OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1520.39A

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: ARMED FORCES HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Ref: (a) DoD Directive 6000.12E of 6 January 2011
(b) OPNAVINST 1120.4B
(c) OPNAVINST 1120.5B
(d) OPNAVINST 1120.7A
(e) OPNAVINST 1120.8A
(f) NAVMEDMPT&EINST 1520.1D
(g) 37 U.S.C. §303a and §373
(h) DoD 7000.14-R, DoD Financial Management Regulations, Volume 7A of April 2017
(i) DoD Instruction 6000.13 of 30 December 2015
(j) SECNAVINST 1920.6C
(k) SECNAVINST 1520.11A
(l) NAVPERS 15560D

Encl: (1) Procedures to Request Remission of Repayment of Unearned Benefits
(2) Application Procedures for AFHPSP

1. Purpose

   a. To establish policy and procedures for the use of the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (AFHPSP) under reference (a).

   b. Major changes to this revision include the addition of enclosure (1) to incorporate implementation of the statutory requirement to recoup unearned educational funds and the steps by which a member may request the Secretary, or designee, to determine if the repayment of the unearned benefit will not be required. This instruction contains significant revisions and should be read in its entirety.


3. Applicability. This instruction applies to:

   a. all civilian applicants;
b. current participants in AFHPSP; and

c. Active and Reserve officer and enlisted personnel from the U.S. Military Services.

4. Responsibilities

a. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (CNO (N1)) is responsible for the conduct of AFHPSP following the guidelines in this instruction.

b. Chief of Naval Personnel is responsible for:

(1) establishing AFHPSP recruiting quotas as an element of accession planning under references (b) through (e); and

(2) coordinating with Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) to provide justification to Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to substantiate the number of Navy scholarship quotas by designator. Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) (ASD (HA)) makes the final determination.

c. BUMED is responsible for:

(1) determining professional academic qualifications for applicants and performance parameters of officers in the program under references (b) through (e);

(2) executing program and administrative support for program participants including programming, budgeting, and active duty for training (ADT) following reference (f);

(3) designating naval activities for ADT to maximize training and indoctrination value and minimize ADT costs;

(4) providing input to Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (COMNAVCRUITCOM) for revision of AFHPSP contracts;

(5) providing official recommendations to Commander, Navy Personnel Command (COMNAVPERSCOM) regarding separation or reassignment of officers who fail to fulfill AFHPSP contractual requirements;

(6) managing of recoupment of educational expenses for students who fail to perform obligated service when authorized by the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), or designee, and in coordination with Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) following references (g) and (h); and
(7) routing of requests by members or former members for remission of educational debt payment caused by failure to complete the active duty service obligation (ADSO) for the scholarship.

d. COMNAVPERSCOM is responsible for managing personnel actions impacting the program participants, which includes, but is not limited to:

   (1) separation authority for AFHPSP student officers who fail to fulfill AFHPSP contractual requirements pursuant to references (i) and (j); and

   (2) consultation for evaluation of eligibility for legal counsel during adjudication of requests described in enclosure (1).

e. COMNAVCURITCOM is responsible for:

   (1) recruiting for the AFHPSP under this instruction;

   (2) determining applicant qualification for commission as a naval officer under references (b) through (e); and

   (3) managing waivers for medical conditions that arise after admission into the program and prior to entry on to active duty following degree program completion.

f. COMNAVPERSCOM and BUMED are responsible for coordinating unique circumstances outside of this instruction.

5. Policy. Department of the Navy policy is to use the AFHPSP to help meet future annual accession requirements for entry level health care professionals on the active-duty list as one element in the accession plan required by references (b) through (e). The scholarship program for each health care competitive category will be applied at the minimum level necessary to meet accession requirements after making optimum use of less costly accession programs and after making use of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) to provide career-motivated regular officers in the health sciences.

   a. U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) midshipmen may be recruited into the program within a maximum limit of 15 graduates entering AFHPSP and USUHS annually, dependent upon CNO (N1) review of out-year accession numbers.

   b. Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) midshipmen may be recruited into the program up to a maximum limit of 25 graduates entering AFHPSP and USUHS annually, dependent upon CNO (N1) review of out-year NROTC accession numbers.
c. AFHPSP scholarships awarded each year must be limited to the competitive categories authorized annually by the ASD (HA). Total AFHPSP scholarships in effect as of the end of each fiscal year must not exceed the allocations made by ASD (HA).

6. Authorized Specialties and Scholarships. Navy accession planning must balance the requirements for flexibility and longer ADSO. To make best use of AFHPSP in meeting accession requirements for health care professionals, CNO (N1) will review accession plans developed under references (b) through (e) annually.

7. Basic Qualifications. Citizenship, age, moral character, and physical qualifications for AFHPSP are those specified for the applicable competitive category in references (b) through (e) and appropriate program authorizations.

8. Professional Qualifications. Candidates must be accepted for admission to, or enrolled in, an accredited civilian institution located in the United States or Puerto Rico, and registered in a professional education program qualified for the applicable competitive category and specialty as detailed in references (b) through (e). A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale must have been attained for all completed course work. Waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9. Performance Standards. Active duty personnel must have no record of conviction by court-martial, nor have been awarded non-judicial punishment, nor have been convicted by a civil court for any offense other than minor traffic violations, for the 2-year period immediately preceding 1 July of the calendar year in which the application is made.

10. Persons Eligible

   a. Civilians who qualify under paragraph 8.

   b. All officers on active duty who have completed their initial ADSO prior to appointment into the program, except for the officers listed in subparagraphs 10b(1) and 10b(2).

      (1) Unless otherwise waived, officers serving under obligations incurred through Department of Defense (DoD) funded education programs. Officers who have completed naval flight officer training or naval flight training must complete the minimum required obligated service for those programs, plus any additional obligated service incurred in conjunction with aviation cross training, transition, or replacement training prior to being made available.

      (2) Nuclear-trained officers must be released by their community. Availability will be determined based on community ability to meet requirements. Unless otherwise waived, officers must have either completed his or her assignment as engineer of a nuclear ship or principal assistant of an aircraft carrier, or be senior to officers so assigned. Submarine officers must have completed a department head assignment or be senior to those so assigned.
c. Midshipmen at the USNA or enrolled in NROTC programs who are qualified under references (b) through (e) and who have been accepted for admission to an accredited institution authorized by the appropriate program authorization.

d. All active duty enlisted personnel.

e. Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) personnel (officer and enlisted), except nuclear-trained naval officers eligible for reassignment to duty as nuclear propulsion trained officers.

11. **Appointment.** Upon acceptance into the program, participants will be required to accept a Reserve appointment in the grade of ensign in the competitive category of the health profession for which selected. All officers will be entitled to the pay and allowance of the grade O-1 while performing active duty in the program, unless otherwise directed by law.

12. **Service Obligations.** AFHPSP appointees will incur an ADSO of 1 year for each year in the program. For periods less than 1 year, the ADSO is 6 months for each additional 6 months of participation in the program. Periods of 15 days or more will be counted as a 6-month period. The obligation will be in addition to any existing active duty obligation held by the individual prior to acceptance into the program.

   a. Appointees who incur an ADSO of less than 3 years will be required to serve a 3-year minimum term of service on active duty. The difference between the minimum term of service and the active duty obligation can be served while in training on active duty.

   b. Officers in the program will be called to active duty immediately upon completion of their course requirements for their degrees. Officers selected for internship or residency training through the Navy Active Duty Delay for Specialists Program under reference (k) will remain on inactive duty until their training is completed.

13. **Disenrollment.** Under references (i) and (j), officers who fail to complete the program may (at the convenience of the Government) be reappointed in a different designator or subspecialty to complete any incurred active duty obligation. Officers who are not reappointed will be processed for separation following reference (j) and will be subject to recoupment for all monies expended by the scholarship.

14. **Request for Relief from Indebtedness Due to Disenrollment from Program**

   a. As provided by law and policy, to include references (g) and (h), a member or former member will repay to the Government an amount equal to the unearned portion of the benefit received after the member fails to satisfy the previously agreed upon requirements. In all cases, SECNAV has the discretion to render a case-by-case determination that repayment will not be
required of the member or former member when repayment would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, would be against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interest of the United States.

b. Officers may either agree to repay the debt or, in the alternative, request that repayment of the unearned benefit not be required under reference (g) and reference (h), chapter 2 of April 2016. Should an officer agree to repay the debt, BUMED Program Manager, Navy Medicine Accessions Department (M-131), will coordinate with DFAS to commence the monetary collections process.

c. Procedural steps by which an officer may request that repayment of the unearned benefit not be required are outlined in enclosure (1). Such requests will be received by BUMED M-131 and forwarded with supporting documentation and recommendation to SECNAV, or designee, via CNO (N1) for final adjudication.

d. If recoupment of funds is authorized by SECNAV, or designee, BUMED M-131 will coordinate with DFAS to commence the monetary collections process.

e. If SECNAV, or designee, determines that repayment of the unearned benefit will not be required, SECNAV, or designee, will notify the individual directly and copy BUMED M-131. BUMED M-131 will coordinate with DFAS to terminate any recoupment action in progress.

15. Failure to Complete ADSO. The member will reimburse the Government for all monies expended by the scholarship or a proportional share for the period of obligation not served.

a. Officers may request that repayment of unearned benefits not be required under reference (g) and reference (h), chapter 2 of April 2016. Procedural steps by which an officer may request remission of indebtedness are outlined in enclosure (1).

b. Requests that the repayment of unearned benefits not be required will be received by BUMED M-131 and forwarded with supporting documentation and recommendation to SECNAV, or designee, via CNO (N1) for final adjudication.

16. Reimbursement in Lieu of Active Duty Obligation. Officers in the program may not be relieved of their active duty obligation solely because they are willing and able to refund all payments made to them or on their behalf.

17. ADT. Officers in the program for more than 1 year will be called to ADT for up to 45 days during each year for military training and professional training directly related to their healthcare specialty. BUMED will designate naval activities for ADT to maximize training and indoctrination value and minimize ADT costs. While on ADT orders, officers are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.
18. **Pay and Allowances.** Officers in the program will be paid a monthly stipend while on inactive duty at the rate specified annually by ASD (HA). Pay and allowances of grade O-1 will be paid while on ADT orders unless current law directs otherwise.

   a. Payment of stipend will begin on the benefit start date, which is the later occurring date of the following dates: the date the member executes the oath of office, the date the contract or program agreement is signed, and the date the participant’s designated course of study commences.

   b. Payment of stipend will continue until the date of graduation unless the member is suspended or dis-enrolled from the designated course of study.

   c. Payment of stipend will be terminated if the date of completion of the academic program precedes the date of graduation by more than 45 days.

19. **Uniforms.** Officers in the program are subject to Navy uniform regulations. Uniforms may only be worn while on ADT orders or when specifically permitted by BUMED following regulations governing IRR status personnel.

20. **Scholarship Contracts**

   a. Tuition and authorized educational fees for each member of the program will be paid by contracts with the educational institutions.

   b. Officers of the program will be eligible for reimbursement of costs incurred for required textbooks, equipment, and supplies, excluding computer hardware, telecommunications packages, and other items not permitted by law or policy. Reimbursement will be limited to expenses normally incurred by students at the same institution at the same academic level, who are not members of the program. Dated, itemized purchase receipts and certification by the educational institution are required for all requests for reimbursement. Items purchased up to 45 days prior to the benefit start date may be eligible for reimbursement. No items purchased within 60 days of graduation will be reimbursed.

21. **Applications.** Annually, CNO (N1) will establish recruiting quotas and solicit applications from civilians and Service personnel for the competitive categories authorized for this program. Application procedures are detailed in enclosure (2). Under reference (1), article 1920-170, active duty officers must submit a request for contingent resignation to COMNAVPERSCOM Officer Performance and Separations Branch (PERS-834) and receive an approval letter prior to applying for this program. Navy active duty enlisted personnel must receive approval for release to the AFHPSP by submitting a NAVPERS 1306/7 Enlisted Personnel Action Request. The NAVPERS 1306/7 is routed through the Service member's command to the responsible Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) community manager for approval.
22. **Applicant Selection.** BUMED will establish procedures for the professional review of applicants for the program. A board composed of officers in the applicants’ competitive category will be used to ensure that the best-qualified applicants are selected for the program.

23. **Records Management.** Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per SECNAV Manual 5210.1 of January 2012.

24. **Review and Effective Date.** Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, CNO (N1) will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 5 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 5-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

25. **Forms**


   e. NAVCRUIT 1131/238 Application Processing and Summary Record is available for download from Naval Forms OnLine at

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This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via Department of the Navy Issuances Web site, http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil/
PROCEDURES TO REQUEST REMISSION OF REPAYMENT OF UNEARNED BENEFITS

1. General Policy

   a. As outlined in the AFHPSP contract, Service members who fail to satisfy their ADSO will reimburse the Government for all monies expended by the scholarship or a proportional share for the period of obligation not served.

   b. AFHPSP members who are recommended for discharge by BUMED M-131 will receive a notice of their Navy Reserve status from COMNAVPERSCOM Reserve Officer Personnel Branch (PERS-911) as it pertains to their possible separation from service following reference (j).

   c. Requests for remission of repayment of unearned benefit will be received by BUMED M-131 and forwarded with supporting documentation and recommendation to SECNAV, or designee, via CNO (N1) for final adjudication.

   d. Criteria for these requests are adjudicated under references (g) and (h). Generally, educational costs of the program are subject to recoupment when members of the program are dropped for deficiency in conduct or studies, or when members for other reasons fail to fulfill their contractual agreement as a result of action not initiated by the Government.

   e. Under reference (h), chapter 2 of April 2016, in instances involving a Service member's separation for medical reasons which were not the result of the member's misconduct, the SECNAV, or designee, has the discretion to determine whether to require repayment of the unearned portion of pay or benefit.

   f. The SECNAV, or designee, has the discretion to render a case-by-case determination that the Service member's repayment of the unearned benefit is not required because it would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interests of the United States.

2. General Procedures

   a. Separation from AFHPSP or Financial Assistance Program, or Both, and Navy

      (1) COMNAVPERSCOM (PERS-911) will send official separation notification to the Service member concerning his or her Navy Reserve status.

      (a) Member will reply to COMNAVPERSCOM (PERS-911) to indicate if he or she intends to appeal the recommendation for separation.
(b) Members have the right at any time during the process to consult with qualified military or civilian counsel. IRR members may not be eligible for military legal services. If counsel is desired, members can contact COMNAVPERSCOM legal to assess military legal counsel eligibility and the opportunity to discuss policy.

(2) COMNAVPERSCOM (PERS-911) will process the recommendation for separation from the Navy and the AFHPSP. Upon completion of the separation, COMNAVPERSCOM (PERS-911) will send a certificate of separation to the separated Service member and to BUMED M-131.

b. Recoupment of AFHPSP or Financial Assistance Program, or Both, Educational Expenditures

(1) Service members will receive notification of the intent to recommend recoupment of educational expenditures by BUMED M-131.

(2) Upon receipt of the Service member’s certificate of separation, BUMED M-131 will initiate a recommendation to SECNAV, or designee, to recoup or remit a Service member’s unearned educational expenditures.

(a) Service members will review submission criteria described within references (g) and (h), and may discuss applicable policy with BUMED policy advisor before submitting a request.

(b) Service members will submit their remission requests and supporting documentation to BUMED M-131 within the time limit specified in the notification sent to the Service member by BUMED. Completed remission requests should be sent to BUMED M-131, as follows:

PROGRAM MANAGER
NAVY BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
ACCESSIONS DEPARTMENT
8955 WOOD ROAD, SUITE 13132
BETHESDA, MD 20889-5628

(c) Service members have the right at any time during the process to consult with qualified military or civilian counsel. IRR members may not be eligible for military legal services. If counsel is desired, members can contact BUMED legal to assess military legal counsel eligibility and the opportunity to discuss policy.

(3) BUMED M-131 will coordinate staffing of the request for SECNAV, or designee, adjudication.
(4) Final adjudication responses will be relayed to BUMED M-131 and to the former member directly by SECNAV, or designee, with characterization of determination.

(5) Resultant financial certification actions are managed by BUMED M-131 in coordination with the DFAS executed monetary collections process. BUMED M-131 will coordinate the resulting action caused by the adjudication.
APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR AFHPSP

1. **Civilians.** Apply through local Navy recruiting district offices.

2. **Navy and Marine Corps Personnel**
   
   a. All military applicants for this program must go through a Navy medical officer programs recruiter to apply.

   b. Officers on active duty must submit their application in letter form, via their chain of command, between 1 August and 30 November of the calendar year prior to the year in which the scholarship is desired. Applications must be submitted through a Navy medical officer programs recruiter and be forwarded to COMNAVCURTCOM via the Service member’s chain of command. The Service member must also submit a request for contingent resignation following reference (l).

   c. NROTC midshipmen must apply for selection to Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) officer developments medical programs coordinator. Applications must be submitted following the instructions outlined in NSTC’s annual official mail message seeking applications for the AFHPSP. If a student is nominated by the NSTC AFHPSP Board and assigned to a Medical Corps designator by the NSTC service assignment panel, the student may apply for an AFHPSP scholarship. Applications must be submitted through a Navy medical officer programs recruiter and forwarded to COMNAVCURTCOM via the Service member’s chain of command. Current NROTC scholarship students that are not selected for and assigned to a Medical Corps designator by the NSTC service assignment panel are not authorized to apply for AFHPSP scholarships.

   d. USNA midshipmen must submit applications in letter form via the chain of command at the beginning of their fourth year. Applications must be submitted through a Navy medical officer programs recruiter and forwarded to COMNAVCURTCOM via the Service member’s chain of command.

   e. Navy active duty enlisted personnel must receive approval for release to the AFHPSP by submitting a NAVPERS 1306/7. The NAVPERS 1306/7 is routed through the Service member's command to the responsible BUPERS community manager for approval. Once approved, enlisted personnel must submit their AFHPSP application in letter form by 1 January of the year in which the scholarship is desired. Applications must be submitted through a Navy medical officer programs recruiter and forwarded to COMNAVCURTCOM via the Service member's chain of command.

   f. Applications should include items listed in subparagraphs 2f(1) through 2f(11).
(1) Letter of acceptance, once received, from an accredited institution as defined in each community’s program authorization. If the applicant is currently in an accredited program, a letter of good standing must be provided as part of the application.

(2) Two reports of interviews by commissioned officers, including one officer from the community to which the applicant is applying. The second interview can be from any officer, O-3 or above, who is not a recruiter. All interviews must be submitted on NAVCRUIT 1131/5, Interviewer’s Appraisal Sheet.

(3) Transcript of college grades.

(4) SF 86 Questionnaire for National Security Positions.

(5) Commanding officer’s endorsement.

(6) Contingent resignation, including the following statement: “I hereby tender my resignation and request that I be accepted contingent upon final approval of my application for commission as a reserve officer in the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program.”

(7) Active duty enlisted personnel must submit a request via their chain of command, using NAVPERS 1306/7.

(8) NAVCRUIT 1131/238 Application Processing and Summary Record.

(9) Current DD 2808 Report of Medical Examination and DD 2807-1 Report of Medical History.

(10) Statement of understanding (Regular and Reserve officers): “I understand that upon completion of the program, my entry grade credit and date of rank upon appointment in the (Medical, Dental, Nurse, or Medical Service) Corps will be determined following regulations in effect at the time of supersession following graduation from my degree program.”

(11) Signature of Applicant.