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COMDTINST 1754.7B  
20 May 2013

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 1754.7B

Subj: SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

- Ref:
- (a) Rehabilitation Act, P. L. 93-112, Section 504
  - (b) Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
  - (c) Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)
  - (d) The Coast Guard Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.3 (series)
  - (e) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996
  - (f) United States Coast Guard, Special Needs Program 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
  - (i) Military Assignments and Authorized Absences, COMDTINST M1000.8 (series)
  - (j) Authorizing Special Needs Family Members Travel Overseas at Government Expense, DoD Instruction 1315.19
  - (k) Standard Operating Procedures for Work-Life Programs (HSWL W-L SOP)
  - (l) Coast Guard Child Development Services Manual, COMDTINST M1754.15 (series)
  - (m) Coast Guard Family Advocacy Program, COMDTINST 1750.7 (series)
  - (n) 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.
2. **ACTION.** All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements shall comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.

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3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Coast Guard Special Needs Program, COMDTINST 1754.7A, dated 30 January 1996, and Management of Family Advocacy and Special Needs Cases, COMDTINST 1754.12, dated 3 April 1997, are cancelled.
4. APPLICATION. This Instruction applies to all active duty (AD) Coast Guard members, U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) officers while serving with the Coast Guard, and Coast Guard Reserve members on active duty for 181 days or more. This policy is affiliated with permanent change of station (PCS) transfers to accommodate special needs of family members. Mobilized and deployed Coast Guard reservists are not eligible for enrollment in the Special Needs Program. 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 will not be enrolled in the program.
5. BACKGROUND. 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).
6. DEFINITIONS. Terms used in this Instruction are defined in Enclosure (1).
7. DISCUSSION.
  - a. 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 and have helped pave the way for all levels of the government, and other public and private institutions to recognize the unique challenges that individuals with disabilities face in their daily living.
  - b. The Coast Guard Special Needs Program was implemented in 1984 to assist Coast Guard families with special needs and to address the complexities affecting their needs during the assignment process. The objective of the program was to identify and support the special needs of a family while allowing the AD member to maintain the maximum assignment flexibility possible. Since 1984, this program has ensured that Coast Guard men and women with special needs family members have successfully continued their careers while addressing the specific needs of their families.
  - c. The Coast Guard 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). During the assignment process, availability of necessary resources for families with special needs is 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.

- d. Enrollment in the Coast Guard Special Needs Program is mandatory for all active duty service members, PHS officers serving with the Coast Guard, and reserve members on active duty for 181 days or more 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 Continental U.S. (OCONUS) locations).
- e. Timely enrollment in the Special Needs Program reduces family stress, undue hardship, and costly and disruptive early returns of dependents from OCONUS areas.

## 8. 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 shall ensure the information available to them is treated according to all relevant Coast Guard and federal regulations, including References (d), (e), and (f). Information concerning enrollment in the Special Needs Program or data used in this program shall not be made part of the service record of the member. All information related to the Special Needs Program shall be kept strictly confidential with access only by authorized personnel who have the need-to-know. Any sensitive enrollment information maintained in an electronic database shall be protected and physically secured.
- b. The Special Needs Program is designed to assist Coast Guard members by addressing the family member's special needs during the assignment process and providing non-clinical case management to families enrolled in the program at their duty locations. A Family Resource Specialist (FRS) in a HSWL RP is the primary point of contact for AD members in the field for all questions regarding the Special Needs Program. The role of the FRS is not to enforce enrollment but to increase program awareness, dispel myths, 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 (i.e., 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. AD 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 would limit the worldwide assignment ability of AD members (e.g., 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 (e.g., remission of cancer within the last five years, etc.);
  - (c) Potentially life-threatening medical conditions (e.g., 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/or 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) mental health condition (e.g., bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, substance dependence, and/or personality disorders, etc.);
  - (b) Inpatient, or intensive outpatient mental health services within the last five years (e.g., 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 health care provider; or
  - (d) Diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) 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 (e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker, etc.);
  - 4) Family member requires a mental health specialty consultant, other than a family practice physician, or general medical officer, 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 (e.g., an apnea home monitor, home nebulizer, wheelchair, splints, orthotics, hearing aids, home oxygen therapy, home ventilator, etc.);
  - (b) Family member requires environmental and/or architectural considerations (e.g., limited number of steps, wheelchair accessibility and/or housing modifications, air conditioning, etc.); or
  - (c) Family member requires assistive technology devices (i.e., 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 3 years or in conjunction with the submission of AD member's e-resume, if member is tour complete. Exceptions to this timeline (i.e., instances requiring an update) are as follows:
- (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 must be initiated at least 9 months prior to that date.
- f. Disenrollment from the Special Needs Program shall occur when any of the following situations occur:

- (1) If special medical, psychological, special accommodations, or educational services are no longer required for a family member, as validated by a health care provider 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) If the dependent child is no longer the member's dependent, or does not reside with the service member which would affect his/her 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 Extended Care Health Option (ECHO).
  - (4) In the event of divorce, loss of custody, or death of the family member with special needs, BAH/dependency status in Direct Access will be verified by the servicing HSWL FRS to confirm dependency information. In cases involving child custody issues, a memo from a member shall be forwarded to the HSWL FRS requesting disenrollment from the Special Needs Program. Information provided in the memo must be verified by the HSWL FRS. The memo should include the following information:
    - (a) First and last name of the family member with special needs and his/her relationship to the sponsor;
    - (b) Type of document cited (divorce decree or custody order signed by a judge, or other official documentation that shows change in dependency status);
    - (c) Effective date of the change in dependency status; and
    - (d) Information on who has residential custody of the child with special needs.
  - (5) Members who have residential custody of their children for 30 percent of the time or less, annually, are not required to enroll in the Special Needs Program, or they may be disenrolled by producing appropriate documentation (as described above in f.(4)(a),(b), (c) and (d));
  - (6) 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; or
  - (7) Retirement, discharge, or transfer to reserve status (for less than 181days) of an AD member will prompt automatic disenrollment from the Special Needs Program.
- g. For all new enrollments and enrollment updates, Family Member Medical Summary, DD Form 2792 (for medical, psychological, and physical conditions) and Special Education/Early Intervention Summary, DD Form 2792-1 (for educational special needs) shall be completed by the family member's health care provider or school personnel, respectively, and submitted by the AD member to the servicing HSWL FRS.

- (1) No additional medical documentation will be required.
  - (2) The FRS will forward the enrollment forms to the cognizant Coast Guard Senior Medical Executive (SME) for verification of eligibility for enrollment.
  - (3) As warranted, the FRS will verify educational eligibility for enrollment by reviewing the child's IEP or IFSP.
- h. Certain medical conditions may warrant temporary enrollment in the Special Needs Program lasting 6-12 months. 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 location for AD members who are 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 HSWL FRS and/or the DoD School Liaison Officer as early in the process as possible. Additionally, the following link (updated annually) may be used for specific educational resources for families with special needs:  
[http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=EFMP\\_DIRECTORY:HOME](http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=EFMP_DIRECTORY:HOME)
- 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 HSWL FRS, and approved by Commandant (CG-1112) 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 HSWL FRS by completing the Family Support Declination, Form CG 1754S. AD 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. AD 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. Enrollment in the Special Needs Program does not preclude AD members from:

- (1) Sea duty;
- (2) Normal sea/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.

- n. 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, an AD 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).
- o. Service members' special needs case files shall be handled only by authorized personnel within the HSWL organizational components (RPs, Service Center (SC), and Commandant (CG-11)). Records may be disclosed to other authorized users in accordance with References (d), (e), and (f). Procedures for release of the special needs information pertaining to persons enrolled in the program shall be developed by the HSWL SC and disseminated to the field as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- p. A detailed SOP has been developed and provided to the SMEs and FRSs for additional guidance on the enrollment and disenrollment process.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Commandant (CG-11) shall promulgate policy and guidance regarding the Special Needs Program.
- b. Commandant (CG-111) and (CG-1112) shall:
  - (1) Provide oversight of policy and procedure implementation as described herein.
  - (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) shall:

- (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) Provide direct technical guidance to HSWL SC and HSWL RP staffs relevant to special needs cases or issues, as per Reference (k);
  - (9) Participate in field quality assurance (QA) site visits, as outlined in Reference (k);
  - (10) Track and research trends in national, federal, and DoD special needs-related programs;
  - (11) Prepare reports and maintain statistics 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 (e.g., 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) shall:
- (1) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-111), develop policy for HSWL medical personnel's oversight of the enrollment in /disenrollment out of the Special Needs Program;
  - (2) Provide training and technical guidance to HSWL SC Occupational Medicine Division and regional medical staffs relevant to special needs enrollment/disenrollment process; and
  - (3) Serve as final authority on all medical decisions pertaining to the Special Needs Program.

- e. Commandant (CG-122) shall 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) shall:
  - (1) Provide operational oversight of the Special Needs Program in accordance with policy described herein and Reference (k);
  - (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) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-1112), develop standard operating procedures (SOP) 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/disenrollment/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 shall ensure that standardized procedures are in place and that regional staffs provide consistent delivery of services across all geographic locations;
  - (5) In collaboration with Commandant (CG-1112), conduct QA Inspections of the Special Needs Program with emphasis on policy compliance and customer satisfaction;
  - (6) Collect and analyze Special Needs Program data for review by Commandant (CG-111);
  - (7) Identify best practices in the field and make recommendations for standardization of these practices through regular policy updates;
  - (8) Address gaps between the Special Needs Program practices and existing policy directives; and
  - (9) Participate in the selection of the FRSSs.
- g. HSWL SC Operational Medicine Division (Op Med) shall:
  - (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/disenrollment processes.
- h. HSWL RM shall:
  - (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 shall include an 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 QA visit conducted by the HSWL SC and Commandant (CG-1112);
  - (7) Use the applicable QA reports provided by HSWL SC to assist in rating the performance of the FRSs; and
  - (8) Provide local resources for the implementation of the Special Needs Program (travel, materials, etc.).
- i. HSWL RP SME or designated medical practitioners shall:
- (1) Determine AD 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) Determine AD member's eligibility for disenrollment from the Special Needs Program; and
  - (3) Collaborate with FRS on issues involving Special Needs Program enrollment, disenrollment, and availability of medical resources.
- j. HSWL RP FRS shall:
- (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 AD member's eligibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program based on the presence of educational special needs;
    - (c) Provide information to Coast Guard personnel within geographic areas of responsibility concerning relevant policy and procedures of the Special Needs Program;

- (d) Use an electronic case management system designated by Commandant (CG-111) to effectively manage special needs cases;
- (e) 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;
- (f) Maintain an accurate count of special needs cases in his/her area of responsibility;
- (g) Maintain comprehensive, accurate, easily accessible, and up-to-date information on military and civilian special needs resources. Share these resources with families requesting assistance;
- (h) Assist Coast Guard families with special needs in accessing resources available to them in the local civilian and military communities;
- (i) Refer AD and family members to appropriate community and military services;
- (j) 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 shall 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;
- (k) Summarize in the case notes contents of emails received in the process of case management. Copies of email messages received by FRS shall not be placed in the official special needs record;
- (l) Ensure that each case entry is typed, signed, and dated by the individual making the entry (when maintaining paper case files). All edits made in the record shall be dated and initialed by the person executing them. Under no circumstances shall entries be removed from the official record;
- (m) Document in the special needs record (paper or electronic) all contacts and activities pertaining to the family member with special needs. Case record shall reflect events occurring after official enrollment of an AD member in the Special Needs Program;
- (n) Provide timely command notification (within 30 calendar days from the reporting date) containing names of AD members who are enrolled in the Special Needs Program and who are attached to that command;
- (o) Provide timely coordination of proposed assignment locations with assignment officers and appropriate regional medical staff (normally within two business days from receiving a request for information);

- (p) Provide timely coordination of transition services with a receiving FRS and other appropriate Coast Guard personnel, including but not limited to the Housing Officer, Child Development Center (CDC) Director, Transition and Relocation Manager, etc.;
  - (q) Provide timely transfer of case records for AD members leaving the AOR (within 15 calendar days from the time FRS learns that the AD member transferred to a new unit);
  - (r) Provide timely case closures (within 15 calendar days from the time FRS learns about AD member's ineligibility for enrollment in the Special Needs Program);
  - (s) 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 Manual;
  - (t) Chair the 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 (l);
  - (u) 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;
  - (v) Report immediately (within 24 hours) all incidents of child abuse, neglect and/or family violence to appropriate state agencies and cognizant FAS, as per References (l) and (m);
  - (w) Collaborate with a FAS on all family advocacy cases involving members enrolled in the Special Needs Program;
  - (x) Provide standardized training to commands within respective AOR on Special Needs Program; and
  - (y) Comply with all mandated training requirements, including annual Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) certification.
- (2) The FRS shall not:
- (a) Engage in clinical case management (e.g., coordination and/or 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 AD members enrolled in the Special Needs Program;

- (d) Attend IEP/IFSP meetings on behalf of children of AD members enrolled in the Special Needs Program; or
  - (e) Enforce enrollment of AD members in the Special Needs Program.
- k. Family Advocacy Specialists (FAS) shall collaborate with the FRS on all family advocacy cases involving members enrolled in the Special Needs Program.
- l. Unit commanding officers and officers-in-charge shall:
- (1) Ensure that all AD members under their command receive training and are aware of the Special Needs Program policy;
  - (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. It is recommended that confirmation of enrollment in the Special Needs Program by AD member be added to the command's check-in list;
  - (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 his/her adult dependent and may be costly to the Coast Guard and/or 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.
- m. Assignment Officers (AO) shall:
- (1) Verify with the cognizant FRS that a proposed assignment location meets the special needs of the family in every case involving an AD member enrolled in the Special Needs Program; and
  - (2) Consult with the Special Needs Program Manager, if amplifying policy guidance is needed.
- n. Housing Officers shall:
- (1) Implement policy contained in Reference (n) 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 (n); and
  - (4) Ensure that reasonable adaptations are performed in Coast Guard operated housing units occupied by families with qualifying special needs.
- o. Child Development Center (CDC) Directors shall:
- (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 prior to admission of children with special needs to the CDC program, as per Reference (l); 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.
- p. Family Child Care (FCC) providers shall:
- (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 (l), 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.
- q. Ombudsmen shall:
- (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.
- r. Active Duty Members shall:
- (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 his/her reporting time to a new unit to facilitate timely transfer of special needs records; and

- (4) Inform the cognizant FRS about his/her separation date from AD status to facilitate timely case closure.
10. 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>
11. DISCLAIMER. This document is intended to provide operational requirements for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
12. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Notice. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites. CGWeb: <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGDirectives/Welcome.htm> and CGPortal: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>
13. 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.
14. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The development of this directive and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office and are categorically excluded under current USCG categorical exclusion (CE) [#1] from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series).

15. FORMS/REPORTS. The forms referenced in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or on the Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/forms/>; CGPortal at <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/forms/SitePages/Home.aspx>

MAURA K. DOLLYMORE /s/  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service  
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Encl: (1) Definitions

## 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. Members of U.S. Public Health Service assigned to the Coast Guard are included in this definition.
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 groups of children.
3. **Child Development Services (CDS).** A Coast Guard operated program that offers developmental services provided in child development centers, family child care homes, and a variety of alternative sites. The program provided is designed to protect the health and safety of children and to promote their physical, social, emotional, creative, and cognitive development
4. **DD Form 2792 (Family Member Medical Summary).** 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. **DD Form 2792-1 (Special Education/Early Intervention Summary).** 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 shall 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 his/her 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 in the HSWL Regional Practice who is responsible for family violence prevention initiatives, intervention strategies, and case management.
13. **Family Resource Specialist (FRS).** A designated professional in the HSWL Regional Practice 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 his/her classification), the services the team has determined that the school will provide, his/her yearly goals and objectives and any accommodations that must be made to assist the child's learning.
15. **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.
16. **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/or appointments.
17. **Personally Identifying 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.
18. **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, Inc. in accordance with the CGMA Manual.
19. **Senior Medical Executive (SME).** Senior medical professional within the HSWL Regional Practice who is responsible for reviewing DD Forms 2792 and 2792-1 to determine AD member's eligibility for enrollment into or disenrollment from the Special Needs Program.
20. **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 his/her disabling conditions.

21. **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.
22. **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/child ratios, group sizes and any necessary program adaptations. The team is comprised of the Family Resource Specialist, CDC Director, Coast Guard Health Care Provider and parents of the child involved. Families are encouraged to have a knowledgeable professional accompany them to the team meeting, at their cost.
23. **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.
24. **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 TRICARE Prime, a managed care option; TRICARE Extra, a preferred provider option; and TRICARE Standard, a fee-for-service option. Additionally, TRICARE for life is available for Medicare-eligible beneficiaries and TRICARE ECHO (Extended Health Care Option) for family members with qualifying by law conditions. The ECHO program offers integrated set of services and supplies that supplement the basic TRICARE program options.
25. **Updates.** Process of obtaining current special needs documentation in order to maintain the most up-to-date information in the AD member's special needs case file.