

Hello Latin America & Canada!

Check out *your* website at: <http://tricare15.army.mil>



- Region 15 Spring 2002 Planned for 23/24 April 2002 in Miami
- Health & Wellness Information on Critical Incident Stress (see page 2)
- Use of International SOS Services
- Lt Col Mark S. Weinstein Retired from the Air Force on 17 January 2002
- COL Mike L. Stapleton, USA assumes the role of Director, TLAC
- International SOS Visits Columbia from 27 – 30 January 2002 And Is Planning Their Next Visit To Panama And El Salvador In March 2002

POCs: Remember To Send A Copy Of Orders With Each New Enrollment Form!

TRICARE Region 15 Spring 2002 Conference Planning

The Region 15 Spring 2002 Remote Latin America Conference is set for Tuesday/Wednesday, 23 and 24 April 2002 in Miami. Monday the 22nd will be a travel day. As requested through your 2001 Conference Critiques, we will not have any breakout sessions, just one big happy conference!

We are required to use the Army's Lodging Success Program for hotel accommodations. We will be at the same hotel as last year, the Windham Airport Miami Hotel.

TRICARE Region 15 Spring 2001 Conference Update

Here's a list of closed items from the Conference Action Items:

#27 – Future Lead Agent site visits planned (closed)

Using International SOS

If you can believe it, we continue to receive many healthcare claims from active duty personnel who receive care and pay out of pocket in locations served by International SOS providers.

International SOS offers a 24/7 Call Center in Philadelphia that is reachable by toll free at 800.834.5514, or call collect at 215.701.2800. They have a Registered Nurse and a Physician onboard at all times to help with medical advice, locating local medical services, appointment services for medical care, payment guarantee, and coordination of out-of-country emergency care.

While there can be delays in paying up front and filing a claim for reimbursement, using the International SOS service removes the burden of 'pay and chase' from the active duty service member.

If you've experienced any difficulties in using International SOS services please let us know.

Critical Incident Stress

Much has happened in our world since 11 September 2001. These events affect everyone differently. The Health & Wellness information page contains some information on identifying the need for help and some coping skills.

Communicating feelings with friends and co-workers is an excellent way to keep yourself 'in-check', however, outpatient mental health care is sometimes needed. When seeking outpatient mental health care International SOS can help locate a provider, make the appointment, and manage the bill(s).

Generally, the first 8 outpatient visits do not require pre-authorization, but, 9th and subsequent outpatient visits and ALL inpatient mental health visits require pre-authorization. Contact International SOS or the TLAC Support Office if you have any questions.

WPS has new phone numbers for the beneficiary lines in Customer Service for TRICARE Overseas: 608.301.2310 replaces 224 2727, and, 608.301.2311 replaces 224 2728

If you have any requests for specific information topics, please forward them to the TSO via email at tricare15@amedd.army.mil.

Critical Incident Stress Information

You have experienced a traumatic event or a critical incident (any incident that causes you to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with your ability to function either now or later). Even though the event may be over, you may now be experiencing or may experience later, some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional aftershocks when they have passed through a horrible event.

Sometimes the emotional aftershocks (or stress reactions) appear immediately after the traumatic event. Sometimes they may appear a few hours or a few days later. And, in some cases, weeks or months may pass before the stress reactions appear.

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and the support of loved ones the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally, the traumatic event is so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event was just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves.

Here are some common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral
chills thirst fatigue nausea fainting twitches vomiting dizziness weakness chest pain headaches elevated BP rapid heart rate muscle tremors shock symptoms grinding of teeth visual difficulties profuse sweating difficulty breathing etc...	confusion nightmares uncertainty hypervigilance suspiciousness intrusive images blaming someone poor problem solving poor abstract thinking poor attention/decisions poor concentration / memory disorientation of time, place or person difficulty identifying objects or people heightened or lowered alertness increased or decreased awareness of surroundings etc...	fear guilt grief panic denial anxiety agitation irritability depression intense anger apprehension emotional shock emotional outbursts feeling overwhelmed loss of emotional control inappropriate emotional response etc...	withdrawal antisocial acts inability to rest intensified pacing erratic movements change in social activity change in speech patterns loss or increase of appetite hyperalert to environment increased alcohol consumption change in usual communications etc...
Any of these symptoms may indicate the need for an evaluation. When in doubt, contact your local mental health professional or a physician.			

Things To Try:

- WITHIN THE FIRST 24-48 HOUR period: appropriate physical exercise, alternated with relaxation will alleviate some of the physical reactions. Structure your time - keep busy.
- You're normal and having normal reactions - don't label yourself crazy.
- Talk to people - talk is the most healing medicine.
- Be aware of numbing the pain with overuse of drugs or alcohol, you don't need to complicate this with a substance abuse problem.
- Reach out - people do care.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible. Spend time with others.
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal, write your way through those sleepless hours.
- Do things that feel good to you.
- Realize those around you are under stress.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control over your life, i.e., if someone asks you what you want to eat - answer them even if you're not sure. Get plenty of rest.
- Re-occurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal - don't try to fight them - they'll decrease over time and become less painful.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals (even if you don't feel like it.)

For Family Members & Friends

- Listen carefully. Spend time with the traumatized person.
- Offer your assistance and a listening ear if they have not asked for help. Reassure them that they are safe.
- Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, minding children.
- Give them some private time.
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.
- Don't tell them that they are "lucky it wasn't worse" - traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.