THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MAY 11 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (M&RA)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (M&RA)
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

SUBJECT: Policy on Bariatric Surgical Procedures for Active Duty Service Members

Bariatric surgery represents a major and permanent change to the digestive system and requires strict adherence to a dietary regimen potentially interfering with operational deployment. A history of bariatric surgery is already considered a bar to military service, and bariatric surgery, while on Active duty, may be grounds for separation.

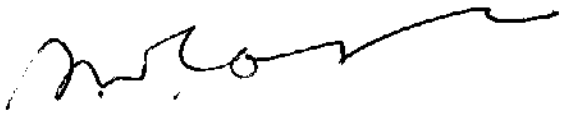
Maintaining compliance with weight and fitness standards acknowledges that regardless of a Service member's specific duty assignment or position requirement, each Active Duty Service Member (ADSM) has an obligation to maintain themselves in a state of high physical readiness. The Services have weight and fitness screening programs to assure compliance with Service standards, and each Service offers evidence-based, multidisciplinary weight and fitness programs for individuals who are unable to meet those standards. The obligation of the Services to assist members in meeting weight standards does not extend to providing bariatric surgery.

Members unable to prevent or remediate a state of morbid obesity, the clinical indication for bariatric surgery, with a combination of caloric restriction and increased physical activity, should be considered for assignment and promotion restrictions, and/or separation in accordance with existing Service regulations.

No ADSM should be authorized to receive bariatric surgery in any military treatment facility or in a purchased care health care facility under the supplemental heath care program. An ADSM obtaining bariatric surgery without Military Health System authorization (e.g., using other health insurance carried by a spouse) is permanently non-worldwide qualified and should be considered for separation.

**HA POLICY: 07-006**

Please provide this office with a copy of your implementing guidance within 90 days of the date of this policy memorandum. My point of contact is Col Joyce Grissom, USAF, MC, who can be contacted by telephone at (703) 681-1703, or by e-mail at *Joyce.Grissom@tma.osd.mil*.



S. Ward Casscells, MD

cc:
General Counsel, DoD
Surgeon General, of the Army
Surgeon General, of the Navy
Surgeon General, of the Air Force
Deputy Director, TMA
Joint Staff Surgeon
Medical Officer, Marine Corps
Director of Health and Safety, U.S. Coast Guard