

## Chapter 6

## Section 6

# Hospital Reimbursement - TRICARE DRG-Based Payment System (DRG Weighting Factors)

Issue Date: October 6, 1997  
Authority: 32 CFR 159.14(a)(1)

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### 1.0 APPLICABILITY

This policy is mandatory for reimbursement of services provided by either network or non-network providers. However, alternative network reimbursement methodologies are permitted when approved by the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) and specifically included in the network provider agreement.

### 2.0 ISSUE

What is the purpose of DRG weighting factors under the TRICARE DRG-based payment system, and how will they be calculated, used, and updated?

### 3.0 POLICY

**3.1 DRG Weighting Factors.** The DRG weights reflect the relative resource consumption associated with each DRG. That is, the weight reflects the average resources required by all hospitals to treat a case classified as a specific DRG relative to the resources required to treat cases in each of the other DRGs. All weights are standardized to a theoretical average weight of 1.0 which is the average weight of all TRICARE claims in the data base. (This is the relative weight of the national average charge per discharge.)

**3.2 Calculation of DRG weights.** The TRICARE weights are derived from charges. They will not reflect standardization for capital or direct medical education expenses, but the charges on which they are based are standardized for indirect medical education (IME) differences. The TRICARE DRG weights will be discharge-weighted. Specifically, the denominator used to calculate each weight represents the national average charge per discharge for the average patient. In order to calculate the DRG relative weights the following procedures will be followed:

**3.2.1 Grouping of charges.** All discharge records in the database will be grouped by DRG using the current Medicare grouper program.

**3.2.2 Remove DRGs that represent discharges with invalid data or diagnoses insufficient for DRG assignment purposes.** Therefore, these records are removed from the database.

# Tricare Reimbursement Manual Section 19

**Judd E. Hollander**



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