



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
65TH MEDICAL GROUP (USAF)
LAJES FIELD AZORES PORTUGAL

2 July 2015

Lieutenant Colonel Richard K. Smith
Commander, 65th Medical Operations/Support Squadron
Unit 7745
APO, AE 09720-7745

Dear fellow Airman,

On 31 July, 2015, the USAF medical clinic at Lajes Field will permanently close its doors. A medical aid station (MAS) staffed by uniformed independent duty medical technicians (IDMTs) will provide basic health services support for **active duty Airmen** assigned to the 65th Air Base Group (ABG). Requirements that exceed the capabilities of the IDMTs will be referred to the local national healthcare network, or a military treatment facility (MTF) in mainland Europe, or CONUS.

Some Airmen choose to relocate their family members to Lajes Field even though it is designated as a remote/unaccompanied location. If you are considering this, remember that **only active duty Airmen can be treated in the MAS**. Non-command sponsored family members must receive their care on the economy, and family members living OCONUS are only eligible for Tricare Standard benefits. This means that when a family member receives care from a host nation provider they should 1) pre-coordinate the visit with the Tricare contractor *International SOS* (ISOS), and 2) pay for services rendered and file an insurance claim for reimbursement. Furthermore, there is no patient travel benefit, so your family member will bear any off-island travel related expenses. Finally, you will pay an annual deductible of \$150 per family member/\$300 per family, and a 20% cost-share up to the \$1,000 per family/per year. This applies to all services whether routine, urgent, or emergent.

If your family remains in CONUS but visits for less than 60 consecutive days, their Tricare enrollment status travels with them. So "Prime" at home, is "Prime" here and in most cases, urgent and/or emergent care pre-coordinated through ISOS will be paid in full by Tricare. Generally, expenses for routine medical visits to anyone other than the assigned Primary Care Manager (PCM), or care not referred by the PCM, is subject to Tricare Standard reimbursement terms.

During your tour, if your family visits or relocates with you to Lajes Field, keep in mind that they will not be eligible for direct care in the MAS, and care in the local national healthcare network will include out-of-pocket expenses that you may be unaccustomed to paying. If you have questions, visit the Tricare Benefit Services Representative at your current duty station, or www.tricare.mil. Get educated about your family's Tricare benefit *before* they join you at Lajes Field. This simple step may save you and your family confusion and financial hardship in the event of a medical emergency.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard K. Smith".

RICHARD K. SMITH, Lt Col, USAF, MSC
Commander, 65th Medical Operations/Support Squadron