

## Defense Health Agency statement provided to Federal News Network regarding space-available care in Japan, dated Nov. 28, 2023:

“Throughout our health care system, military hospitals and clinics, otherwise known as military medical treatment facilities (MTFs), have provided access to care for non-enrolled patients, including Department of Defense Education Activity teachers, contractors, and DoD civilians on a space-available basis.

We are continually reviewing access to care standards for active duty Service members and TRICARE Prime beneficiaries to increase space-available appointments for non-enrolled patients because we understand the importance of their health care needs.

Sometimes, military hospitals and clinics must pause or limit space-available appointments for non-enrolled patients in order to meet required access to care standards for active duty Service members and TRICARE Prime beneficiaries. We also realize that while we are making every effort to maximize our appointments - and the number of available appointments has increased from last fall - there will be locations where individuals will be challenged to find appointments that work for them.

On March 3, 2023, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) issued the memorandum, ‘Standard Guidance for Space-Available Care in Military Medical Treatment Facilities’ that establishes standard guidance regarding space-available care in military hospitals and clinics in United States Indo-Pacific Command.

The memorandum states that the ‘civilian component of our total force (civilian employees and contractor personnel) is critical to our mission success’ and that military hospitals and clinics will optimize appointment capacity to ‘enable safe care and treatment for the greatest number of patients within the capability of the MTFs. MTFs are expected to meet access to care standards for active duty, and active duty family members but make excess appointment capacity available for space-available care.’

The new memorandum gives our people the ability to manage their space-available appointments and ensures that space-available patients may schedule primary care.

Additionally, this memorandum allows access to space-available specialty care if such care is recommended by a military hospital or clinic provider and is within the scope of services offered in the facility. The memorandum further reiterates that each military hospital and clinic will provide space-available care within their respective current scope of services based on a reimbursable basis.”