SECNAV designates November 2010 as Warrior Care Month

By Zona Lewis,
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In All Navy Message ALNAV 068/10, released Nov. 2 to all Navy and Marine Corps personnel, secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) designated November 2010 as Warrior Care Month.

"Recognizing and appreciating the sacrifices of wounded, ill and injured service members and their families remains a priority of the Department of the Navy," said SECNAV Ray Mabus. "Through the Navy Safe Harbor Program, the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment and Navy Medicine, we take care of our own by serving wounded warrior Sailors and Marines who are in active duty, reserve and veteran status."

These programs offer a variety of non-medical support to seriously wounded, ill and injured service members through a comprehensive approach designed to optimize their recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Non-medical support covers a wide range of areas including pay and personnel issues, invitational travel and non-medical attendant orders, temporary lodging, housing and transportation adaptation, child and youth care, legal and guardianship issues, education and training benefits, commissary and exchange access, respite care and transition assistance.

Warrior Care Month is a way to highlight these various programs and services across the Department of the Navy so that Navy and Marine Corps service members and families are aware of the support available to them should they ever become seriously ill or injured.

A critical element of support provided by Navy Safe Harbor and the Wounded Warrior Regiment is assisting Wounded Warriors transitioning out of active service prepare for and find meaningful post-service careers.

"Over 140,000 veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom are unemployed or underemployed; the challenge is particularly acute if the returning Sailor or Marine is wounded, ill or injured," said Mabus. "In addition to weeks, months, or years of recovery, they face the potential travesty of unemployment."

Mabus also acknowledged that while it is the service member that becomes ill or injured, it is family that serves as a critical support system for healing.

"For service, sacrifices, and achievements of wounded, ill, and injured Sailors, Marines, their families and caregivers; I encourage all Department of the Navy personnel to join me in expressing our heartfelt gratitude and support," Mabus said.

For more information on Warrior Care Month activities or about the Department of the Navy Wounded Warrior Programs, contact Safe Harbor toll free at (877) 746-8563, on the Web at www.safeharbor.navy.mil or on Facebook and Twitter.

The Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment may be contacted via the Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center toll free at (877) 487-6299 or on the Web at www.woundedwarriorregiment.org.

In addition, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Wounded, Ill and Injured Warrior Support may be contacted at (202) 762-3000/3043.

SECNAV Ray Mabus addresses Sailors from CFAY and its tenant commands during an all-hands call aboard the visiting aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) Aug. 28, 2009. In ALNAV 068/10 released Nov. 2, SECNAV designated November 2010 as Warrior Care Month.
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Dominique Pineiro

TRICARE, Military Health System celebrates women's health

By Sharon Foster, TRICARE Management Activity

Women make up almost one-half of the Military Health System's (MHS) 9.6 million beneficiaries.

TRICARE and the MHS observed Women's Health Month in October, recognizing that every female beneficiary should understand the resources available to them and the easy access to quality care.

"We want women to take full advantage of the preventive screenings and tests covered by TRICARE to protect their own health," said Kathie McCracken, Health Affairs program director for Patient Advocacy, Medical Ethics and Women's Health Issues. "These include services like mammograms, Pap smears, cholesterol screening, colorectal cancer screenings, testing for diabetes and blood pressure screenings. All of these are meant to keep women healthy or detect health problems in a timely manner."

While women's health, in general, has improved significantly in the last century, much more can be done. For example, the leading cause of death in women is still heart disease, cancer and stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And for many female active duty service members, post-traumatic stress disorder and other behavioral issues still persist as a result of increased deployment.

To address these health conditions, TRICARE has numerous health programs that focus on disease prevention and health promotion. It is important that women talk to their primary care managers about their individual history, ask questions and make the decision that is right for them regarding screening and preventive care.

TRICARE female beneficiaries have a wide variety of preventive and routine services available to keep them healthy and help identify potential problems down the road. These beneficiaries need to keep in mind, there are limitations on the frequency of preventive care and coverage varies depending on whether a beneficiary is using TRICARE Prime or Standard. Cost-shares and deductibles may also apply.

Behavioral health. TRICARE behavioral health care services are available for beneficiaries and family members during times of stress, depression, grief and anxiety. TRICARE covers mental and behavioral health care that is medically or psychologically necessary. See www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth for more information.

Breast cancer. TRICARE beneficiaries are entitled to an annual mammogram beginning at age 40 and at a doctor's discretion for women younger than 40 who are at high risk of developing breast cancer. Beneficiaries identified as being at high risk for breast cancer (due to family history, etc.) are covered for annual mammograms beginning at age 35. TRICARE also covers magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) screenings for beneficiaries within the American Cancer Society's guidelines for a high risk of breast cancer. See www.tricare.mil/breastexams for more information.

Colon cancer. TRICARE covers colonoscopy screenings once every 10 years beginning at age 50 for beneficiaries at average risk for colon cancer. Every two years beginning at age 25 (or five years younger than the earliest age of diagnosis of colon cancer in a family member, whichever is earlier) and then annually after age 40 for individuals with hereditary colon or rectal cancer.

High blood pressure, stroke. TRICARE covers cholesterol tests once every five years beginning at age 18.

Oral health. TRICARE approved an enhanced Maternity Dental Benefit through United Concordia, TRICARE's dental contractor. The enhanced benefit authorizes an additional cleaning at no cost for all pregnant TRICARE dental program enrollees. See www.tricaredentalprogram.com/tdptws/home.jsp for more information.

Reproductive organ cancers. TRICARE covers pelvic examinations in conjunction with Pap smear testing when necessary or annually beginning at age 18 (or younger, if sexually active), until three consecutive normal Pap smears and then once every three years unless otherwise recommended by the physician.

Well-child care. TRICARE coverage includes routine newborn care for eligible newborns up to age 6; comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention exams; vision and hearing screenings; height, weight and head circumference; routine immunizations and developmental and behavioral appraisal in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.