



Administrative Absence for Non-Covered Reproductive Health Care

Overview

On October 20, 2022, the Secretary of Defense released a memorandum, “Ensuring Access to Reproductive Health Care,” directing the Department to take a series of actions to ensure Service members and their families can access reproductive health care.

Secretary Austin has made it clear that the health and well-being of our Service members and their family members is a top priority. This policy provides Service members the ability to request an administrative absence from their normal duty stations to access non-covered reproductive health care without being charged leave, ensuring they are able to access such care regardless of where they are stationed.

This policy...

- Provides Service members the ability to request an administrative absence from their normal duty stations in order to access, or accompany a dual-military spouse or dependent to access, non-covered reproductive health care without being charged leave.

Policy Summary

- Service members may be granted an administrative absence from their normal duty station, without being charged leave, for a period of up to 21 days to receive, or to accompany a dual-military spouse or dependent who receives, non-covered reproductive health care. The period of absence will be limited to the minimum number of days essential to receive the required care and travel needed to access the care by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable.
- Administrative absences may be granted to Service members when a reproductive health care need is identified by the Service member and the military situation permits.
- Requests for administrative absence should be given all due consideration and should be granted to the greatest extent practicable, unless, in the commanding officer’s judgment, the Service member’s absence would impair proper execution of the military mission.
- Commanders will act promptly and with appropriate discretion to protect the privacy of protected health information they receive, and information shall be restricted to personnel with a specific need to know.

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

Non-covered reproductive health care includes non-covered abortion and Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), which includes, but is not limited to, egg retrieval, IUI, and IVF. Non-covered reproductive health care is at the patient’s expense.

An administrative absence should be granted regardless of whether such care is available within the local area.

Commanders will not levy additional requirements on the Service member (including, but not limited to, consultations with a chaplain, medical testing, or other forms of counselling) prior to approving or denying the absence.

Service members may need to disclose a minimum amount of health information necessary for commanders to authorize the administrative absence.