



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MRAI&E)

SUBJECT: Reserve Forces Periodic Dental Examination

Reference: HA Policy Memorandum 98-021

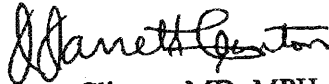
Health Affairs Policy Memorandum 98-021 directed the Services to ensure all members of the Selected Reserve undergo an annual dental examination. The justification for this policy is the critical need for the department to have a clear picture of Reserve Component (RC) service members' dental readiness and fitness for duty. The Services have experienced some difficulty fully implementing this policy by February 2001. Given the challenges associated with identifying both the mechanisms for compliance and the tracking system for documentation, I am extending the suspense date to February 2004. I anticipate that the Services will coordinate with their RC leadership in an effort to ensure that necessary resources are programmed to meet this requirement. The services should adopt a phased approach to build to a target of 90% documentation of dental examinations by the new suspense date. Reserve units already in compliance with HA Policy 98-021, are to be commended.

Fitness for duty is a personal responsibility. The RC member must obtain the examination and report the result to their Service. My staff has worked closely with OASD (RA) to develop several initiatives to assist the Services in reaching compliance. DD Form 2813 documents dental examinations provided by the service member's civilian dentist, thereby fulfilling the DOD annual dental examination requirement. Service dental treatment facilities may also provide the examination to RC members when they are in an Inactive Duty Training (IDT), Annual Training (AT) or other active status. Efforts should be made to avoid the diversion of RC medical assets from essential wartime mission training to perform the examinations. Another initiative is the Army's Federal Strategic Health Alliance with the Departments of Veteran's Affairs (VA) and Health and Human Services (DHHS). VA and DHHS contracted dentists may provide dental examinations to service members on a reimbursable basis via Service funding. Effective 1 February 2001, RC members and their families are eligible for the new TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) and are strongly encouraged to consider this cost effective dental insurance. The TDP includes an examination benefit as part of its comprehensive dental benefit package that may be used to fulfill the annual dental examination requirement.

I recognize that the full implementation of this policy will require innovation and command emphasis. Effective command education and communication of the critical importance of dental readiness should be emphasized. The Services should develop their own implementation and enforcement guidance to allow for Service unique requirements, but commonality and cooperation are encouraged.

HA POLICY: 01-025

My point of contact on this subject is Lieutenant Colonel Bill Martin who may be reached at commercial (703) 681-1711.



J. Jarrett Clinton, MD, MPH
Acting Assistant Secretary

cc:
Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force
OASD(Reserve Affairs), Director Medical Readiness