



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND  
2748 WORTH ROAD  
JBSA FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX 78234-6000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 13-029

**13 MAY 2013**

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Expires 13 May 2015

**MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MEDCOM REGIONAL MEDICAL  
COMMANDS**

**SUBJECT: Medically Optional Surgeries for Service Members Undergoing Disability  
Evaluation**

**1. References:**

- a. Army Regulation 40-400, Patient Administration, 27 Jan 10.
- b. Army Regulation 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness, 23 Aug 10.
- c. Army Regulation 635-40, Physical Evaluation for Retention, Retirement, or Separation, 8 Feb 06 (Rapid Action Revision, RAR 20 Mar 12).
- d. OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 13-013, 19 Mar 13, subject: Bariatric Surgery.

**2. Purpose:** To provide general guidance on medically optional surgeries for all Service Members who are being evaluated in the Physical Disability Evaluation System (PDES).

**3. Proponent:** The proponent for this policy is Clinical Services Division, Health Care Delivery, MEDCOM, G-3/5/7.

**4. Guidance:**

a. The definition of a medically optional surgery or procedure is one that may be beneficial but not required to preserve the life of the patient, prevent the loss of function, or return the Soldier to fit for duty status. Many of these procedures are restricted by regulation. Examples include, but are not limited to Refractive Eye Surgery, Rhinoplasty, Bunionectomy, Optional Dental Procedures and Vasectomy, as well as any type of Cosmetic, or Bariatric Surgery.

b. The PDES determines the fitness and applicable disability benefit of Service Members with duty-related medical impairments. The Soldier's medical condition is

\* This policy memo supersedes OTSG/MEDCOM Policy Memo 11-038, 3 May 11, subject: Medically Optional Surgeries for Service Members Undergoing Disability Evaluation.

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thoroughly and completely evaluated during the process. Optional medical interventions during the PDES process can delay the final PDES determination and prolong the disposition of the Service Member.

5. Policy:

a. Medically optional surgery will not be performed while the Soldier is being evaluated in the PDES due to the potential to delay the Soldier's return to duty or completion of the disability evaluation. This is irrespective of the anticipated disposition of the Soldier.

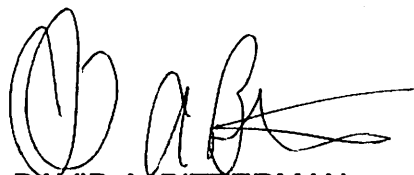
b. Medically optional surgery will not be performed within the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) nor authorized for civilian purchased care during transition leave for release from Active Duty, separation, or retirement.

c. Medically optional surgery will not be performed for the purpose of influencing potential disability benefit determination by either the Army or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

d. Any Soldier who, after being told by a competent medical authority that a treatment option is unwarranted for a given medical condition, elects to have such treatment done at his/her own expense, will not be eligible for compensation in accordance with AR 635-40.

e. Regional Medical Commanders will ensure subordinate MTF Commanders comply with this guidance.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DAB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DAVID A. BITTERMAN  
COL, MS  
Chief of Staff