



WICHITA CHAPTER April 2019 NEWSLETTER

MOAA

MILITARY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

APRIL 8, 2019

BY LT. COL. MICHAEL R. GEORGE

DEAR MOAA MEMBERS,

“Happy Easter.” Hopefully the Easter Bunny will be generous to all of you and you will enjoy a peaceful Easter celebration.

As for happenings in our chapter, it's been a quiet month. Spring has arrived, the last of cold weather appears to be behind us and the trees and flowers are beginning to bloom. Too bad WSU couldn't get it done at the NIT, but next season will be here soon.

At our March Brunch we received a great presentation on the soon to be open Army ROTC unit at WSU by the new Professor of Military Science, MAJ Eric Hollingsworth. From all accounts he is getting a lot of interest in the program and we should all wish him well. Our meeting in May will be our re-installation of our current Executive Council, we're on two-year terms now, and an introduction of this year's JROTC scholarship recipients. We are still in negotiation with the USD259 school district to take over the administrative duties for the scholarships. Hopefully we'll have that in agreement soon.

Speaking of JROTC and Leadership Programs, USD259 held their annual National Awards Ceremony on Thursday, 4 April, to recognize over 225 cadets who were identified as superior performers for academics, leadership or both. It was a great celebration of achievement hosted by Heights HS. The JROTC program finished up their locally held, regional events with the Air Capital Raider Challenge held at South HS on 6 April. The Leadership Program will host a similar event at Butler Community College, Grizzly Adventures, El Dorado, KS, on Saturday, 26 April.

A couple of items of interest from this month's national MOAA website news are given below. Since many of us will be traveling this summer there is an article on “*Tips for Traveling With TRICARE*”. There is also an article on the “*President's Budget Confirms*

Plans for Drastic Reduction in Military Medical Positions.” Please visit the MOAA National website to read the full articles. For additional news about changes and updates to retiree benefits please visit:

<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/newsevents/newsletter.html>.

Finally, please consider contacting our Congressman/Senators and advocating for the necessary legislation to ensure our benefits are maintained. As always, your input is always welcome. Email all concerns to me at m2george55@gmail.com. Also, please save the dates for upcoming MOAA Meetings: 14 Apr and 19 May.

MOAA CHAPTER MEETING BRUNCH

Our monthly chapter brunch and meeting will be April 14 at the Rolling Hills Country Club. The guest speaker is Mr. Edward Cross who serves as President of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association (KIOGA). He is responsible for public policy advocacy and interaction with external stakeholders including elected officials, regulators, government decision-makers, and community thought leaders. He also serves as director of staff and editor of the Association’s publications. On behalf of KIOGA members, Mr. Cross lobbies in both Topeka and Washington, D.C. The brunch begins at 11:30 a.m., and the meeting will start at 12:45 p.m. Please make plans to join us for what promises to be an outstanding meeting.

TROW’S APRIL MEETING

The Retired Officers Wives Club (TROW) will meet April 19 at The Scotch & Sirloin, 525 E. Kellogg. The guest speaker is Denise Neal, Food Editor for the Wichita Eagle. Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. Please plan to attend what should be a great outing.

MOAA’s Advocacy Mission: Legislative Goals for 2019

- *Ensure any TRICARE reform sustains access to top-quality care.*
- *Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases.*
- *Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector.*
- *Stop erosion of compensation and non-pay quality-of-life benefits.*
- *End financial penalties for military survivors.*
- *End concurrent receipt penalties for military retirees.*
- *Achieve equity of benefits for Guard and Reserve members with their active duty counterparts.*

- *Strengthen DoD-VA collaboration and services to support wounded warriors and an expanding population of women veterans.*
- *Ensure timely access to service-earned VA benefits.*
- *Protect military and veteran family support programs and policies.*

Tips for Traveling With TRICARE

By Cathy Artino

(This article originally appeared in Military Officer, a magazine available to all MOAA Premium and Life members).

Accidents and illnesses can happen any time, even when you're on vacation. If you're planning on traveling across the U.S. or around the world, TRICARE's resources can help make your trip stress-free.

“First, fill all of your prescriptions and have any necessary routine care before you travel,” says Allen Carter, TRICARE beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator. “TRICARE does not cover routine care when you're outside your area, so you'll end up paying out of pocket for any routine care you receive.”

Next, know which TRICARE coverage plan you have, and visit www.tricare.mil before hitting the road. You can select your coverage and learn specific guidelines you need to follow when receiving care away from home. If you've taken all preventive measures but still must seek medical care while traveling, don't panic. “If your life, limbs, or eyesight are in jeopardy, go to the nearest emergency room, regardless of where you are,” Carter says.

For those who aren't sure whether their situation warrants a trip to the ER or urgent care, Carter suggests calling the Nurse Advice Line at (800) 874-2273. Registered nurses are on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to answer questions, give advice, and assist beneficiaries with scheduling an appointment with their primary care manager.

Carter says you shouldn't stress about receiving care while away from home but do some research before you leave. “Bottom line: Before you travel or receive routine care, talk to a beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator, if you have questions, and make sure you download the TRICARE Important Contact Information card. TRICARE counselors are always available to assist you, if you have questions regarding any medical issues you have while traveling or to help you prepare for any sort of scenario before you travel.”

President's Budget Confirms Plans for Drastic Reduction in Military Medical Positions

By: Capt. Kathryn M. Beasley, USN (Ret) MOAA Director of Government Relations, Health Affairs

Sometimes, you have to play detective.

For example, combing through the fine print of the president's annual budget submission, poring over budget tables (lots of numbers), spotting subtle nuances buried within the explanatory statements...and then attempting to put all the pieces together to understand potential ramification and impact.

MOAA has done this with the Defense Health Program (DHP) portion of the FY 2020 budget and found some disturbing data.

But first the good news, which was anticipated: There will be no new changes to the existing TRICARE fee structure. There was no indication of any desire to lower the already steep fee increases of the previous year; any fee increases seem to be off the table, for now. Additionally, the proposed budget seems to provide adequate funds for health care requirements, the new electronic health record, medical research efforts, and health care requirements for contingency operations.

However, the disturbing piece of the news is confirmation of a significant reduction in uniformed medical personnel. We had been left to speculation earlier, but now we know the exact numbers and can begin to broadly anticipate their impact. We still do not know (and the services are still in the process of analyzing) which medical specialties, nursing specialties, medic ratings, and other positions these will affect, or where these billets will go in support of military readiness.

With a total personnel reduction of almost 22 percent from current levels, or 17,991 positions, we anticipate both the system itself and beneficiaries will experience the effects of it. These reductions are expected to happen starting Oct. 1, 2019.

MOAA has pressed for answers. As a result, Defense Health Agency officials have stressed that these reductions will not happen all at once but will occur through "natural attrition." Officials also stated that they have been given extra monies for civilian medical professional hiring and increase use of the TRICARE networks to support beneficiary access to care - contract care we know is much more costly than using military treatment facilities (MTFs).

In addition to closely monitoring leading access to care indicators, MOAA intends to determine which medical services will be cut or reduced and where those reductions will occur. These may take the form of reduced primary and specialty care, or of reduced lab, radiology or pharmacy services at MTFs - resulting in more out-of-pocket costs for TRICARE beneficiaries. Also, any reduction in MTF services will need to be understood and evaluated by beneficiaries prior to the new TRICARE annual enrollment season.

The bottom line: The order of magnitude these cuts represent certainly will be felt by the military medical community itself and a large percentage of beneficiaries. This is one reason that again this year, MOAA is [Storming the Hill](#) to stabilize TRICARE.