

## CRDAMC initiates *Dear Darnall* column to answer common patient questions

CRDAMC Public Affairs

Over the past several months Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center leadership, providers and administrative staff have committed themselves to improving patients' experiences at every clinic and every visit throughout our medical center.



Colonel Patrick Sargent, CRDAMC commander, writes a personal response to a question posed by a patient through the hospital's new "Dear Darnall" feature. Customer service rates at Darnall have climbed to more than 90 percent and the column is one of many new and innovative projects underway at Darnall to continue to improve the patient experience at the hospital. (U.S. Army photo by Patricia Deal, CRDAMC Public Affairs)

Today I am very pleased to report the feedback we have received from our beneficiaries through the Army Provider Level Satisfaction Survey (APLSS), and the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) survey, indicates that our hard work and commitment to excellence is paying off.

APLSS is a MEDCOM survey that is randomly sent to patients in the mail a few weeks after an appointment. It asks them to rate the care received at their facility. In January we received 2,532 completed and returned APLSS surveys with an overall satisfaction rating of 89.7 percent. Total submissions for June rose to 3,311 and reflected a 90.9 percent overall service satisfaction rating too.

Our ICE comments reflect an even higher level of beneficiary satisfaction. In January we received a total of 446 ICE comments with an average overall satisfaction rating of 72 percent. June submissions sky rocketed to 3,723 for the month, and they reflected a 94 percent overall patient satisfaction rating with CRDAMC healthcare.

I am highly pleased with these improvements, and I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of our beneficiaries who have taken the time to provide feedback regarding their care. This is your system of healthcare, and your input continues to help CRDAMC meet and exceed your expectations.

I also want to take this opportunity to publicly thank my leaders, providers and staff for their commitment to rendering the compassionate, world-class healthcare our patients expect and deserve, but our job isn't finished. In fact, it has just begun. We will continue to work to find new and innovative ways to provide quality healthcare and superior patient services throughout our medical center.

It is in that spirit that I am introducing our new regular Sentinel news column, *Dear Darnall* where I will personally address questions or concerns that we regularly hear from beneficiaries at CRDAMC.

I hope all our beneficiaries find these topics helpful, and I encourage you to submit your own questions as well at [www.crdamc.amedd.army.mil](http://www.crdamc.amedd.army.mil).



### *Questions and Answers*

***If my parents are my dependants can they make routine appointments at Darnall?***

By law, dependent parents have some healthcare benefits but are specifically excluded from enrolling in Tricare. They are eligible for care on a space-availability basis at military treatment facilities, but typically, CRDAMC doesn't have space availability for acute or routine Primary Care appointments. At this time we just can't accommodate this admittedly valid need. For more information I encourage you to visit [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil) or call one of our health benefit advisors at 254-286-7095/7026.

***When I call to make an appointment at 7 a.m. all the appointments are already booked. Why can't I get an appointment?***

Patients who are ill with an acute condition like a cough, fever or sore throat are usually scheduled for an appointment within 24 hours. A patient is transferred to their assigned clinic for triage if all appointments are already booked, and the clinics will work to get them in as quickly as possible. Routine or well appointments may be booked out a week or more, but they are still available within prescribed Access to Care standards.

The good news is the average wait time when a beneficiary calls to make an appointment is less than 90 seconds. The shortest wait times are usually after 9 a.m. Monday typically has the highest volume of calls and Friday has the lowest. Patients who are not able to keep their appointments should call and cancel as soon as possible to allow another beneficiary the opportunity to be seen more quickly especially if providers schedules are already full. For more information call the Patient Appointment Services at 254-288-8888. Or schedule, change or cancel your own appointment through Tricare Online. Once registered you can also order medication refills through the pharmacy, download your medical records and sign up for text or email appointment reminders. For more information on this service go to [www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com).