



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY
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FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79918-8002

ATSS-DAS

3 August 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR Sergeants Major Academy

SUBJECT: Sergeants Major Academy Policy Memorandum No.6, Student Medical Appointments and Other Protected Health Information (PHI)

1. Purpose. To establish the Sergeants Major Academy policy monitoring missed medical appointments. Because medical appointment information may contain PHI, this memorandum also addresses student PHI in general.

2. Applicability. This Policy Memorandum applies to all Sergeants Major Academy students, staff, and faculty members.

3. Background and discussion.

a. Sergeants Major Academy policies and procedures for managing class absences as a result of routine medical appointments and emergencies are addressed in Sergeants Major Academy Policy Memorandum No. 12. Student Absences.

b. This memorandum establishes policies and procedures for monitoring missed medical appointments, including behavioral health appointments. The goal is to ensure students receive necessary care and do not fail, without a valid reason, to attend scheduled appointments.

c. During student in-processing, medical personnel often identify students who require follow-up medical or behavioral health diagnosis and/or care; as a result, the medical staff makes appointments for the students. The intent of this policy is to ensure student receive necessary medical care while maintaining the student's privacy of his or her Protected Health Information (PHI).

4. POLICY AND PROCEDURES.

a. General.

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(1) The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (Public Law 104-191, 1996) increased an individual's rights and control over his/her PHI. Generally, Soldiers must provide an authorization for their PHI to be released. However, the privacy rule recognizes the uniqueness of the military mission and PHI can be disclosed to commanders without the Soldier's authorization under certain circumstances. While commanders and their designees have a specific exception to receive health information, they do not have unrestricted access to a Soldier's PHI--they only the necessary PHI.

(2) Commanders and designees have unrestricted access to the following medical information:

- (a) DOD drug testing results.
- (b) Medical readiness and fitness for deployability (i.e. immunization status, temporary or permanent profile status, MEB/PEB related data, allergies, blood type, flight status, etc.).
- (c) Medical line of duty investigation determinations.
- (d) Changes in duty status due to medical conditions (appointments and hospitalization).
- (e) Army Weight Control Program Documentation.
- (f) Medical conditions or treatments that are duty limiting.
- (g) Any perceived threat to life or health such as suicidal behavior, homicidal behavior, acute agitation, impaired impulse control or other violent action.

(3) The following medical information is protected and commanders and designees do not have a need to know:

- (a) Medical information that does not impact readiness or fitness for duty such as routine medications.
- (b) The reason for medical appointments, routine medical treatments, clinical service seen, or other information that does not directly affect fitness for duty.

b. Missed Appointment Procedures.

(1) When medical personnel, including behavioral health personnel, identify students' general health and behavioral health issues during in-processing, medical

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personnel will offer to make an appointment on-the-spot and provide the appointment information to the students.

(2) When students fail to report to a scheduled appointments for medical conditions identified in paragraph 4a (3) above, the medical treatment facility will notify the Director, Sergeants Major Course.

(3) The Director, Sergeants Major Academy will establish positive contact with the affected student and, if necessary, the medical treatment facility to ensure the student receives a new appointment.

(4) The Director, Sergeants Major Academy will provide Department Chairs and Vice Chairs the information necessary to preserve the health of the students. The Privacy Act, permits the sharing of Privacy Act records among government personnel on a need-to-know basis.

5. The POC for this action is the Sergeants Major Academy Operations Sergeant Major at (915) 744-8657 or DSN 621-8657.

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Director