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From: Commanding Officer, Naval Hospital Bremerton
To: All Ships and Stations, Puget Sound

Subj: HEALTH CARE CONSUMER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF
5 JUNE 2003

Encl: (1) Attendance Roster

The Health Care Consumer Council (HCCC), chaired by Mr. Terry Roberts, Director for Healthcare Support, met at 1000, 5 June 2003, at Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) in Room 1626A/B with CDR James A. Thralls, Executive Officer, Naval Hospital Bremerton presiding. Enclosure (1) lists attendees.

Mr. Roberts welcomed those attending and stated the next HCCC meeting would be held on 4 September 2003, at 1000 in Ross Auditorium.

Mr. Roberts asked everyone to review the minutes of the previous meeting; there were no additions, deletions or corrections.

Mr. Roberts introduced CDR James Thralls, Executive Officer, NHB.

CDR Thralls stated Fleet Hospital Eight (FH8), deployed to Rota, Spain, still has an active mission and they are still receiving patients; their return date is not known at this time. He stated 180 NHB staff personnel are still deployed together with other personnel from other organizations. He informed the Council the change of command will take place on 12 June; CAPT Hunter will be transferring to PACFLT as the Force Surgeon and CAPT W. M. Roberts will assume command of NHB. He stated our Command Master Chief, CMDCM Lopez will be retiring that same week. Our incoming CMC will be CMDCM(SW/AW) Robert Finley.

Mr. Roberts stated during the March HCCC the Council had been informed that FH8 was deploying and some NHB capabilities would decrease. Since March NHB has returned to full capabilities, with the only exception being oral surgery; Neurology is back on line, as is Urology and Dermatology. Enrollment to NHB had been temporarily suspended but has been reopened for active duty family members only. He stated the question is often asked, "Does NHB do waiting lists for enrollment?" He stated NHB does

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not maintain waiting lists for any category of enrollment. If there are active duty families that were placed out in the civilian network during the time period since March who wish to obtain their care from HNB, they are welcome to come into the TRICARE Service Center and request to do so.

Mr. Roberts introduced Mr. Dahl to the HCCC as our Retired Affairs Officer located at PSNS. Mr. Dahl stated the office is now open five-days-a-week. Mr. Dahl spoke to the Council about Concurrent Pay (concurrent pay is retirement pay plus VA benefits of 60 percent and above on 20 to 30 year enlistments) and stated he brought the forms with instructions on how to complete them if anyone is interested. He further stated that any Desert Storm veterans, who may have applied for VA benefits and had been denied, now have the opportunity to reapply.

Mr. Roberts introduced Ms. Alice Acker, Field Operations Manager for Health Net Federal Services, our Managed Care Support Contractor. He stated Ms. Acker would address some changes in the Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) affecting reservists called to active duty.

Ms. Acker stated the TRICARE Service Center (TSC) is located on the third deck of the new wing of the hospital's Family Care Center. The Beneficiary Services Representatives (BSRs) know the command and the civilian network very well and if anyone is aware of someone transferring into the NHB area they may apply or transfer enrollment via mail or the 1-800 number located in California, but by using the BSRs a smooth transition can almost always be guaranteed and encouraged everyone to use their expertise. Ms. Acker passed out a fact sheet about TAMP and also mentioned additional information may be obtained from the TRICARE web site at www.TRICARE.osd.mil. She stated that TAMP is a program much like COBRA in the civilian community, whereas when personnel are discharged from active duty their access to health care is protected under an umbrella coverage. She stated these personnel would include Reservists who have been called up for active duty in support of Iraqi Freedom and served more than 30 days; people involuntarily retained on active duty in support of Iraqi Freedom at the time of their separation; and people who were separated and voluntarily returned to active duty in support of Iraqi Freedom. She stated one of the enhancements of TAMP is, if you have served less than six years, the service member and their family can have benefits for 60 days from the

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date of discharge/release of the sponsor; and for anyone serving over six years and being discharged/released it's 120 days. She stated the DD214 clearly indicates this information. She stated the twist to this is, if someone is eligible for the 60 or 120 days and wants to stay in Prime, they have to fill out a new enrollment form so the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) can keep track of who's coming and going. Another enhancement for Reservists, which isn't indicated on the form is before in order to be enrolled in Prime you had to have orders for 180 days and now it's only 30 days. She stated that often beneficiaries ordered to active duty already have an established relationship with a civilian provider who is not a TRICARE Prime provider and they would like to continue with him, and for these beneficiaries TRICARE Standard may be the best option. She stated that for the majority of people, though, Prime is the most cost effective. Mr. Roberts asked Ms. Acker to talk about the co-pay issue for Reservists who are demobilizing. Ms. Acker replied if someone is demobilizing and are TRICARE Prime, there are no co-payments; if they opt for Standard/Extra the deductible for Standard/Extra has been waived, however they are still responsible to pay the cost share (co-payment). She encouraged everyone, if they have questions regarding that issue, to come up to the TSC.

One of the Council members inquired about Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The XO stated this would be a great topic in the future, especially since it involves patients directly. He stated HIPAA basically replaces the Privacy Act of 1974. He stated NHB has gone through its entire system to ensure that patient information isn't available in places where it shouldn't. NHB has also developed a release form for patients to sign so that their information can be released if they so desire. Another Council member mentioned they "received a letter that covered all this information and it said the first time you're seen by a PCM you will need to fill out one of these forms. I had a dental appointment and filled one out, but when I saw my PCM I wasn't asked to fill one out." A NHB staff member stated NHB had not initiated that from just yet and believes all the form addresses is simply that you're acknowledging that you are aware of your privacy rights under HIPAA. He stated there is nothing in that title that mentions privacy but privacy has become a very important part of that federal regulation, which everyone, civilian and military, have

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to now abide by. Mr. Roberts stated he would make HIPAA an agenda item for the HCCC meeting in September.

An additional concern was raised over TRICARE Online and the difficulty in registering and using the appointing function when the system is down so frequently. Council members agreed, however, that when the system is operating it is a very useful tool. Mr. Roberts stated TMA is aware of the issues and he would have a TRICARE Online demonstration at the next HCCC meeting.

A Council member inquired if there was a shortage of pharmacists, because they had waited for over an hour for their prescription. CDR Simon (Department Head for Pharmacy) stated there are still several personnel from the pharmacy deployed and that NHB had also just opened up another re-fill pharmacy which is taking more time and personnel away from the pharmacy. The XO asked CDR Simon to elaborate on the best times to have a prescription filled and also on how often an hour wait occurs. CDR Simon stated the pharmacy is currently running at 46 percent less than ten minutes and 80 percent less than 20 minutes. She indicated, however, that there are peak times throughout the day when it is very busy, i.e., between 1000 and 1300 and at the end of the day. She stated before 1000 and between 1300 and 1500 are the best times.

Mr. Roberts introduced Ms. Janet Mano, Health Promotions.

Ms. Mano stated "We want you healthy. We could have the best health care system in the world and still have unhealthy families and personnel. Everyday lifestyle habits are the greatest determinant of health." Ms. Mano shared NHB has an active outreach program for community groups and commands to empower commands. Health Promotion topics are cycled into monthly themes to ensure that we cover the major risk factors. The summer Health Promotion themes are family and safety focused. Please contact Health Promotion at 475-4997 if you would like to bring Health Promotion displays, classes, POD notes, newsletters in support of health lifestyles. Ms. Mano distributed brochures, posters and reproducible handouts related to family summer safety. Bicycle helmets are available for \$5 at NHB on Thursdays from 100 to 1600. Ms. Mano announced that bike helmets would be available at both Bangor and Jackson Park, outside the CDCs, on June 17th, as part of the county-wide "Gear

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Up For Summer" event. Helmets are required on military bases as well as in the cities of Bainbridge, Bremerton and Poulsbo.

Ms. Mano stated the leading cause of accidental death among children one to four years old is drowning. She stated if drowning prevention or education is a topic someone would like to have addressed, just contact Health Promotion and they'll assist with it. She also stated she had some coupons for 25 percent off life jackets. She mentioned NHB's and Kitsap County's car-seat-check program and indicated she had a laminated handout regarding car seats. She distributed posters promoting NHB's and Kitsap County's car-seat-check program. Car seat checks are held at NHB on the last Wednesday of each month from 1300 to 1700. She distributed Personal Health Assessment examples on a 20-question, anonymous, personal health assessment. This survey is web based and takes about two minutes to complete. It is anonymous, no name or other identifier, but provides a "commander's summary." This tool is a great way for a command to kick-off health promotion activities targeted to the specific needs of its members.

Mr. Dahl stated the retiree seminar will be held on 6 September from 0800 to 1400 at the Naval Station gym, Building 502.

In response to a question about a survey concerning the pharmacy refill station moving, the XO indicated that for security purposes the current location of the refill station makes it vulnerable. He indicated that the process to move the refill station will take some time and that currently the command is asking beneficiaries where they think the refill station should be located for convenience purposes if it does have to move.

Mr. Roberts mentioned that everyone should have noticed that there are now contract security personnel on the gate. The XO stated NHB has recently received funding to contract for additional security personnel. He indicated that NHB had always had one civilian security person on 24-hours-a-day, which was augmented by military personnel from the hospital; this really impacted NHB during the current heightened security posture. He stated with the recent funding NHB was able to return about 15 corpsmen back to their jobs in the hospital.

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Mr. Roberts stated HIPAA and TRICARD Online would be agenda topics for the September meeting and asked if there were any other topics of interest for that meeting; there were none.

Mr. Koether (Health Benefits Advisor) stated for active duty personnel, enrollment or transfer of enrollment into TRICARE is something that is supposed to be accomplished through their medical department when they check in. He stated if they were not enrolled when checking in, they can always come to the TSC at NHB and enroll. Ms. Acker stated enrollment applications can also be sent out electronically.

Mr. Dahl stated Pier 36 makes ID cards if anyone is in need of an ID card. Ms. Acker stated people could go to the DEERS web site at <http://dmdc.osd.mil/rsl> and it tells you where all the different locations are that make ID cards.

The point of contact for these minutes in the Healthcare Support Directorate is Mr. Hank Rose, Code 08S, at (360) 475-4365.

/s/ T. D. ROBERTS
By direction