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Exceptional Families of the Military Releases Second Annual Survey on EFMP
EFM's Survey Helps Guide Advocacy Efforts

WASHINGTON DC, Feb. 20, 2024 – Exceptional Families of the Military (EFM) releases their second annual survey of the Department of Defense's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) for enrolled military families. In honor of EFM's birthday, they are returning to their roots and asking families where they feel the pain points most in their EFMP experience. EFM's survey is open to the service member, their spouse, and any other adult family members enrolled in EFMP, allowing them to anonymously share their experiences with TRICARE and the EFMP program services. The survey aims to help inform EFM's future advocacy efforts to create long-lasting systemic changes in the laws and regulations that affect EFMP families. Some sections include questions about TRICARE Prime Travel, respite care, specialty wait times, food insecurity, and overall experiences with EFMP. The survey opens on February 20, 2024, and will close on March 23, 2024.

EFM created this survey due to the demand for usable data while meeting with the Department of Defense, military leaders, and legislators. The anonymous data collected is shared with other organizations for advocacy purposes and reported on the EFM website. EFM believes the DoD's EFMP program survey scope was limited because it was only sent to service members, excluding spouses. Yet, spouses are more likely to manage their exceptional family member's care. By EFM's inclusion of spouses and adult members enrolled in EFMP in their survey, they hope to have a broader scope of comprehensive data about experiences with the EFMP program services. EFM believes the information provided from this survey can help EFM continue to serve families in ways that they need most and help them navigate the EFMP program and advocate for themselves.

Exceptional Families of the Military is committed to advocating for military families to improve their lives by highlighting issues that affect our EFMP families. EFM wants EFMP families to thrive and find the support they need, so their service members can continue to serve the country and not have to worry about their family. “Each year, we are improving on how we survey our families,” says Executive Director Jennifer Bittner, “and judging from the data we have collected over the past few years, the EFMP families who are hurting the most from this program seem to take the time to answer our survey. They’re the ones who need to be heard, and we want to give them the platform to raise their voices.”

EFM’s 2021 survey was created utilizing Google Forms, with participants being able to opt into open-ended questions at the end of each section. This allowed participants to add their experiences as EFMP families. This year, EFM is using Qualtrics as their survey format to allow more customization and improved analysis of data collected.

In EFM’s 2021 survey, 89 percent of respondents reported that they waited more than TRICARE’s standard of care of 28 days for care. Out of 300 respondents, 34.7 percent said they waited more than 5 months for care, and 10.7 percent said that there were no services available for care at the new duty station when they arrived.

About Exceptional Families of the Military

Founded in 2020, Exceptional Families of the Military (EFM) is a volunteer-led, 501c(3) non-profit organization specializing in helping Military families enrolled in the DoD’s Exceptional Family Member Program or the Department of Homeland Security’s Special Needs Program. Through our 20 peer-to-peer support groups, we serve more than 14,000 families enrolled in these programs. When peer-to-peer support is insufficient our team provides 1:1 direct family support to help families navigate life. Leveraging the data we collect, our team works to change government policy and actively educates lawmakers on what their legislative priorities should be on behalf of our families. We are founding members of [the EFMP coalition](#), the largest group representing EFMP families, and are the creators of the [Military Nonprofit Roundtable Collaborative](#).

Website: www.ExceptionalMilitaryFam.com

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