



## HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA

UNIT #15237  
APO AP 96205-5237

17 OCT 2005

FKSG

MEMORANDUM FOR TRICARE Management Activity (TMA), Skyline 5, Suite 810,  
5111 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3206

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Expand the TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP) to  
Overseas Retirees

1. I recommend the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) expand the TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP) to the Korean Peninsula for over 1,500 retirees and their family members that reside and work in the Republic of Korea.
2. The US Forces Korea and the Eighth United States Army have credible Quality of Life and Well Being Programs for Soldiers, retirees, and family members. One of the key elements of these programs is to bring normalcy to the lives of our retirees and their family members.
3. Retirees living in Korea are unable to enjoy the recently enhanced TRICARE Retiree Dental Insurance benefit because the program does not permit beneficiaries residing outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) to receive dental care in the country of their residence. Since TRICARE's inception over a decade ago, the Department of Defense (DoD) made significant progress with enhancing the TRICARE benefit for our uniformed service members, retirees and their families. The TRICARE for Life enhancement benefit restored the promise of lifetime medical care for most retirees, their families and survivors throughout the world. However, the combination of limited space-available dental care and the TRDP does not restore dental care benefits for those beneficiaries residing in Korea. There is still much work to be done to ensure a comprehensive benefit for all eligible beneficiaries worldwide.
4. In Korea and in most other overseas locations, retirees are able to obtain only space-available emergency care in a military Dental Treatment Facility because available capacity is consumed by uniformed active-duty service members and occasionally their space-available family members. Furthermore, the cost of dental insurance for retirees and their family members is excessive in many overseas locations. Conversely, military retirees residing in CONUS have enjoyed the non-subsidized and recently enhanced TRDP for several years.
5. In order to allow retirees and their family members living in Korea to obtain equity with their CONUS peers, the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) should help retirees maintain their dental health by expanding the TRDP. This expansion should permit beneficiaries residing in Korea, and other areas outside of CONUS, to receive the retiree dental plan in their country of residence.


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6. The US Forces Korea has developed, and continues to expand, a robust TRICARE Host Nation Provider network that conforms to American health and dental standards. Moreover, dental practices were selected where English is fluently spoken by many staff personnel, minimizing the challenges of international communications. Over 1200 referrals have been made to this network with significantly outstanding reports returned by referred patients. Our positive experience with the Host Nation provider network over the past four years should alleviate concerns regarding access, quality of care, and language.

7. I firmly believe dental care is integral to the overall health status of our beneficiaries. Untreated dental disease can progress to serious health consequences and should not be excluded from our comprehensive healthcare plan. As we move toward creating a uniform healthcare benefit, dental care is a principal feature that should be consistent across all categories of beneficiaries worldwide. As you review the dental insurance contract with Delta Dental of California, I ask your support in enhancing the TRICARE benefit for our retirees in Korea and other overseas locations. I also recommend that you expand the TRDP to permit retired beneficiaries residing OCONUS to receive dental care in their country of residence. These changes will improve their quality of life and demonstrate our commitment to enhancing the TRICARE benefit for all military retirees and their families.

8. If additional information is desired, my points of contact are LCDR Kenneth Christopher, Deputy Command Surgeon, U.S. Forces Korea, at [kenneth.christopher@korea.army.mil](mailto:kenneth.christopher@korea.army.mil), DSN 315-724-3144; or COL Greg Jolissaint, USFK Command Surgeon, at [james.jolissaint@us.army.mil](mailto:james.jolissaint@us.army.mil), or DSN 315-736-7389.

  
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