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DOD: Outside health funds might run out

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has warned Congress that by the end of this week its health care system could run out of money to cover outside treatment for troops and dependents.

High retail pharmacy prescription costs have carved out a \$2 billion shortfall in the military's worldwide health care system this year, according to a letter sent by DOD Health Affairs to lawmakers on July 16. The budget crunch underscores the growing cost of providing drugs to an aging group of Tricare beneficiaries and a debate this summer on Capitol Hill over increasing fees to cover the expenses.

Lawmakers in the House and Senate have been divided on higher pharmacy copays. Now,

they appear faced with making an emergency fix to the military's overall health care budget or risking a critical budget shortfall that could affect treatment for troops, families and retirees.

"Without your support, we run the real risk of exhausting funds needed to pay private sector care costs in late July 2015, which could also have negative spillover effects on the direct care system," Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, wrote in the letter obtained by Stars and Stripes.

The Defense Health Program, which is facing the \$2 billion shortfall and had a \$41 billion budget this year, handles Tricare health insurance as well as worldwide medical and dental services to active-duty troops, according to budget documents. Private

care includes medical and dental treatment at nondefense facilities.

The DOD has raised the alarm for years over the ballooning costs of health care, prescriptions and other servicemember benefits. Pentagon brass have been urging lawmakers to pass reform measures to curb costs.

Woodson said DOD has shifted money with two reprogramming requests to Congress but still needs to move \$900 million to cover the shortfall in health care funding, which could also affect treatment at the military's own facilities.

"If we fail to secure funding proposed in the reprogrammings from the identified sources, the direct care system would likely have to scramble for alternate sources with the potential of causing an adverse impact on operational sup-

port and readiness," Woodson wrote.

The Pentagon did not immediately provide a comment.

The revelation comes as the armed services committees of both chambers of Congress are negotiating its defense policy bill for the coming year and possible increases in Tricare prescription drug copays. Lawmakers are just days away from a monthlong August recess.

The Senate proposed a schedule of pharmacy copay increases that would raise the average copay for a 30-day generic prescription from \$8 to \$14 by 2024. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., is leading conference committee negotiations for the chamber on the National Defense Authorization Act, which may include the changes. His staff declined to comment.

tritten.travis@stripes.com
Twitter: @Travis_Tritten

Navy to create ballistic missile defense task force in Italy

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy will create a task force for ballistic missile defense at its European headquarters here in an effort to consolidate command of new anti-missile ships and shore sites.

Task Force 64 will have operational and tactical command of ballistic missile defense, or BMD, and integrated air and missile defense assets assigned to Navy forces in Europe and Africa, the Navy said in a directive posted online over the weekend. Those assets include BMD ships operating out of Spain and land-based missile interceptor sites still under construction in Romania and Poland.

The task force falls under

U.S. 6th Fleet and will be led by a Navy captain with a planning staff. The move, announced by Chief of Naval Operations Jonathan Greenert and scheduled to be implemented in October, recognizes the growing number of resources devoted to BMD in the theater in recent years.

The U.S. is the primary contributor to the European missile defense shield, known as the European Phased Adaptive Approach. Four guided-missile destroyers equipped with Aegis radar and missile interceptors are being stationed at a Navy base in Rota, Spain, for regular patrols.

An Aegis Ashore interceptor site in Deveselu, Romania, is expected to be operational by the end of the year. Another, in Redzikowo, Poland, is planned

for deployment in 2018. Both sites are being run by the Navy.

Other components under the U.S. contribution to the missile shield include a command structure at Ramstein Air Base in Germany and a radar facility in Turkey. NATO allies are making other contributions to the shield.

The scheme has caused a major rift with Russia, which says NATO missile defense plans are aimed against its own nuclear missile arsenal. The U.S. and its NATO allies insist the defense system is meant to protect Europe from potentially hostile countries, such as Iran, but Moscow has countered that Iran doesn't have any missiles capable of reaching Europe.

Greenert and other mili-

tary officials have questioned the sustainability of the BMD mission in recent months, citing high demand for the ships in several theaters, including the Pacific, the high cost of converting destroyers and cruisers into BMD-capable platforms, and future funding uncertainty.

The 6th Fleet has five other task forces, all numbered by mission. Task Force 63 oversees civilian sealift ships; Task Force 65 controls surface ships deployed to the region; Task Force 67 is in charge of maritime patrol in the region; Task Force 68 oversees expeditionary forces including Seabees; and Task Force 69 is responsible for submarine warfare.

beardsley.steven@stripes.com
Twitter: @sjbeardsley

Bill helps sex assault victims

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Veterans who suffered sexual assault or other sexual abuse while in uniform would get help more easily from the Department of Veterans Affairs under a bill approved Monday by the House.

The bill would allow a statement by a survivor of military sexual trauma to be considered sufficient proof that an assault occurred. The House approved the bill by voice vote Monday night.

The bill is named after Ruth Moore, a former Navy sailor who was raped twice by a superior officer nearly three decades ago. Moore, of Milbridge, Maine, was awarded more than \$400,000 in retroactive disability benefits last year after a decadeslong battle with the VA.

The bill's sponsor, Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, called it an important step to get the VA to make its benefits process easier and fairer for veterans like Moore who were sexually assaulted during their

military service.

Since starting work on the issue five years ago, Pingree said she heard from "countless veterans who've struggled for years to get disability benefits for [post-traumatic stress disorder] and other conditions that stem from their assaults."

The survivors are men and women of all ages, from every branch of the service, Pingree said.

An identical bill is sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont.

Lawmaker: Tenn. victims should get Purple Heart

From wire reports

The FBI hasn't declared the July 16 attacks on two Chattanooga, Tenn., military sites terrorism, but Congress is letting its opinion be known.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, R-Tenn., on Monday told the Chattanooga Times Free Press he had gathered support for a bill that would grant Purple Heart awards for the five U.S. servicemen gunned down July 16 at the U.S. Naval and Marine Reserve Center on Amnicola Highway.

"Chattanooga and America lost five exceptional service members to a horrendous attack on our home soil," Fleischmann said in an email to the Times Free Press.

"These men proudly served their country, and several made the ultimate sacrifice while braving fire in order to save others."

The Military Times reported last week that Purple Heart packets were prepared for the four Marines — Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Sullivan, Staff Sgt. David Wyatt, Sgt. Carson A. Holmquist and Lance Cpl. Squire "Skip" Wells — and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Smith.

The military was awaiting a declaration by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that the gunman, Mohammad Youssef Abdulazeez, was part of or communicating with a foreign terrorist cell. Fleischmann's bill makes that declaration.

"The attack clearly meets the criteria for the award of the Purple Heart to members of the Armed Forces killed or wounded in the attack," the resolution says.

Fleischmann spokesman Tyler Threadgill said the effort was "to reinforce the sense of Congress that these men should receive a Purple Heart because they were wounded in service of their country."

Attack kills 2 police in Bahrain

The Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Two Bahraini policemen were killed and six were wounded in a bomb attack south of the island kingdom's capital on Tuesday, according to authorities.

The blast was the latest in a series of bombings in recent years targeting security forces in the Gulf nation, which continues to face low-level unrest more than four years after widespread protests demanding greater political rights.

The Interior Ministry described the bombing as a "terror blast," and said it took place in the largely Shiite community of Sitra, just south of the capital, Manama. One of the wounded officers sustained serious injuries, the ministry said.

Bahrain is a Sunni-ruled kingdom that is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, whose responsibilities include patrolling the busy waters off Iran.

The opposition movement in Bahrain is dominated by the country's Shiite majority, which has

long complained of discrimination and heavy-handed treatment by security forces.

Although opposition rallies largely attract peaceful demonstrators, young activists frequently set up makeshift roadblocks and clash with police in Shiite villages. Anti-government activists have planted bombs that have killed or maimed police in the past.

The largest Shiite opposition group, al-Wefaq, condemned the killing.

Tuesday's blast occurred just days after Bahraini authorities announced they had broken up an attempt to smuggle assault rifles, ammunition and explosives into the kingdom. The cargo intercepted earlier this month off the country's coast included nearly 97 pounds of C-4 plastic explosives and detonators.

Police linked the smuggling attempt to Iran, alleging that one of the suspects they arrested received military training in the Islamic Republic and that he and another suspect admitted to receiving the shipment from Iranian handlers.

Oil leak blamed for Marine jet crash

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — An oil leak caused a Marine fighter jet to crash in a Southern California neighborhood last year, setting several homes on fire and destroying the aircraft, it was reported Monday.

The AV-8B Harrier went down on June 4, 2014, after a crack in an oil drain tank

caused a leak that sparked a fire, engine failure and loss of flight control, according to a Marine investigative report.

The document was obtained by the San Diego Union-Tribune through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The pilot had left the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Ariz., and was flying back after daytime low altitude training

when the oil leak was detected. He decided to make an emergency landing at Naval Air Facility El Centro.

He was about 15 miles from that runway when the plane became sluggish and lost altitude, followed swiftly by an engine fire, loss of engine power and then his ability to control the aircraft, the investigation concluded.

QB training more specialized

The Associated Press

Jackson Burkhalter and Sheldon Layman are slinging a football around a grassy field on a muggy fall evening in Mobile, Ala., under the watchful eye of David Morris, who spent most of his college football career as Eli Manning's backup and is now tutoring aspiring QBs.

The young quarterbacks throw flat-footed and from their knees, dropping back and rolling out. Neither is in high school yet, but both have been working with Morris for years.

Personal training starts early for most quarterbacks and it can be costly. It is a booming business, with some parents spending thousands of dollars per year to refine their sons' skills and keep up with the competition. Morris and former NFL quarterback Trent Dilfer are among those who are trying to make sure that quarterback doesn't become an exclusive position, only attainable by kids who have access to high-level training.

"Everybody should have an opportunity to be the quarterback. It shouldn't be who your dad was, who your high school coach was and how much money you have," Dilfer said.

Five years ago, Dilfer became the face and driving force behind Elite 11, a quarterback competition for top high school prospects. Dilfer said all 18 Elite 11 finalists who competed in Oregon earlier this month have had at least some exposure to a personal quarterback coach.

His latest push is toward a do-it-yourself approach to quarterback training, using ecoachsports.com and other online services to give players inexpensive access to his methods.

"What I'm trying to do is ... give the parents and the community the information that out there exists. A methodology, for

lack of a better term, of information that will help you reach your potential without the crutch of a personal quarterback trainer all the time," Dilfer said.

"But the goal behind it all is so they're not paying \$100 an hour going to a quarterback coach."

Dilfer entered the quarterback development "space" — as he calls it — in part because he saw a broken business, where self-proclaimed experts were charging hundreds of dollars an hour to parents who felt the training had become a necessity.

"There's definitely that sense of feeling for sure," said Steve Layman, father of 14-year-old Sheldon, who will be a freshman playing with the varsity at McGill-Toolen High School in Mobile. "I do feel you have to do the individualized position training to keep up. If not, you're going to get passed."

Layman started Sheldon working with Morris, founder of QB Country, which now has eight locations around the South, when his son was in fifth grade.

Layman estimates between sessions with Morris and other personal coaches, along with travel to various passing camps around the country, he spent about \$10,000 last year on Sheldon's football development. That includes about \$2,000 for regular sessions with Morris.

"You've got to look at it as an investment," Layman said. "What does it cost your kid to go to college today?"

Burkhalter is 13 and going into eighth grade this fall at St. Paul's Episcopal School in Mobile, where Alabama quarterbacks AJ McCarron and Jake Coker went to school.

His father, Todd, who played at Auburn in the 1980s, has not yet run up the type of bills on Jackson's training that Layman

has for Sheldon's. It is moving in that direction, though.

"I think at some point, you tend to sort of get in a stream," Burkhalter said. "If everybody's in a stream you're sort of intersecting with them and saying how do you do this in terms of the training and the camps."

Tanner Morgan, a rising junior from Ryle High School in Union, Ky., skipped the training fees and went the ecoach route, getting hooked up with northern Virginia-based quarterback coach Paul Troth and saving his father an eight-hour drive.

Now, Morgan submits a video of himself to Troth and Troth responds with coaching videos that Morgan and his father, Ted, credit with helping him to get his first scholarship offer from Wake Forest. Troth said players can submit three videos for \$35.

"I don't want to be out here just taking people's money. I feel like I provide a high-quality service but at the same time I know that the most talented kids oftentimes are the ones who can't afford it," Troth said. "I'd love to be able to teach those kids."

Morris, who threw 46 passes in four years at the University of Mississippi, has also decided the best approach to make it in the quarterback coaching business is to build a brand that is not reliant upon being the guru to the stars. He partnered with D1 Training so QB Country would have facilities for its network of coaches to use, spanning from Memphis, Tenn., to Orlando, Fla.

"The bread and butter is middle school and high school," he said. "That's what we do. That's what I want to do."

"I didn't want to price out people. What we do is a little pricier, but it's not going to price the majority of the people out. It's not like we're 500 bucks an hour."

Boston dropped by USOC

The Associated Press

BOSTON — On Boston's last day as a potential Olympic host, Chris Dempsey ate lunch at an Irish pub across from City Hall and waited for the bid for the 2024 Summer Games to crumble.

A waitress recognized Dempsey, the co-chair of the opposition group No Boston Olympics, from last week's televised debate. A customer walked by and applauded, but his attempt at a high five was rebuffed.

"We'll see," Dempsey said. It was about two hours after Mayor Marty Walsh refused to cover Olympic cost overruns, dooming the bid, and two hours before the USOC withdrew its support. Dempsey explained his hesitation in a truly Bostonian way: Referring to the stolen base that helped propel the Red Sox to the 2004 World Series, he said, "I want to make sure there's no Dave Roberts-style comeback."

Later Monday afternoon, the USOC announced that it was, indeed, backing away from Boston in what was described as a mutual agreement to give the United States hope of hosting its first Summer Games since 1996. Officials said they would explore other cities, with the most likely being Los Angeles.

Dempsey said he hoped the experience in Boston would change the way the USOC and the IOC do business. Otherwise, he said, "It's hard to imagine smart cities and countries getting involved."

Formed in a Beacon Hill living room in November 2013, when the prospect of bringing the Summer Games to the Athens of America was only slightly more realistic than it is now, No Boston Olympics grew into the most visible and sensible opposition to the plan to host the 2024 Games.

Tapping into the city's notorious negativity but also seizing on a growing resentment over the way international sports are run, the group led the campaign to scuttle what it saw as an attempt by Boston's power brokers to determine what's best for the city without any input from the people the plans would affect.

The USOC chose Boston as the potential American host city in a secretive process in January over San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington.

But the bid was in trouble from the start.

Poll numbers showed a consistent majority of Boston residents opposed hosting. Few believed the local businessmen leading the bid could deliver without billions in taxpayer subsidies.

Four different men took turns as the face of Boston 2024, the privately run and financed bid committee, but No Boston Olympics hammered away at the same points: That planning for the games would distract the city from more important needs, and that a lack of transparency undermined any promises.

IOC urges US to submit another city

The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — With Boston no longer in contention, IOC President Thomas Bach urged U.S. Olympic leaders on Tuesday to pick "the most appropriate city" as a substitute candidate for the 2024 Games. Two-time Olympic host Los Angeles could fit the bill perfectly, according to several IOC board members.

The U.S. Olympic Committee severed ties with Boston on Monday, finally pulling the plug on a bid that had been hampered by dismal poll ratings, strong local opposition and months of political wrangling.

The USOC now has until Sept. 15 to submit a candidate to the International Olympic Committee and formally enter a race that already includes Paris; Rome; Hamburg, Germany; and Budapest, Hungary. Toronto and Baku, Azerbaijan, are also likely contenders.

The IOC has been consulting with potential bids, including Boston, as part of a new "invitation phase" for interested cities. The IOC is eager to have a strong can-

didate from the U.S., which hasn't hosted a Summer Games since Atlanta in 1996.

"For the IOC this was always about an American bid put forward by the United States Olympic Committee," Bach said in a statement. "This invitation phase is also an opportunity to determine which city will eventually be chosen by an NOC. We are confident that USOC will choose the most appropriate city for a strong U.S. bid."

IOC officials had just learned of Boston's withdrawal as they gathered for an executive board meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The rest of the IOC membership will be arriving later for a general assembly highlighted by Friday's vote to determine the host city for the 2022 Winter Olympics, with Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan, as the two candidates.

"It's always a shame when a national Olympic committee selects a city and then is incapable or unable to bring it to the next stage of the contest," IOC vice president Craig Reedie told The Associated Press. "But I suppose after mature reflection and looking at what's

happened, it might be a wise decision."

"Personally, I hope the United States do find another candidate and produce another applicant city for 2024," Reedie said.

Boston had been chosen by the USOC as its bid entry ahead of Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington. But the USOC was left with little choice but to drop Boston after Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker declined to commit to the bid.

"It's not [only] bad for the U.S., but it's bad for everybody," IOC board member Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. told the AP. "Boston was an extraordinary city, very attractive for the Olympic games, a very sporty town. I am very sad to hear this."

After New York failed in a bid for the 2012 Olympics and Chicago lost in the first round of the vote for the 2016 Games, the USOC took steps to try to improve relations with the IOC. Two years ago, the two sides signed a new revenue-sharing agreement, ending a long-running dispute that had helped undermine previous U.S. bids.



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Rockies trade SS Tulowitzki

The Associated Press

DENVER — The Colorado Rockies and Toronto Blue Jays have swapped star shortstops.

The teams confirmed the blockbuster trade Tuesday that sends Jose Reyes and right-handed pitchers Miguel Castro, Jeff Hoffman and Jesus Tinoco to the Rockies for Troy Tulowitzki and right-handed reliever LaTroy Hawkins.

Both shortstops have remarkably similar career statistics but also a history of injuries.

Tulowitzki is a five-time All-Star and a career .299 hitter. He's hitting .300 this season. At 32, the speedy Reyes is two years older than Tulowitzki. He's a lifetime .291 hitter and is hitting .285 this season.

Reyes, a four-time All-Star, is signed through 2017 on a \$106 million, six-year contract he received from Miami.

Before the 2011 season, Colorado made a big commitment to Tulowitzki by agreeing to a contract that guaranteed him \$132 million over seven seasons from 2014-20. The deal included a \$14 million team option for 2021 with a \$4 million buyout.

Combined with his previous deal, it meant the Rockies agreed to pay Tulowitzki \$157.75 million over 10 years. The plan was to build around him and outfielder Carlos Gonzalez, who signed an \$80 million, seven-year contract about the same time.

But the plan never panned out. The two sluggers often weren't in the lineup together because of injuries. Now, with the Tulowitzki trade, Gonzalez might be next — considering how hot

he's been at the plate lately after an injury-riddled 2014 season.

The deal gives Toronto (50-50) another powerful, right-handed bat in a dangerous lineup that includes Jose Bautista, Josh Donaldson, Edwin Encarnacion and Russell Martin. The Blue Jays, by far the highest-scoring team in the majors, are three games behind Minnesota in the race for the second AL wild card.

Donaldson bid farewell to Reyes on his Twitter account: "Going to miss my boy. ... Once a brother always a brother."

They are tied for second place in the AL East, seven games behind the New York Yankees. Toronto has not reached the playoffs since winning the 1993 World Series — the longest drought of any major league team.

The face of Colorado's franchise, Tulowitzki has spent his entire career with the Rockies (42-55) but has been the subject of trade talk for some time. Still, the Blue Jays seemed an unlikely destination.

"Tremendous player," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said in San Francisco. "Sometimes you're surprised when you have a guy like Tulo who's so iconic in Colorado."

There's no doubting the hitting prowess of the 6-foot-3 Tulowitzki. Staying healthy has been his biggest challenge. During his career, he's had stints on the disabled list for a quadriceps tendon tear, lacerated right hand, broken left wrist and a groin injury.

Last season, Tulowitzki played only 91 games before undergoing hip surgery. This year, he's been injury free, with manager Walt Weiss resting him on occasion to save wear and tear.

Indy league to test calls by computer

The Associated Press

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. — No blaming or booing the umpire for a questionable called third strike this week in a Northern California independent league.

The human element that many in baseball appreciate will be absent during an experiment for a pair of games. A computer will call balls and strikes as the home plate umpire handles all of his other regular duties.

"It's going to be strange yelling at that computer," San Francisco Giants manager Bruce Bochy joked.

On Tuesday night, the computer system was to stand in for pitch calls in what is considered to be the first professional game without the umpire making those decisions. A full umpiring crew will be there for everything else.

Former outfielder Eric Byrnes will oversee the computer.

"I have been pushing for a computerized strike zone for years," Byrnes said. "Just like instant replay was, it is long overdue. Very much looking forward to seeing how the entire process unfolds. I truly believe we are very close to seeing it implemented in the big leagues, just a matter of time."

The San Rafael Pacifics will use the automated technology in two games against the Vallejo Admirals at Albert Field. The program, Pitchf/x, comes from the company Sportvision in nearby Fremont, offering technology to track and digitally record the full trajectory of live pitches within an inch of accuracy.

"Personally, I have some empathy for those guys back there. It's not easy to track a 100 mph baseball less than a quarter of an inch," Toronto Blue Jays knuckleballer R.A. Dickey said. "That's tough on the human eye. I'm prone to have a little more grace. The one thing you hope for is for consistency."

The technology features three cameras that record the velocity, trajectory and location of every pitch to determine how closely each pitcher comes to hitting the catcher's target.

Not that this will necessarily reach the major leagues any time soon — if ever.

"I have a hard time seeing that ever happen," Toronto manager John Gibbons said. "It'll give somebody a wild idea, though. I guess nobody ever figured they'd see replay, so who knows."

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred doesn't envision it either.

"I think we are a ways away from the technology on, using technology to call balls and strikes. I really do," Manfred said. "It's because of speed. It's because of technology limitations. It's because quite frankly, the strike zone is different for every single guy."

Byrnes will be umpire of the strike zone to relay the information from the computer to everyone in the ballpark. Each night, he plans to donate \$100 for each walk and strikeout to the Pat Tillman Foundation and \$10,000 if he ejects a player for arguing balls and strikes.

Dickey appreciates any work to improve baseball even if he is rooting for umpires to stay for the long haul.

"We've seen replay for the most part be a success. You have to be open to anything that will uphold the integrity of the game," he said. "Even with replay there are still some really gray calls. That being said, the behind-the-plate umpire, I enjoy the human error component of it. It makes for a good spectator sport."

"Plus, it wouldn't give us anybody to yell at. That's kind of part of the fun."

Bryant lifts Cubs with 2-run HR

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — After coming close to hitting a home run the previous few games, Kris Bryant believed he was due to get one to go out.

He got one in a big situation.

Bryant's two-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted the Chicago Cubs to a 9-8 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Monday night.

Colorado had taken an 8-7 lead in the ninth inning on a two-run homer by Carlos Gonzalez — his second of the game. However, Bryant hit the second pitch he saw from John Axford (3-4) over the wall in left-center to give Chicago a dramatic victory and snap a three-game skid.

"The last three or four games I think I've hit five or six out to the warning track. That's obviously frustrating but I believe in baseball gods and I believe they pay you back and I guess I got one today," Bryant said.

"It worked out for us. It was a really good win, that's for sure."

While the Cubs were celebrating a walk-off hit by their newest franchise cornerstone, the Rockies were dealing with the loss of theirs.

Troy Tulowitzki was traded to the Toronto Blue Jays for Jose Reyes and three pitching prospects in a stunning swap of star shortstops.

Tulowitzki was replaced on defense in the bottom of the ninth. After the game, the five-time All-Star spent at least 30 minutes in manager Walt Weiss' office at Wrigley Field, but was unavailable to reporters.

The Cubs, meanwhile, were basking in one of their most thrilling victories.

Trailing 7-4, the Rockies scored four times in the ninth to move ahead. Jason Motte started the inning by allowing a pinch-hit homer to Daniel Descalso, a single to Charlie Blackmon and a double to DJ LeMahieu.

Rafael Soriano (1-0), added to the roster July 20, then came on and gave up Tulowitzki's run-scoring grounder before Gonzalez, who had four hits, roped a two-run homer to right that put Colorado in front.

Gonzalez continued his torrid stretch after hitting five home runs and batting

.476 last week. He hit his 19th homer of the season in the third off Kyle Hendricks to give Colorado a 2-0 lead.

Looking for his third victory of the month, Jorge De La Rosa gave up six runs and five hits in 3²/₃ innings.

"That six-run fourth inning, we definitely needed that," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said.

Chicago was coming off a three-game sweep by lowly Philadelphia to slip 2½ games behind San Francisco for the second National League wild-card spot.

Yankees 6, Rangers 2: Alex Rodriguez had quite a 40th birthday bash.

A-Rod became the fourth player in major league history to homer as a teen and in his 40s, marking his birthday by lining an opposite-field shot to right against his former team.

"It's amazing, hitting one as a teenager and hitting one here today," Rodriguez said. "A lot has happened, and I'm just happy to be here."

Ty Cobb, Rusty Staub and Gary Sheffield are the only other players to homer before turning 20 and then at age 40 or after, according to STATS.

"It's remarkable what he's been able to do, and how good he was at such a young age, and he continues to play well at an older age," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said.

Rodriguez has 24 homers this season and 678 in his career, fourth on the all-time list. The latest came two days after he went deep three times against Minnesota in his previous game.

A-Rod's solo drive in the sixth off Matt Harrison (1-2) was the designated hitter's big league-best sixth homer on his birthday, STATS said, breaking a tie with Todd Helton, Chipper Jones, Derrek Lee and Al Simmons.

The AL East-leading Yankees won for the seventh time in eight games, and their seven-game division lead is their largest since leading by 7½ games on July 29, 2012. New York's 15-5 record in July is the best in the majors.

White Sox 10, Red Sox 8: Adam Eaton had three hits and two RBIs, and visiting Chicago earned its fifth consecutive win.

Eaton had a triple, double and single to key Chicago's 15-hit night. Matt Albers (1-0) got five outs for the win, and David Robertson pitched the ninth for his 22nd

save.

Royals 9, Indians 4: Eric Hosmer drove in four runs, Kendrys Morales added three RBIs and Kansas City opened a 10-game road trip with a victory over spiraling Cleveland.

Hosmer connected for a three-run homer in the first inning off rookie Cody Anderson (2-2) as the Royals rolled to their AL-leading 60th win and improved to 15-5 in their last 20 games.

Cardinals 4, Reds 1: Kolten Wong hit a grand slam, powering Lance Lynn and host St. Louis to the victory.

Wong connected on a 3-2 fastball from rookie Raisel Iglesias (1-3) with two outs in the fourth, putting St. Louis ahead 4-1. Wong's second career grand slam easily cleared the right-field wall, landing in the home bullpen.

Orioles 2, Braves 1 (11): Matt Wieters homered leading off the 11th inning, sending host Baltimore to its third straight victory.

Wieters hit a 1-0 pitch from Luis Avilan (2-4) over the wall in center. It was Wieters' fourth home run and his teammates celebrated by dousing him with a bucket of water at the plate.

Rays 5, Tigers 2: Curt Casali homered twice for host Tampa Bay, and Nathan Karns took a one-hit shutout into the seventh inning.

Diamondbacks 4, Mariners 3 (10): Paul Goldschmidt hit his 22nd homer of the season in the first inning and scored the go-ahead run in the 10th on Jake Lamb's sacrifice fly as Arizona beat host Seattle.

The Diamondbacks won their third straight despite blowing a 3-2 lead in the ninth inning. They took advantage of control issues by Seattle closer Carson Smith (1-4) in the 10th to regain the lead.

Giants 4, Brewers 2: Brandon Crawford hit a two-run homer to help rookie Chris Heston win his fifth consecutive decision, and host San Francisco beat Milwaukee for its sixth straight victory.

Heston (11-5) allowed two runs and five hits over seven innings as the defending World Series champions moved a season-high 11 games over .500 with their seventh home victory in a row and 12th in 13 overall.