19).**