

STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW FOR TRICARE REGIONS 6, 7 & 8

The best logistics business practices of the most successful government and commercial organizations increasingly include reorganization, standardization, requirements consolidation, coordinated planning and cooperative actions. Together, these practices have proved to result in significant cost savings and efficiencies. TRICARE Region Southwest and TRICARE Region Central are striving to achieve these results through the Regions 6, 7, and 8 Standardization Program.

Today, Region 6, 7, and 8's Tri-Service Product Review Board (TPRB) serves as that forum for seeking and evaluating opportunities for committed volume purchase agreements through the DOD Prime Vendor Program, and coordinating logistics efforts in support of military health care within the TRICARE Southwest and Central Regions. The final approval rests with the TRICARE DOD Lead Agent VI.

To determine which products should be standardized, candidates (medical items) are carefully analyzed. Initially, the Tri-Service Regional Business Office (TRBO) looks at the product line, use, and annual dollar expenditures. Candidates that fall into a major product line and have the greatest potential for volume purchasing are high on the priority list. Information from Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs) are welcomed and can be sent via email to the TRBO, located at TRICARE Southwest. The address is provided at the end of this overview.

For each product line that is under review, the Tri-Service Product Review Board (TPRB) assigns a Clinical Product Team (CPT). One Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) is designated as the lead and they provide the clinical team leader. The CPT, in conjunction with the nurse methods analyst, will coordinate the process with the other selected MTFs.

The CPTs meet as frequently as necessary to review a product line, develop clinical criteria, evaluate products (clinically), analyze use, and select the best product for recommendations. The TRBO assists clinical representatives with the administrative workloads by: contacting vendors, determining whether the vendors have a National Distribution and Pricing Agreement (DAPA) in the Universal Data Repository (UDR), facilitating CPT meetings, conducting data analysis, and other administrative and support functions necessary to sustain this program. The CPT leader will report on their initial recommendations to the board. The board will then forward those recommendations to the contracting office for final pricing. The pricing information is then forwarded back to the CPT for final product selection. The board then makes its final product recommendation and forwards their recommendation to the 10 partner MTFs for review/input. Finally, the board considers all input and makes a recommendation to the Lead Agent for approval.

Specific responsibilities of the TRBO are:

- Reviewing stockage and use data to identify opportunities for standardization and volume purchase agreements.
- Establishing and coordinating Clinical Product Teams (CPTs) for the purpose of conducting product evaluations and trials.

- Developing and coordinating common logistical concepts aimed at improving services, efficiencies, and reducing cost.
- Providing a single military forum for receiving and evaluating vendor proposals for product introduction and standardization within Region 6, 7, and 8.
- Providing a single military forum for coordination and resolution of issues regarding the DOD MedSurg Prime Vendor Program within Region 6, 7, and 8.
- Developing courses of action and make recommendations based upon sound clinical and business considerations. Recommendations are forwarded to the Lead Agent for approval.
- Ensuring fair consideration is given to the National Institute for the Blind (NIB) and National Institute for the Severely Handicapped (NISN) manufacturers.

Once approved, the selected vendor provides an agreement to the Region 6, 7, and 8 Regional Logistics Chief. This agreement serves as an interim document for managing the agreed upon price saving and any additional service which the vendor is willing to provide until a DAPA is in place (normally 30-60 days after the agreement is signed). The intent is to use the Regional DAPAs as the means to manage pricing agreements. These agreements are binding for all Region 6, 7, and 8 MTFs. Vendors who do not have DAPAs or wish to establish a regional DAPA are asked to contact DSCP or to visit <http://www.dmmonline.com>.

After activating an agreement, the TRBO monitors the MTFs and vendors compliance with the agreement. Pricing is disseminated in the form of a "Price Book" to MTF Logistics personnel. The Price Book is procurement sensitive, "For Official Use Only," and not to be shown to vendors, in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations.

There are several ways Region 6, 7, and 8 MTFs can participate in the standardization decisions that are being made for the region:

- The first is to follow the monthly minutes to find out what is going on and what products are being looked at; minutes can be downloaded by visiting the Mms.tricare.af.mil web site.
- Contact the CPT leader and request participation. You can find a list of the POCs on the TRBO Web Site. Let the CPT leader know that you want to participate in the trials.

Contact the TRBO at the numbers listed below to request that you be considered in the product review.

TRBO Team Lead
(210) 292-4848, DSN 554

Regional Logistics Chief
(210) 292-6444, DSN 554

Regional Product Standardization Chief
(210) 292-5049, DSN 554