



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

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MEMORANDUM FOR: SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Policy for Surveys within the Military Health Services System (MHSS)

Survey data are becoming a key component of MHSS Information Systems. They provide decision makers with the perspective of our various "customers" whether they are Prime enrollees, MTF patients or beneficiaries who do not look to the MHSS as their regular source of health care. However, surveys must protect our customers' privacy and not present an undue burden. This memorandum identifies five major surveys currently sponsored or under development by Health Affairs (HA) which all MHSS managers should be familiar with. The memorandum also outlines the procedures for obtaining approval of any survey designed to meet information needs not addressed in the five HA-sponsored surveys listed in paragraph 3.

The Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) (US D(P&R)) will soon reissue DoDI 1100.13 "Surveys of DoD Personnel". Surveys which require participation by personnel in a DoD component other than the sponsoring component must be approved by USD(P&R) and display a Reports Control Symbol (RCS). Surveys of MHSS beneficiaries or MTF patients -- whether by mail, telephone, or local questionnaires conducted in waiting rooms or base newspapers -- almost always cross service lines and therefore require RCS approval. (Surveys solely of personnel in the sponsoring component require Service level Reports Control approval and are not covered by this memorandum).

The OASD(HA) is sponsoring the following five surveys that are designed to meet the majority of our needs for patient level information:

- a. **DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel** conducted every three years by OASD(HA) Clinical Services. This survey collects worldwide data from active duty personnel on drug & alcohol abuse and other health related behaviors.
- b. **Annual Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries** conducted by OASD(HA) Health Budgets and Programs in response to Congressional mandate. This survey collects worldwide data from all beneficiaries eligible for military health care on access, satisfaction, health status and use of services.

- c. **Health Enrollment/Evaluation Assessment Review** is a clinically oriented questionnaire completed by patients as they enroll in TRICARE Prime. It identifies high utilizers and chronic conditions, assesses need for preventive services and motivates behavioral change.
- d. **Customer Satisfaction Survey** conducted centrally under the supervision of OASD(HA) Health Budgets and Programs. This survey, currently under development, will focus on patient satisfaction with care at military MTFs. [See attached for more information.](#)
- e. **Bi-annual MHSS User Survey** conducted twice per year by OASD(HA) Health Budgets and Programs on source of health services by U.S. beneficiaries (including Alaska and Hawaii). Data from this survey are used to develop capitation budgets. When enrollment is completed and ADS is operational in all sites, this survey will be discontinued.

The depth and breadth of these efforts are sufficient to answer most questions we can pose, and there will be an opportunity for tri-service workgroups to assess and modify these instruments on a regular basis. Survey data will be provided to the Services/Lead Agents electronically and in hard copy and will be fully available to researchers to conduct independent analyses. If other patient and staff level information is necessary to meet management requirements, OASD(HA) will generally sponsor surveys (e.g., inpatient satisfaction surveys and surveys targeted to specific clinical groups such as pregnant women or diabetics) which meet the criteria in DODI 1100.13, especially paragraphs B, D and F.



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Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Attachment:

Quarterly MTF-level Outpatient Satisfaction Survey

HA POLICY 97-012

Quarterly MTF-level Outpatient Satisfaction Survey

PURPOSE:

To directly question beneficiaries who had appointments regarding their satisfaction with a specific appointment. Survey will permit direct comparisons among MTFs, of the same MTF over time, against civilian benchmarks.

DESCRIPTION:

MTFs will be required to forward selected appointment data from CHCS or ADS monthly to the DISIDDOMS contractor managing the program. The contractor will mail a questionnaire direct to the patients' homes 30-50 days after the appointment. The questionnaire will be customized to the date, time and clinic of the appointment, ask 20-25 multiple choice questions and allow space for patient's written comments. The questions will be returned to the contractor which will produce descriptive and trending reports based on the multiple choice questions. The contractor will forward all written comments directly to the MTF, without analysis. The contractor will report to the MTF, Lead Agent, Service and Health Affairs within 45-60 days of the end of each quarter.

TIMING:

Draft questionnaire and sampling procedures will be reviewed by the Surgeons General as soon as they are prepared by the contractor. Initial "pilot" questionnaires are expected to be mailed to patients in mid-February based upon January 1997 appointments. MTFs will therefore be required to forward patient information to the contractor in early February. The survey should enter its "routine" stage by May 1997 when questionnaires are mailed to patients who have had April 1997 appointments.