



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 1754.7C
09 APRIL 2020

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1754.7C

Subj: SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

- Ref:
- (a) Rehabilitation Act of 1973, P. L. 93-112, Sept 26, 1973, 87 Stat 355 (1973) (as amended)
 - (b) Americans with Disabilities Act, Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327 (1990) (as amended)
 - (c) Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) Pub.L. 108-446, Stat 2647 (1990) (as amended)
 - (d) The Coast Guard Freedom of Information (FOIA) and Privacy Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.3 (series)
 - (e) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, Pub.L. 104-191, 110 Stat. 1936 (1996)
 - (f) United States Coast Guard, Exceptional Family Member Program Records System of Records Notice of Privacy Act system of records (Docket No. DHS 2008-0147)
 - (g) Provision of Early Intervention and Special Education Services to Eligible DoD Dependents, DoD Directive 1342.12
 - (h) Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. §§ 801-946a
 - (i) Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, COMDTINST M1000.8 (series)
 - (j) Department of Defense Instruction 1315.19, 4.1, The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), Authorizing Special Needs Family Members Travel Overseas at Government Expense
 - (k) Coast Guard Child Development Services Manual, COMDTINST M1754.15 (series)
 - (l) Coast Guard Family Advocacy Program (FAP), COMDTINST 1752.1 (series)
 - (m) Coast Guard Housing Manual, COMDTINST M11101.13 (series)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes policy and guidance for the Coast Guard Special Needs Program and prescribes associated responsibilities of various organizational components.

DISTRIBUTION SDL No. 170

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy and assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements must comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Coast Guard Special Needs Program, COMDTINST 1754.7B, dated 20 May 2013, is cancelled.
4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. This Instruction applies to all active duty (AD) members. Active duty members are defined as members of the Armed Forces, including reservists on active duty for 181 days or longer, and members of U.S. Public Health Service assigned to the Coast Guard. This policy is affiliated with permanent change of station (PCS) transfers to accommodate special needs of family members. Coast Guard reservists mobilized and deployed for less than 181 days are not eligible for enrollment in the Special Needs Program, unless they are eligible for the Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) of TRICARE. If a reservist enrolling in TRICARE benefits chooses to enroll in ECHO services, that member may enroll in the Special Needs Program on a case-by-case basis to ensure access to those services. Coast Guard reservists, retirees and civilian employees may benefit from information and referral to community resources for their family members with special needs; however, they must not be enrolled in the program.
 - b. The Special Needs Program, working in concert with other military and civilian agencies, provides a comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to community support, housing, medical, educational, and personnel services for Coast Guard families with special needs. By following specific procedures and guidelines, efforts will be made to ensure that sponsors with family members who have special needs are assigned to duty stations where access to, and availability of, medical and community services can be validated. This program is comparable to the Department of Defense (DOD) Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).
 - c. References (a), (b), and (c) provide appropriate legal background and set expectations for recognition of the civil and educational rights of persons with disabilities. These specific laws have been successfully implemented leading to the federal government, and other public and private institutions to recognize the unique challenges that individuals with disabilities face in their daily living.
 - d. The Coast Guard Special Needs Program was implemented in 1984 to assist Coast Guard families with special needs during the assignment process. The objective of the program is to identify and support the special needs of a family while allowing the AD member to maintain the maximum assignment flexibility possible. During the assignment process, availability of necessary resources for families with special needs are evaluated to allow AD members to continue their Coast Guard careers while ensuring that their family needs are met and the mission of the Coast Guard is fulfilled.
 - e. The Coast Guard also provides assistance to families with special needs through the Health, Safety and Work-Life (HSWL) Regional Practices (RP) before, during, and after a member's

reassignment. Location of a duty assignment involving members enrolled in the Special Needs Program is given careful consideration by assignment officers (in PSC-epm-2 and PSC-opm-2) and by Commandant (CG-111) and (CG-112).

- f. Enrollment in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program is mandatory for all AD members who have dependent family members diagnosed with medical, psychological, physical, or educational special needs. Enrollment in the program helps to ensure early identification of families with special needs and maximizes the time for appropriate assignment consideration, such as overseas screening and entry approval process for Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS) locations.
 - g. Timely enrollment in the Special Needs Program reduces family stress, undue hardship, and costly and disruptive early returns of dependents from OCONUS and remote areas.
5. DISCLAIMER. This Instruction is intended to provide operational guidance for CG personnel and is not intended to impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the CG. It is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule.
6. MAJOR CHANGES. This Instruction reflects the following changes:
- a. Implementation of the special needs category system;
 - b. Addition of Medical Administration Regional Coordinators (MARC)s in the process of identifying medical services for relocating AD members;
 - c. Transfer of cases will be centrally managed, and may not coincide with the enrollee's permanent change of station; and
 - d. Reservists who are eligible for TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) may enroll in Special Needs to ensure access to services.
7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.
- a. The development of this Instruction and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office in conjunction with the Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47). This Instruction is categorically excluded under current Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion (CATEX) A3 from further environmental analysis in accordance with "Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS Instruction Manual 023-01-001-01 (series).
 - b. This Instruction will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policy in this Instruction must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other applicable environmental mandates.

8. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites:

Internet: <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/directives/>

CGPortal: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>

9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., NARA requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not create significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.

10. DEFINITIONS. Terms used in this Instruction are defined in Enclosure (1)

11. POLICY.

- a. Because of the sensitive nature of the Special Needs Program and based on the confidentiality requirements of family members' medical conditions, all Coast Guard personnel involved in the implementation of the Special Needs Program must ensure the information available to them is treated according to all relevant Coast Guard policy and federal laws and regulations, including References (d), (e), and (f). Information concerning enrollment in the Special Needs Program or data used in this program must not be made part of the service record of the member. All information related to the Special Needs Program must be kept strictly confidential with access only by authorized personnel who have a need-to-know. Any sensitive enrollment information maintained in an electronic database must be protected and physically secured.
- b. The Special Needs Program is designed to assist Coast Guard members by addressing the family members' special needs during the assignment process, providing non-clinical case management to families enrolled in the program, and ensure access to medical or support programs that require enrollment in an Exceptional Family Member Program or Special Needs Program, such as, TRICARE ECHO and respite care. A Family Resource Specialist (FRS) is the primary point of contact for all questions regarding the Special Needs Program. The role of the FRS is not to enforce enrollment but to increase program awareness, provide accurate information, and encourage enrollment while facilitating access to a range of family support services.
- c. The family member identified to be enrolled in the Special Needs Program must be an authorized dependent enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) who resides with the member (unless on an unaccompanied tour), and has a qualifying condition that requires more than routine primary care. Enrollment in the Special Needs Program helps ensure the availability of specialized services at future assignment locations.
- d. Active duty members must enroll in the Special Needs Program if their family members have a medical, psychological, physical, or educational special need that meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Medical special needs:
 - (a) Medical conditions which the Coast Guard Senior Medical Executive (SME) may determine limits the worldwide assignment ability of AD members (such as, autism, high-risk newborns, sickle cell disease, insulin-dependent diabetes, human immunodeficiency virus, etc.);
 - (b) Medical conditions that require monitoring on a periodic basis due to the potential of limiting member's worldwide assignment (such as, remission of cancer within the last five years, etc.);
 - (c) Potentially life-threatening medical conditions (such as, high risk pregnancy, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), etc.); or
 - (d) Diagnosis of asthma or other respiratory-related diagnosis with chronic recurring wheezing which meets one of the following criteria:
 - 1) Scheduled use of inhaled and anti-inflammatory agents and bronchodilators;
 - 2) History of emergency room use or clinic visits for acute asthma exacerbations within the last year;
 - 3) History of one or more hospitalizations for asthma within the past five years;
 - 4) History of intensive care admissions for asthma within the past five years.
- (2) Psychological special needs:
 - (a) Current and chronic (duration of six months or longer) diagnosed mental health conditions (such as, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, substance dependence, and personality disorders);
 - (b) Inpatient, or intensive outpatient mental health services within the last five years (such as, day treatment program, counseling provided at frequency greater than one time per week, etc.);
 - (c) Intensive (greater than one visit monthly for more than six months) mental health services required at the present time, consisting of medical care from any provider, including a primary care provider; or
 - (d) Diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) that meets one of the following criteria:
 - 1) Family member has any additional psychological diagnosis;

- 2) Family member requires multiple medications, psycho-pharmacological medication (other than stimulants), or does not respond to normal doses of medication;
 - 3) Family member requires management and treatment by a mental health provider (such as, psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker, etc.);
 - 4) Family member requires a mental health specialty consultant, other than a primary care provider, more than twice a year on a chronic basis; or
 - 5) Family member requires modification of the educational curriculum or the use of behavioral management staff.
- (3) Physical special needs:
- (a) Family member requires adaptive equipment for six months or longer (such as, an apnea home monitor, home nebulizer, wheelchair, splints, orthotics, hearing aids, home oxygen therapy, home ventilator, etc.);
 - (b) Family member requires environmental and architectural considerations (such as, limited number of steps, wheelchair accessibility or housing modifications, air conditioning, etc.); or
 - (c) Family member requires assistive technology devices (for example, communication devices) or services.
- (4) Educational special needs:
- (a) Child (birth through two years of age) has or requires an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP); or
 - (b) Child (three through 21 years of age) has or requires an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- e. Special Needs Program enrollment updates for each family member enrolled in the program are due every three years or in conjunction with the submission of AD member's e-resume, if member is tour complete. Updates may also be required if:
- (1) There is a change in medical or mental health related diagnosis, or a new diagnosis develops;
 - (2) There is a change in early intervention or special education needs; or
 - (3) If an update is due at the time of a projected rotation time, it should be initiated at least nine months prior to that date.

- f. Disenrollment from the Special Needs Program must occur when any of the following situations occur:
- (1) Family member no longer requires special medical, psychological, special accommodations, or educational services, as validated by a medical professional or school official;
 - (2) Medical and mental health conditions are in remission for a minimum of three years with no more than routine primary care needed;
 - (3) The dependent child is no longer the member's dependent, or does not reside with the service member which would affect their availability for worldwide assignment, unless enrollment in the Special Needs Program is required for a program for which the dependent is otherwise qualified, such as TRICARE (ECHO);
 - (4) The family member loses dependency and Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) status in Direct Access (confirmed by FRS) due to divorce, loss of custody, or death of the family member;
 - (5) Separation from a spouse with special needs is not grounds for disenrollment from the Special Needs Program. Disenrollment because of divorce can only be completed upon final termination of the marriage;
 - (6) Members who have residential custody of their children for 30 percent of the time or less, annually, may be disenrolled, as they are not required to enroll in the Special Needs Program; or
 - (7) Retirement, discharge, or transfer to reserve status (for less than 181 days) of an AD member will prompt automatic disenrollment from the Special Needs Program.
- g. New enrollments and enrollment updates require for each family member enrolled, a completed; Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792 (for medical, psychological, and physical conditions) and Special Education and Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1 (for educational special needs). The forms must be completed by the family member's medical professional or school personnel, respectively, signed by the family member (if 18 years old) or legal guardian, and submitted to the servicing FRS and:
- (1) No additional medical documentation will be required;
 - (2) The FRS must forward the enrollment forms to the cognizant Coast Guard Senior Medical Executive (SME) for verification of eligibility for enrollment; and
 - (3) As warranted, the FRS must verify educational eligibility for enrollment by reviewing the child's IEP or IFSP.

- h. Certain medical conditions lasting 6 to 12 months may warrant temporary enrollment in the Special Needs Program. The need for such enrollments will be determined by a SME.
- i. Reference (c) requires all states within the United States (U.S.) to provide special education and related services to eligible children. When considering assignment locations for members enrolled in the Special Needs Program, strictly for educational reasons, and the provision of specialty medical services is not an issue, it will be presumed that special education resources are available in all duty locations within the U.S. Although educational services must be provided by the states, parents of children with educational special needs must be aware that the quality of these services may vary among and within the states. It is imperative for parents to be aware of strengths and limitations of school districts when considering assignment options; be prepared to encounter variations in the level of services; and, to provide appropriate advocacy on behalf of their children. Members are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the servicing FRS and the DoD School Liaison Officer (where available) as early in the process as possible.
- j. Members stationed in foreign countries or U.S. territories (such as Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Guam, etc.) may be eligible to use schools operated by Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), or private Non-DoD schools as per Reference (g). Availability of appropriate educational services in these locations must be verified by the FRS, and approved by Commandant (CG-111) and DCMS-83 prior to the member's transfer.
- k. Upon enrollment in the Special Needs Program, a member may decline routine contact with the FRS by completing the Family Support Declination, Form CG 1754S. Active duty members declining family support services must still contact the FRS (or the FRS will initiate the contact) to update special needs enrollment information every three years. Active duty members cannot decline the FRS' involvement in the process of assessment of available special needs services for assignment purposes.
- l. The Special Needs Program is an assignment process tool that allows for efforts to be made to secure availability of medical and community support services, but it cannot validate the quality of those services.
- m. Since assignment coordination across global locations poses an ongoing challenge in the efforts to balance the mission of the Coast Guard and the career aspirations of members enrolled in the Special Needs Program, each special needs case must be assigned a category indicator in order to facilitate the assignment process. Categories of special needs must be determined by a Coast Guard Senior Medical Executive (SME) based on the information submitted on DD Form 2792 and DD Form 2792-1. A category of special needs must be based on the following criteria:
 - (1) Medical diagnosis;
 - (2) Frequency of specialty visits;
 - (3) Type of medical specialists required; and
 - (4) Distance to the major medical area measured from the duty station.

- n. The following categories of special needs may be assigned:
- (1) Category 1: Medical, physical, psychological condition that is readily treatable, such as mild hypertension or seasonal allergies or educational condition. In this category, members may be stationed in any geographical location;
 - (2) Category 2: Condition is generally minor and treatable, such as mild migraines, eczema, stable ADHD and ADD, and uncomplicated educational needs. In this category, members must be stationed in geographic locations with access to a major medical area within 100 miles or two hour drive from assigned duty station;
 - (3) Category 3: Condition requires increased attention, such as moderate disabilities, diabetes, asthma, most behavioral and dental health needs, and specialized educational needs. In this category, members must be stationed in geographic locations with access to a major medical area within 50 miles, or one hour drive from assigned duty station;
 - (4) Category 4: Condition requires significant attention, such as severe lupus, cerebral palsy, chronic heart disease, major depression, and complex educational needs. In this category, members must be stationed in geographic locations with access to a major medical area within 25 miles, or 30 minute drive from assigned duty station;
 - (5) Category 5: Condition requires constant, high-level attention, such as multiple disabilities, complicated cancer cases, severe cases of autism, and multiple, complex educational needs. In this category, members must be stationed in geographic locations with access to a major medical area within 25 miles, or 30 minute drive from assigned duty station; or
 - (6) Category T: Allows for temporary enrollment of members in the special needs program, typically for 6-12 months, and the dependent family member's condition can be addressed and resolved in a short period of time.
- o. A case category must be assigned to all cases and be reflected in Direct Access for AD members enrolled in the Special Needs Program. Assignment officers (AO) must select duty locations for AD members based on the category indicator. The AO may seek approval for a location outside of the category indicator through the assigned FRS or servicing HSWL RP where it can be confirmed that adequate services are available and meet military health care standards for access to care.
- p. Depending on the category of special needs, an AO and a FRS may, or may not engage in assignment coordination. For example, for category 1 within the United States, no assignment coordination is required because an AD member may be assigned to any geographical location within the United States. For categories 2 and 3 enrollments, assignment coordination must take place for all locations not identified as Major Medical Areas (category 4 and 5 locations). For categories 4 and 5, a pre-approved list of duty locations must be used by the AOs to determine assignment location. This list can be accessed on the CG-111 website and typically, no assignment coordination is needed, however, in complex or unique cases, such coordination is recommended. In those situations, it is essential that a member communicate their dependent's

complex needs to a FRS. The FRS should then collaborate with the AO and Medical Administration Regional Coordinator (MARC) to ensure availability of medical care for the member's dependents in the new duty location.

- q. If a member becomes newly enrolled in the Special Needs Program, or has a family member diagnosed with a new special need while already serving in a location that was not screened for availability of care for the new medical condition and the location is not in agreement with the distance and travel time policy, that member may remain in the current duty location until the next rotation, if medical services are available for the family member. If medical services are not available, a member may be eligible for an early transfer to a duty location where services for a family member are available.
- r. Enrollment in the Special Needs Program does not preclude AD members from:
 - (1) Sea duty;
 - (2) Normal sea and shore rotation;
 - (3) Unaccompanied assignments;
 - (4) Standing watches;
 - (5) Performing normally assigned duties; or
 - (6) Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments in support of Coast Guard-wide individual augmentation or contingency response operations.
- s. Ultimate responsibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program and update of enrollment information rests with the AD member. Members who willfully fail to enroll in the program, update enrollment information, or knowingly provide false information regarding their special needs status, may be subject to disciplinary action under Reference (h) or other adverse administrative action. Additionally, a member's refusal to provide accurate information may preclude successful entry approval for overseas locations, command sponsorship, access to healthcare services, and may require the member to pay for family members' relocation expenses, as per References (g), (i), and (j).
- t. Service members' special needs case files must only be handled by authorized personnel within the HSWL organizational components, which include, RPs, HSWL Service Center (SC), and Commandant (CG-11). Records may be disclosed to other authorized users in accordance with References (d), (e), and (f).
- u. Standard operating procedures are provided to the SMEs and FRSs for additional guidance on the enrollment and disenrollment process.

12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Commandant (CG-11) must promulgate policy and guidance regarding the Special Needs Program.
- b. Commandant (CG-111) and (CG-1112) must:
 - (1) Provide oversight of policy and procedure implementation as described herein; and
 - (2) Collaborate with Area Commanders, the HSWL SC, HSWL Regional Managers (RM), Coast Guard medical personnel, and the CG PSC to ensure compliance with this Instruction.
- c. Special Needs Program Manager (SNPM) must:
 - (1) Develop policy and provide programmatic oversight of the Special Needs Program;
 - (2) Develop a strategic plan for the program;
 - (3) Manage program resources;
 - (4) Provide coordination of the Coast Guard Special Needs Program service-wide;
 - (5) Review, assess, and evaluate information on special needs records to ensure appropriate case decisions have occurred;
 - (6) Exercise final review authority regarding special needs case decisions;
 - (7) Oversee the Special Needs Central Registry for special needs cases Coast Guard-wide;
 - (8) Set program quality assurance priorities and participate in no less than one annual site visits;
 - (9) Provide direct technical guidance to HSWL SC and HSWL RP staffs relevant to special needs cases or issues;
 - (10) Track and research trends in national, federal, and DOD special needs-related programs;
 - (11) Prepare reports and maintain data regarding the Special Needs Program service-wide;
 - (12) In collaboration with the HSWL SC staff, develop standardized briefing materials to facilitate education on special needs issues for senior Coast Guard leaders, relevant HSWL personnel (such as, FRS, Family Advocacy Specialists (FAS), Child Development Services staff, medical staff, etc.), unit commanders, chaplains, assignment officers, etc.;
 - (13) Represent Coast Guard interests in meetings and contacts with military, national, federal and state agencies and organizations;
 - (14) Participate in the interview and selection process of the FRSs.

d. Commandant (CG-112) must:

- (1) Develop policy for HSWL medical personnel's oversight of the enrollment and disenrollment in the Special Needs Program in collaboration with Commandant (CG-111);
- (2) Provide training and technical guidance to HSWL SC Operational Medicine Division (Op Med) and Medical Administration Division (Med Admin), relevant to special needs enrollment and disenrollment process and access to care checks;
- (3) Serve as final authority on all medical decisions pertaining to the Special Needs Program.

e. Commandant (CG-133) must ensure that Reference (i) reflects the requirement for mandatory enrollment in the Special Needs Program for all AD members and qualifying reserve members.

f. HSWL SC Work-Life Division (W-L) must:

- (1) Provide operational oversight of the Special Needs Program in accordance with policy described herein;
- (2) Ensure compliance with all applicable Commandant Instructions and other relevant regulations by the HSWL RPs;
- (3) Distribute program funding to HSWL RMs in accordance with the existing budget model and local needs;
- (4) Develop standard operating procedures (SOP) in collaboration with Commandant (CG-1112) for the Special Needs Program based on this Instruction and other relevant Coast Guard regulations including, but not limited to the following topics: Special Needs Program enrollment and disenrollment and update process; Special Needs Resource Team (SNRT); case management and record keeping; disclosure of special needs records; mandated training; and quality assurance (QA) process. The SOPs must provide streamlined guidance to assist in the execution of roles and responsibilities, and standardize procedures so that regional staffs may provide consistent delivery of services across all geographic locations;
- (5) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-1112), the Special Needs Program Manager, develop standardized briefing materials to facilitate education on special needs issues for senior Coast Guard leaders, relevant HSWL personnel (such as, FRS, Family Advocacy Specialists (FAS), Child Development Services staff, medical staff, etc.), unit commanders, chaplains, assignment officers, etc.;
- (6) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-1112), conduct Quality Assurance (QA) Inspections of the Special Needs Program with emphasis on program quality assurance priorities, policy compliance and customer satisfaction;
- (7) Identify best practices in the field and make recommendations for standardization of these practices through regular policy recommendations or SOP updates;

- (8) Identify gaps between Special Needs Program practices and existing policy directives;
 - (9) Gather and maintain Special Needs Program data for operational and programmatic reporting; and
 - (10) Participate in the interview and selection process of the FRSs.
- g. HSWL SC Operational Medicine Division (Op Med) must:
- (1) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-1121) and HSWL SC (W-L), conduct QA reviews and provide oversight of the medical officers working with the Special Needs Program with emphasis on enrollment and disenrollment and case categorization processes.
- h. HSWL SC Medical Administration Division (Med Admin) must:
- (1) Assist FRSs with determining availability of TRICARE providers in proposed duty locations through Medical Administration Regional Coordinators (MARCAs);
 - (2) Assist the Special Needs Program Manager, Commandant (CG-1112) in providing recommendations on availability of medical services to PSC; and
 - (3) Review and update the list of duty locations approved for members enrolled in category 4 and 5 special needs at least annually.
- i. HSWL Regional Manager must:
- (1) Implement policy and Special Needs Program procedures, as described herein and in appropriate program SOPs;
 - (2) Supervise and provide administrative support to the FRSs;
 - (3) Ensure that special needs case records are secured. This must include availability of a locked office for use by the FRS, and a locked filing cabinet for the physical security of case files;
 - (4) Ensure that only personnel with a need-to-know are provided access to case information and records;
 - (5) Direct all policy and technical assistance questions to Commandant (CG-1112) and HSWL SC;
 - (6) Participate in the HSWL QA visit;
 - (7) Use the applicable QA reports to assist in performance management of the FRSs; and

- (8) Provide local resources for the implementation of the Special Needs Program (travel, materials, etc.).
- j. HSWL Regional Practice Senior Medical Executive (SME) or designated medical practitioners must:
- (1) Determine member's eligibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program through the review and validation of a Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792, for each family member with an eligible condition;
 - (2) Assign a category of special needs to each new or updated special needs case;
 - (3) Determine member's eligibility for disenrollment from the Special Needs Program; and
 - (4) Collaborate with FRS on issues involving Special Needs Program enrollment, disenrollment, and specific medical, psychological, and physical special needs.
- k. Family Resource Specialist must:
- (1) Provide non-clinical case management by performing the following functions:
 - (a) Coordinate the Special Needs Program enrollment, update, and disenrollment in collaboration with the HSWL RP SME;
 - (b) Determine each member's eligibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program based on the presence of educational special needs;
 - (c) Ensure official documents, such as declination of service forms, privacy release forms, disclosure forms and DD 2792 forms have the correct data entered which may include: medical provider information, family member or legal guardian signatures, and etc and are maintained in the case record;
 - (d) Provide information to Coast Guard personnel concerning relevant policy and procedures of the Special Needs Program;
 - (e) Use an electronic case management system designated by Commandant (CG-111) to effectively manage special needs cases;
 - (f) Protect personally identifiable information (PII) and health-related information in accordance with Coast Guard regulations and federal laws, including References (e) and (f). Report violations of PII as per appropriate Coast Guard directives;
 - (g) Maintain an accurate count of special needs cases in their administrative control;

- (h) Maintain comprehensive, accurate, easily accessible, and up-to-date information on military and civilian special needs resources. Share these resources with families requesting assistance;
- (i) Assist Coast Guard families with special needs in accessing resources available to them in the civilian and military communities;
- (j) Refer AD and family members to appropriate community and military services;
- (k) Maintain regular contact with AD member or a family member enrolled in the Special Needs Program by phone, email, or through face-to-face meetings on an "as needed" basis, but not less frequently than one time per calendar year. For members who completed the Family Support Service Declination Form, CG Form 1754S, the FRS must maintain contact at least once every three years to update enrollment information and consult with the assignment officers on availability of special needs services for the family members during reassignment;
- (l) Summarize all contacts and communications regarding the management of a special needs case into case-notes. Communications that require case notes may include: command notifications, face-to-face meetings, telephone discussions, written messages, memorandums, emails, and etc. Printed copies of correspondence should be avoided unless pertinent to a specific concern in the case. Email messages may not be used in lieu of case notes and should not be maintained in the record;
- (m) Ensure that each page of paper case notes is legible (typed when possible), signed, and dated by the individual making the entries. All entries and edits made in the record must include the date and the initials of the individual executing them. Entries must not be removed from the official record;
- (n) Document in the special needs record (paper or electronic) all contacts and activities pertaining to the family member with special needs. Case record must reflect events occurring after official enrollment of an AD member in the Special Needs Program;
- (o) Provide timely command notification (within 30 calendar days from the AD member's reporting date) containing names of AD members who are enrolled in the Special Needs Program and who are attached to that command;
- (p) Provide command notification if special needs case documentation for an AD member is out of compliance;;
- (q) Provide timely coordination of proposed assignment locations to assignment officers and appropriate regional medical staff (normally within three business days from receiving a request for information);
- (r) Collaborate with a MARC to determine availability of TRICARE services for families;

- (s) Provide timely coordination of transition services with appropriate Coast Guard personnel, including but not limited to the Housing Officer, Child Development Center (CDC) Director, Transition and Relocation Manager, etc.;
 - (t) Provide timely case closures (within 15 calendar days from the time FRS learns of AD member's ineligibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program);
 - (u) Coordinate with Commandant (CG-1112) and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) for availability and approval of Respite Care Grants for qualifying AD members, as per the CGMA Operating Manual.
- (2) Participate in Special Needs Resource Team (SNRT) meetings for admission of children with special needs to Coast Guard-operated CDC and Family Child Care (FCC) programs, as per Reference (k);
- (3) Provide an annual Special Needs Program overview to the CDC and FCC personnel, if co-located with a Coast Guard-operated CDC or FCC program;
- (4) Report immediately (within 24 hours) all incidents of child abuse, neglect and family violence to appropriate state agencies and cognizant FAS, as per Reference (l) and (m);
- (5) Collaborate with a FAS on all family advocacy cases involving members enrolled in the Special Needs Program;
- (6) Provide standardized training to commands, active duty members, and family members within respective AOR on Special Needs Program; and
- (7) Comply with all mandated training requirements, including annual Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) certification.
- (8) The FRS must not:
- (a) Engage in clinical case management (such as, coordination and follow up on medical treatments, etc.);
 - (b) Engage in individual or family counseling of members enrolled in the Special Needs Program;
 - (c) Perform home visits to the residences of members enrolled in the Special Needs Program;
 - (d) Attend IEP and IFSP meetings on behalf of children of members enrolled in the Special Needs Program; or
 - (e) Enforce enrollment of AD members in the Special Needs Program.

- l. Family Advocacy Specialist must collaborate with the FRS on all family advocacy cases involving members enrolled in the Special Needs Program.
- m. Unit commanding officers and officers-in-charge must:
 - (1) Ensure that all AD members under their command are aware of the Special Needs Program policy and receive program training provided by their servicing FRS or HSWL RP and;
 - (2) Ensure AD members under their command comply with the mandatory enrollment requirement, if they have a qualifying family member eligible for participation in the Special Needs Program;
 - (3) Review the circumstances behind an AD member's failure to comply with the mandatory requirements of the Special Needs Program. Such failure may be attributable to the member or their adult dependent and may be costly to the Coast Guard and disruptive to mission success;
 - (4) Consult with the servicing legal office to determine if disciplinary or adverse administrative action (to include separation from the service) may be warranted for members failing to comply with this policy; and
 - (5) Take disciplinary or adverse administrative action, as warranted.
- n. Assignment Officers must:
 - (1) Verify with the assigned FRS that a proposed CONUS assignment location meets the special needs of the family in all category 2 and 3 special needs cases, and “as needed” in category 4 and 5 cases;
 - (2) Verify with the assigned FRS that a proposed OCONUS assignment location meets the special needs of the family in ALL categories of special needs cases, and
 - (3) Consult with the Special Needs Program Manager, if amplifying policy guidance is needed.
- o. Housing Officers must:
 - (1) Implement policy contained in Reference (m) pertaining to families with special needs residing in Coast Guard operated housing;
 - (2) Collaborate with the cognizant FRS on issues related to Coast Guard housing for families with special needs;
 - (3) Provide guidance to eligible members regarding housing accommodations as per Reference (m); and
 - (4) Ensure that reasonable adaptations are performed in Coast Guard operated housing units occupied by families with qualifying special needs.

p. Child Development Center (CDC) Directors must:

- (1) Inform AD members about the requirement of mandatory enrollment in the Special Needs Program when caring for an AD member's dependent child with special needs;
- (2) Participate in the SNRT meetings prior to admission of children with special needs to the CDC program, as per Reference (k) and subsequent SOPs; and
- (3) Collaborate with the cognizant FRS regarding availability of appropriate resources for children with special needs who are enrolled in the Coast Guard CDC.

q. Family Child Care (FCC) providers must:

- (1) Inform AD members about the requirement of mandatory enrollment in the Special Needs Program when caring for a Coast Guard dependent child with special needs;
- (2) Participate in the SNRT meetings, as per Reference (k) and subsequent SOPs, prior to the admission of children with special needs to the FCC program; and
- (3) Collaborate with a FRS regarding availability of appropriate resources for children with special needs enrolled in the FCC program.

r. Ombudsmen must:

- (1) Inform AD and family members about the requirement of mandatory enrollment in the Special Needs Program; and
- (2) Provide AD and family members with information regarding Special Needs Program point of contacts within the local AOR.

s. AD Members must:

- (1) Comply with the requirement of timely enrollment in the Special Needs Program in accordance with this Instruction;
- (2) Provide update of the enrollment information every three years or as a special needs condition of a family member changes;
- (3) Inform the cognizant FRS about their reporting time to a new unit to facilitate timely command notification; and
- (4) Inform the cognizant FRS about their separation date from AD status to facilitate timely case closure.

13. **PRIVACY PROVISIONS.** References (d) and (e) apply to records that contain protected health information. These acts and regulations place procedural requirements on the use and disclosure of such information. The applicable Special Needs Systems of Records Notice for military personnel can be found at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/2011-10756.htm>
14. **FORMS and REPORTS.** The electronic forms called for in this Instruction are available in the CG Electronic Forms library on the Standard Workstation on the Internet at <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-C4IT-CG-6-/The-Office-of-Information-Management-CG-61/aboutFormsManagement/>; the CG Portal at <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/forms/SitePages/Home.aspx>; and the Department of Defense (DoD) Forms Management Program website at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/forms/index.htm>.
15. **REQUEST FOR CHANGES.** Units and individuals may recommend changes via the chain of command to: hqs-dg-lst-cg-111@uscg.mil.

DANA L. THOMAS /s/
Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service
United States Coast Guard
Director, Health, Safety, and Work-Life

Encl: (1) Definitions

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Definitions

1. **Active Duty (AD) Members.** This term refers to persons who are members of the Armed Forces, including reservists on active duty for 181 days or longer, who are eligible for enrollment in the Special Needs Program, and U.S. Public Health Service members assigned to the Coast Guard.
2. **Child Development Center (CDC).** A Coast Guard operated facility that offers, on a regularly scheduled basis, developmental services designed to foster social, emotional, physical, creative, and intellectual growth to children.
3. **Child Development Services (CDS).** Coast Guard-operated programs offered in support of AD members' child care needs. The CDS can be obtained in child development centers, family child care homes, and a variety of alternative sites sponsored by the Coast Guard.
4. **Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792.** Official Department of Defense form that must be completed by AD members who have one or more family members with a medical, psychological, physical, or educational special need. AD members must submit this form for initial enrollment, status change, 3-year update, and disenrollment from the Special Needs Program.
5. **Special Education and Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1.** Official Department of Defense form that must be completed by AD members who have children with educational special needs. This form is submitted in addition to DD Form 2792 and must be accompanied by a copy of the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
6. **Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).** This term relates to a worldwide computerized database of uniformed service members (active duty and retired), their family members, and others who are eligible for military benefits.
7. **Disenrollment.** This term refers to the removal of an AD member from the Special Needs Program based upon improvement or resolution of the family member's special need, change in their dependency status, or AD member's separation or retirement from the Coast Guard.
8. **Enrollment.** This term refers to the initial entry of an AD member into the Special Needs Program based upon the eligibility of the family member's condition, as determined by a CG Senior Medical Executive (SME). Enrollment also applies to re-entry into the Special Needs Program after a period of non-enrollment.
9. **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).** A Department of Defense mandatory enrollment program, equivalent to the Coast Guard Special Needs Program that safeguards the continuum of care for the AD family members with special needs.
10. **Family Child Care (FCC) Services.** Child care provided on a reimbursable or bartering system and on a regularly scheduled basis for 10 hours or more a week by an individual certified by the Coast Guard and who resides in Coast Guard-controlled housing.

11. **Family Member.** An authorized dependent of an AD member who resides with the AD member and is enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).
12. **Family Advocacy Specialist (FAS).** A designated professional who is responsible for family violence prevention initiatives, intervention strategies, and case management.
13. **Family Resource Specialist (FRS).** A designated professional that is the primary point of contact for the Special Needs Program.
14. **Individualized Education Plan (IEP).** This term refers to a legal document that defines a child's special education program. An IEP includes the disability under which the child qualifies for Special Education Services (also known as their classification), the services the team has determined that the school will provide, their yearly goals and objectives and any accommodations that must be made to assist the child's learning.
15. **Medical professional.** The Medical Officer or civilian TRICARE provider charged with managing healthcare, including the authorization of referrals for a prescribed area.
16. **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).** This term refers to a plan of services for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and their families. Such a plan includes statements regarding the child's present developmental level, the family's strengths and needs, the major outcomes of the plan, specific interventions and delivery systems to accomplish outcomes, dates of initiation and duration of services, and a plan for transition into public schools.
17. **Major Medical Area.** This term refers to any area served by medical departments of the armed services or civilian medical treatment facilities with inpatient, outpatient, and pediatric care services which have medical professionals capable of treating and monitoring family members with acute, chronic, and severe medical, psychological, and physical special needs.
18. **Medical Administration Regional Coordinator (MARC).** HSWL SC staff member who is an expert in TRICARE policy and procedures and works with a FRS to determine availability of medical providers in geographic areas considered as potential duty location for AD members enrolled in the Special Needs Program.
19. **Non-Clinical Case Management.** Provision of information and referrals to families with special needs, and the individuals who assist them, in making informed decisions to navigate resources. The goal of non-clinical case management is to improve the family's quality of life. This does not involve coordination of, and follow-up on, medical treatments and appointments.
20. **Personally Identifiable Information (PII).** Any piece of information which can potentially be used to uniquely identify, contact, or locate a single person, or can be used with other sources to identify a single individual.
21. **Respite Care.** This term refers to a service that is intended to reduce stress placed on a caregiver of a person with special needs by providing temporary rest periods for the caregiver. Coast Guard respite care grant program is sponsored and administered by the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance, in accordance with CGMA Operating Manual.

22. **Senior Medical Executive (SME).** Senior Public Health Officer within the HSWL Regional Practice who is responsible for reviewing the Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792 and Special Education and Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1 to determine AD member's eligibility for enrollment into or disenrollment from the Special Needs Program. SME assigns special needs categories to the cases they reviews.
23. **Special Education.** Instruction and related services to which a preschool or school-age child (ages 3 through 21 years) is entitled when an education specialist representing a public school district determines that the child's educational performance is adversely affected by one or more of their disabling conditions.
24. **Special Need.** This term refers to a professionally diagnosed physical, psychological, medical or educational condition of a family member that meets the criteria set forth in this Instruction and impacts or limits the AD member's availability for worldwide assignment.
25. **Special Needs Category Indicator.** A number (1 to 5), or a letter T, indicating the severity of special needs of each family member enrolled in the Special Needs Program. The category of special needs is determined by a Senior Medical Executive at the time of the initial enrollment in the Special Needs Program and reevaluated during the enrollment update, or when new special needs condition develops.
26. **Special Needs Resource Team (SNRT).** A multidisciplinary team that addresses the placement of children with special needs in the Coast Guard operated CDCs or FCC programs taking into consideration a developmentally appropriate environment, adult to child ratios, group sizes and any necessary program adaptations. The team is comprised of the Family Resource Specialist, CDC Director, Coast Guard medical professional and parents of the child involved. Families are encouraged to have a knowledgeable professional accompany them to the team meeting, at their cost.
27. **Sponsor.** Person who is a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty and who is authorized to receive travel orders to transport dependents to or from an OCONUS area at government expense and is provided an allowance for living quarters in that area.
28. **TRICARE.** This term refers to the Department of Defense (DoD) worldwide health care program for AD members and retired uniformed service members and their families. It consists of plan options such as: TRICARE Prime & Prime Remote, a managed care option; TRICARE Select, a fee-for-service option; and, US Family Health Plan, a TRICARE Prime option available through networks of community-based, not-for-profit health care systems in 6 areas of the United States. Additionally, TRICARE for life is available for Medicare-eligible beneficiaries and TRICARE ECHO (Extended Care Health Option) for family members with statutorily qualifying by law conditions. The ECHO program offers an integrated set of services and supplies that supplement the basic TRICARE program options.