

MEDICAL

- I. [Physician & Hospital Report 2000-2002](#)
- II. [Houston County Healthcare Facilities](#)
- III. [TRICARE](#)
- IV. [BRAC](#)

HOUSTON COUNTY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

The availability of outstanding healthcare is one of the most important quality of life issues for any community. Houston Healthcare is a total healthcare system located in Middle Georgia including Houston Medical Center, Perry Hospital, the Houston Heart Institute, the Houston Health Pavilion, and the Houston Lake MedStop Facility. These state-of-the-art facilities offer the latest in medical technology paired with caring doctors and staff who are part of the community.

Houston Medical Center, located in Warner Robins, Georgia, is a 186-bed complete medical facility. From 24-hour emergency care to rehabilitation, from surgery to psychiatric treatment, and primary care to the most advanced specialized treatment, Houston Medical Center offers a full range of services. This Medical Center includes: the Women's Center (complete services for women), the Pain Treatment Center, Inpatient/Outpatient Surgery, Respiratory Care, Lithotripsy Services, Clinical Laboratory, Medical and Surgical Intensive Care Units, comprehensive Neurology Lab, Cardiovascular Services, Behavioral Science and Psychiatry, and Imaging to include MRI, Nuclear Medicine, CT Scanning, Ultrasound, and Mammography.

The Perry Hospital is a 45-bed acute care facility, offering state-of-the-art technology and a highly skilled staff of medical professionals. This facility includes the latest in outpatient and inpatient surgery to include endoscopy and laparoscopy, along with the Intensive Care Unit, Laboratory, Physical Therapy, and Emergency Room with 24-hour physician coverage, Rehabilitation and Transitional Care, Diagnostic Imaging, Respiratory Care and Cardiovascular Services, and Pain Management Services.

The Houston Heart Institute combines professional cardiovascular care with personal attention. Affiliated with the Emory Heart Center in Atlanta, it is a comprehensive cardiac catheterization laboratory, equipped with sophisticated equipment for both diagnosis and treatment.

The Houston Health Pavilion, located in the Houston Mall in Warner Robins, provides outpatient medical services including: Health Connection Cardiac/Pulmonary Rehabilitation Center, Pavilion Rehabilitation Center, Pavilion Diagnostic Center, the Counseling & Psychological Services Center, the Pavilion MedStop (urgent care facility), and the EduCare Community Health Education Program.

Located in the middle of Houston County is the Houston Lake MedStop (urgent care facility). In this new facility, the Occupational Health and Wellness Program (healthcare for the business community) and the Houston Lake Rehabilitation also provide services to the Middle Georgia community.

Healthcare does not stop at the facility doors – it actively reaches into the community with classes and health screenings designed to keep our residents healthy and informed. Many of these programs are facilitated on Robins AFB such as the two-day Health fair held every May and the Black History Health fair.

The State of Georgia is a Certificate of Need state that regulates the level and availability of healthcare services. The Robins AFB area which includes Houston County, is well served by the Houston Healthcare Complex, the Medical Center of Central Georgia, and the Coliseum Health System.

Houston Healthcare's staff of over 1,500 employees and 145 physicians has been educated at many of the best schools and facilities – including Harvard, Duke, and Emory. The surrounding areas also offer outstanding medical facilities, such as the Medical Center of Central Georgia in Macon. With the Medical Center of Central Georgia's 500 physicians, the Middle Georgia area is positioned to support a high quality of life conducive to the needs of the Department of Defense work force, Robins AFB and the Central Georgia community through comprehensive healthcare services allowing the vast majority of Middle Georgia citizens to seek their healthcare close to home. While Houston Healthcare provides the majority of the care for Houston County residents, the Medical Center of Central Georgia (MCCG) provides 40% of the region's hospital services and more than 75% of the region's specialized services, such as cardiology, cardiac surgery, trauma care, high-risk obstetrical care and high-risk neonatal care. The quality of care is demonstrated by MCCG's designations as a Top 100 Hospital in the USA and a Five-Star Hospital (the highest rating possible) in cardiology, neurosurgery, and orthopedic surgery.

The wide range of medical staff specialties means very few patients must leave the region for healthcare services. The quality and scope of services provided by the facilities in Middle Georgia and their medical staffs ensure the quality of life for our region is among the best in the nation. In addition, these facilities and physicians are constantly assessing the need to expand or add additional services as technology improves and advances are made in healthcare. For example, a new ambulatory surgery center is being built adjacent to the Houston Medical Center in Warner Robins, Georgia. A long-term strategic plan is being formulated to meet the healthcare needs of the residents of Middle Georgia for the next 10-15 years. Through this proactive process, Robins AFB and the Middle Georgia community will always have the best healthcare available anywhere in the country.

(Sources: www.hhc.org/services/hmc.html; Director, Occupational Health & Wellness, Houston Healthcare, Warner Robins, March 2004)

TRICARE

TRICARE is the Department of Defense's healthcare program for members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors, and retired members and their families. TRICARE brings together the healthcare resources at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) and supplements them with networks of civilian healthcare professionals to provide quality care and better access to beneficiaries.

For eligible beneficiaries, the TRICARE program offers a triple-option healthcare plan:

- ✍ TRICARE Prime is the managed care option offered by the Department of Defense. It integrates military and civilian health care into a single health care system. Beneficiaries who choose this option agree to a one-year enrollment, and select a Primary Care Manager (PCM) to provide or arrange for their health care needs. The TRICARE Prime option offers additional wellness and preventive care services.
- ✍ TRICARE Standard is a fee-for-service option that is the same as the former CHAMPUS benefit. Beneficiaries using this option have the greatest choice of civilian providers, but at a higher cost. The beneficiary is responsible for a deductible, plus co-payments. Enrollment is not required to participate.
- ✍ TRICARE Extra is similar to TRICARE Standard but offers discounts to patients when they use TRICARE network providers. This option allows beneficiaries to receive their care from civilian network providers at a reduced cost compared to TRICARE Standard. There are no claim forms to file-just pay your reduced co-payment after satisfying the deductible. You may use a combination of the TRICARE Extra and Standard programs at any time, depending on whether you choose providers inside or outside the network. Enrollment is not required to participate.

(Source: www.tricare.osd.mil/frequentlyaskedquestions.cfm)

Provider Participation and Shortages

According to Humana Military Healthcare Services, the Manager for the military health insurance program (TRICARE) for the southeastern United States, there are 1,200 primary care managers, 3,500 specialists, and 56 major hospitals in the Georgia network. This amount has increased every year for the last eight years.

In Warner Robins the total number of network (TRICARE contracted civilian doctors) physicians equates to 92.7%. The total number of network physicians in our planning area (the 50-mile radius around Robins AFB) is:

- ? Family Practice Physicians = 93%
- ? Specialty Physicians = 88%

Specialties not currently in our network include: Rheumatology, Neurosurgery, and Endocrinology. However, out-of-network physicians are located in the study area. The closest network physicians in these specialties are located in Augusta, Columbus and Atlanta.

Online access provides enrollees information on Network Providers up to a 60-mile radius by varying distances from an enrollee's home zip code or by specialist's last name.

(Source: TRICARE Office, Robins AFB, February 2004; www.mytricare.com; Minutes from Meeting with Humana Military Healthcare Services and the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee [GMACC], November 21, 2003)

Access Standards

To ensure that beneficiaries who use the Department of Defense (DoD) Military Health System receive medically necessary care when they need it, DoD leadership developed access standards for TRICARE Prime enrollees. What's important is ensuring that access to care is easy, fast and logical.

- ✍ TRICARE's standards for access are easy-one-day or less for urgent care, one week for routine care, one month for specialty or wellness care, 30 minutes or less in the provider's waiting room, and 30 minutes or less travel time to the primary care provider's office.
- ✍ Emergency services are available and accessible within the TRICARE Prime service area 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In an emergency, TRICARE beneficiaries should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Access standards give TRICARE leaders a tool to measure the actual waiting and drive times beneficiaries experience and to fix problems when they occur. By measuring access to care, DoD leaders can improve customer service. Their goal is to provide beneficiaries the world's best access to healthcare.

- ✍ To ensure they receive evaluation of illness in a timely manner, TRICARE Prime enrollees have access to primary care manager services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- ✍ With the aid of TRICARE's healthcare finders, referrals from primary care managers are handled rapidly. If a beneficiary needs to see a specialist, the care is arranged through TRICARE's provider network. In some regions, the services of a healthcare finder are available to beneficiaries

24 hours a day, seven days a week. TRICARE's access standard for travel time to the specialty care provider's office is 60 minutes.

- ✍ TRICARE's worldwide Nurse Advice Line is the logical solution to a variety of healthcare access needs. If a beneficiary wants to ask a question, a qualified health professional can answer questions over the telephone.
- ✍ Another practical feature of TRICARE is the National Mail Order Pharmacy (NMOP) program. DoD offers this convenient benefit so that TRICARE beneficiaries don't have to drive to a pharmacy every month to receive drugs for chronic conditions. To use the NMOP, beneficiaries simply call Merck-Medco at 1-800-903-4680 to determine eligibility and obtain mail order envelopes with order forms. For a nominal co-payment, beneficiaries may obtain up to a 90-day supply of drugs.

(Source: www.tricare.osd.mil/news/2000/news2000_16.htm)

Specialist Referrals and Travel Reimbursement

Under provisions of the 2001 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), TRICARE Prime beneficiaries referred by their primary care manager (PCM) for services at a location more than 100 miles from their PCM may be eligible to have their "reasonable travel expenses" reimbursed by TRICARE.

Eligibility

The TRICARE Prime travel entitlement is available to non-active duty TRICARE Prime enrollees and TRICARE Prime Remote family members (when implemented) when they are referred for specialty care more than 100 miles from the PCM location. Beneficiaries must have a valid referral and travel orders from a TRICARE representative at the military treatment facility (MTF) where they are enrolled or from the regional lead agent's office if their PCM is a TRICARE network provider.

- ✍ This entitlement does not apply to expenses incurred by active duty uniformed services members, active duty family members residing with their sponsors overseas, or travel costs of beneficiaries referred under Department of Defense (DoD) specialized treatment programs, which are reimbursed by other travel entitlements.

Reasonable Travel Expenses

Reasonable travel expenses are the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary when traveling to their specialty provider - not in an emergency status.

- ✍ Costs include meals, gas/oil, tolls, parking, and tickets for public transportation (i.e. airplane, train, bus, etc.). Beneficiaries must submit receipts for expenses above \$75.
- ✍ Government rates will be used to estimate the reasonable cost. Beneficiaries are expected to use the least costly mode of transportation. The actual costs of lodging (including taxes and tips) and the actual cost of meals (including taxes and tips, but excluding alcoholic beverages) may be reimbursed up to the government rate for the area concerned.

(Source: www.tricare.osd.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet.cfm?id=181)