

## **Nurse Advice Line**

The purpose of the Nurse Advice Line (NAL) initiative is to implement a CONUS-wide nurse advice line that provides clinical advice, triage, and general health information via a dedicated clinician-staffed call line. Lessons learned from the TRICARE Europe NAL and private industry suggest that a single, CONUS-wide NAL (including Alaska and Hawaii) will generate benefits for the Military Health System (MHS).

The NAL will offer a single, known point for all beneficiaries to access clinical advice, health information, and centralized appointing across CONUS. The call line will be open 24 hours/7 days a week and will include a warm transfer to military treatment facilities (MTF) clinics during operating hours and a centralized appointing center—using the existing DoD platform to appoint: Composite Health Care System (CHCS)—during afterhours. These services will be contracted with a vendor that has experience with advice lines, employs experienced clinicians, and is supported by decision support tools, health information resources, and 24/7 physician support. This initiative is supportive of the Medical Home concept and may eventually be able to integrate with MHS provider messaging systems.

In November 2009, the IIP Board of Directors approved advancement of the NAL initiative to issuance of a Request for Information (RFI). The proposed NAL model results in \$321 million in net benefits over 5 years and a ROI of 4.7:1. The ROI comes primarily from private sector care savings and reflects reimbursement from the Medicare-Eligible Retiree Health Care Fund (MERHCF) to cover costs for Medicare eligible beneficiaries. The benefits of the NAL stem from recapturing patients within the direct care system and shifting patients to more appropriate levels of care. Ongoing analysis would be performed to review and validate cost savings.

Additionally, the NAL is intended to increase patient satisfaction as it provides patients easy access to appointing and reduces unnecessary visits by shifting venue choice towards self-care. In the TRICARE Europe NAL study, 97 percent of survey respondents reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” overall with the program.

An RFI is currently pending release.