



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-ALFLDCOM-FOA/CC
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SUBJECT: Ensuring Access to Reproductive Healthcare

On October 20, 2022, Secretary of Defense Austin signed a memorandum entitled "Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care," directing the Department of Defense (DoD) to take a series of actions to ensure Service members and their families can access reproductive health care regardless of where they are stationed; to ensure DoD health care providers can operate effectively, consistent with federal law; and to establish uniform policies to protect the privacy of reproductive health information. As directed, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness released several policy memoranda on February 16, 2023, to support our Service members' and beneficiaries' access to reproductive health care (www.health.mil/EnsuringAccessstoReproductiveHealth).

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) will implement these policies immediately. These policies and associated documents, such as the travel template request form, frequently asked questions, and links to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) reproductive health care site can be found at: <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Reproductive-Health/>. A summary of the OSD policies and our implementation plan are as follows:

Pregnancy Notification/Privacy Policy (Attachment 1): This policy clarifies when reproductive information will be shared with commanders, standardizes and defines the extension of the timeframe for Service members to inform their command about a pregnancy up to 20 weeks gestation, and ensures commanders exercise objectivity and discretion when addressing reproductive health care information. DAF has renamed assignment and deployment availability codes with generic "medical" codes to protect the member's privacy and sanitize the AF Form 469 by removing "pregnancy." This change allows the member privacy and time for personal health decision-making prior to pregnancy notification to the commander, consistent with DoD policy.

Administrative Absence Policy (Attachment 2): This policy allows Service members to request an administrative absence without being charged leave to access non-covered reproductive health care, which is defined in this policy as lawfully available assisted reproductive technology and non-covered abortions. DAF Instruction 36-3003, "Military Leave," has been updated to support this requirement. DAF Service members will request the administrative absence via LeaveWeb, which now has the capability for the member to select "administrative absence," attach an attestation they have a valid medical condition which meets the requirements for this type of leave, and then submit the request to their commander for approval.

Travel Reimbursement Policy (Attachment 3): This policy updates the Joint Travel Regulations to establish travel and transportation allowances for Service members and dependents who must travel to access timely non-covered reproductive health care that is not available within the local area of the member's Permanent Duty Station or Temporary Duty Location. The DAF Service member's organization will create a line of accounting within Defense Travel System (DTS) using Emergency and Special Program (ESP) code 83 as designated per the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Budget (Policy and Fiscal Control Directorate) Fiscal Year 2023 Non-Joint Chiefs of Staff ESP Code list. Service members will use this designated line of accounting along with the substantiating documentation from their licensed medical provider to request travel. DTS will allow our department to track travel utilization and reimbursement for all non-covered reproductive health services, generally, and potentially generate an anonymized report if requested by an appropriate authority.

Provider Indemnification Policy (Attachment 4): The Secretary of Defense has taken steps to provide additional support to DoD health care providers and other DoD personnel subject to legal action or penalties for performing their official duties. This includes indemnification for any verdict, judgment, or other monetary award consistent with applicable law. Health care providers and other personnel should consult with their servicing legal office for questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Licensure Reimbursement Guidance (Attachment 5): The Defense Health Agency has developed guidance to ensure reimbursement of applicable fees for DoD health care providers who seek to obtain licensure in a different state from where they are currently licensed due to state laws and regulations that would restrict the provider's federally-authorized duties.

The DAF strongly supports Secretary Austin's commitment to ensuring our Airmen, Guardians, and their family members have equitable access to timely reproductive health care, and the information necessary to make well-informed health decisions. As a reminder, a service member is not required to avail themselves of these resources when pursuing access to non-covered reproductive healthcare services during their personal leave. I expect leaders will continue to prioritize the health and well-being of our Service members and their families while protecting their privacy.



Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force

Attachments:

1. Pregnancy Notification/Privacy Policy
2. Administrative Absence Policy
3. Travel Reimbursement Policy
4. Provider Indemnification Policy
5. Licensure Reimbursement Guidance