

# In Touch

JAN/FEB 2010

*with the TRICARE Retiree  
Dental Program*



## *In this issue*

- ***A new contract year reminder: Check your Consumer Toolkit for TRDP benefit information***
- ***Is an electric toothbrush better than a regular one?***
- ***February is National Children's Dental Health Month***
- ***From the Front Lines***
- ***Fun Facts***
- ***The Smile Corner***

### **A new contract year reminder: Check your Consumer Toolkit® for TRDP benefit information**

Remember that the current TRDP contract year runs from October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. If you haven't already done so, now is the time to review your information on the Consumer Toolkit® at [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org) for the amount of your annual maximum remaining as well as the date you and/or your enrolled family members are due to visit the dentist for your next exam or cleaning. The Toolkit, created specifically for TRDP enrollees, provides all the information you need to manage your program and maximize your TRDP benefits.

Don't forget that effective October 1, your \$1,200 annual maximum benefit under the TRDP began anew. A new deductible also began October 1, and TRDP premiums were adjusted in accordance with the provisions of the contract that became effective in 2008. Since any unused maximum amount cannot be carried over from year to year, you should also think about having your dentist provide some of those important services that can be applied to your maximum, therefore helping you defray your out-of-pocket costs and optimize your TRDP benefits for the current contract year.

### **Is an electric toothbrush better than a regular one?**

This is a question that our TRDP enrollees often ask. The answer is: Not necessarily. Many people can and do brush their teeth effectively with a manual toothbrush; however, an electric toothbrush can be a great alternative for some. If you have arthritis or other conditions that make it difficult to brush well, using an electric toothbrush can make brushing your teeth much easier. The movement of the bristles of an electric toothbrush may even help remove more plaque (the sticky film on your teeth that can damage enamel and cause cavities, gum disease and even infections) and improve your oral health.

Electric toothbrushes are, of course, more expensive than manual toothbrushes. If you are considering buying an electric toothbrush, make sure it is easy to use and comfortable for you to hold. Additional features available on some models of electric toothbrushes include rotating/oscillating heads, adjustable power levels, timers and rechargeable batteries.

Whether you choose an electric toothbrush or a manual one is up to you. Either way, the TRDP would like to remind you that the most important thing is daily brushing and flossing, in addition to visiting your dentist regularly for professional checkups and cleanings.

*Information provided in part by MayoClinic.com*

## February is National Children's Dental Health Month

This February, the American Dental Association (ADA) will once again sponsor National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Messages and materials promoting the mission and goals of NCDHM reach out to millions of people annually in communities across the country.

Plans for the 2010 NCDHM campaign have been in the making since fall of 2009. The ADA has free online resources that can be used by parents, teachers and dental professionals alike to help young children develop good dental habits and give them a head start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. For more information, visit the NCDHM content area of the ADA website at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org).

# From the front lines

**By Joe Montoya, TRDP Marketing Representative – West Central Region (AK, WA, ID, UT, WY, CO, NV, NM, NE, KS, & OK)**

I would like to start off this article with a huge “thank you” to all our widows, Medal of Honor recipients, retirees and family members for the opportunity to serve you as a marketing representative for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP). This job has been the best one I have ever had; I have been able to do what I love, which is taking care of all our retired Uniformed Services members and their families. It would not have been possible without my employer's support of our mission to ensure that all retired service members and families have the best oral health program available, as well as without the assistance of individuals in all of the Reserve Components, USAFR, USAR, USCGR, USNR, USMCR, and the 54 state National Guards and territories with whom I have had the pleasure of working for several years.

My job as a TRDP marketing representative has provided me with many stories to share. One of my favorites took place about two-and-a-half years ago, when I was invited to participate in the Army's first Surviving Spouse Appreciation Day at Fort Lewis in Washington state. This event was advertised in USA Today and other national publications.

The turnout was a great success. Attending this event were many widows ranging from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom to Vietnam, Korea and World War II. It was a pleasure and an honor to give a short presentation on the TRDP and relay information to this group about their eligibility for the program. Our table was constantly surrounded by widows; I might have been speaking to just one of them, but all of them would be crowded around, listening intently—and of course, they loved the free toothbrushes and TRDP pocket guides! Though most of the attendees were older, I did meet a young, 22-year-old widow who told me that she needed information on the TRDP because her three-year eligibility for the TRICARE Dental Program as a surviving spouse was ending. She was wondering if she would be able to enroll herself and her family in the TRDP and was very happy to find out that she could. She gave me a big hug (it is such a wonderful feeling to help others!) and said, “I will make sure I enroll so we do not have any waiting periods,” as the children were starting orthodontic treatment. Many other widows told me they were glad to understand how the TRDP works for them, too.

It is always fun to have drawings at these events. At this particular event we had a drawing for a TRDP golf umbrella and a TRDP cooler. The winner of the golf umbrella told me she did not have any need for a big umbrella and wondered if she could have the cooler instead. I told her, “Of course,” and she was all smiles as she walked away with the cooler. A little bit later, the same woman returned with her daughter and asked if she could have the umbrella instead of the cooler, because “My daughter wants the umbrella.” Again, I told her “Of course.” It never surprises me how much this special group cares about their families. For me, that is really what it this job and the TRDP are all about: We are all family and should always help each other.



TRDP marketing representative Joe Montoya speaking with military widows during Surviving Spouse Appreciation Day at Fort Lewis. (Photo: King 5 News, Seattle, Washington).

## Fun facts:

- \$1.8 billion is the total annual consumer spending on toothpaste.  
(ACNielsen, 2002)
- \$775 million is the total annual consumer spending on toothbrushes.  
(ACNielsen, 2002)
- \$885 million is the total annual consumer spending on oral antiseptics/rinses.  
(ACNielsen, 2002)
- Americans spent \$21 billion on candy in 2001—more than the gross national products of Lithuania, Costa Rica and Mozambique combined.  
(Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter 2002 November: 3)
- The most valuable tooth belonged to Sir Isaac Newton. In 1816 one of his teeth was sold in London for \$3,633 (around \$35,700 today). The tooth was set in a ring.  
(Source: Guinness World Records 2002)
- How much is the Tooth Fairy paying these days? Around \$2 per tooth.  
(12/05, Money Magazine)

## The Smile Corner

A young dentist had just started his own clinic. He had rented a beautiful office and furnished it with antiques.

As he was sitting there, doing nothing, he saw a man come into the front office. Wishing to appear busy, he picked up the phone and pretended to schedule an appointment with a patient, while the man waited outside his office door.

Finally, the dentist hung up and asked the visitor, “Can I help you?” The man replied, “Yes, I’ve come to activate your phone.”



Q. What was the dentist doing in Panama?

A. Looking for the Root Canal

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