



The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

**Understanding and Overcoming the Challenge of Obesity and Overweight in the Armed Forces:
A Workshop
May 7, 2018**

SESSION 3: HIGHLIGHTING INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES
Abstracts

Policy and Office of the Secretary of Defense Strategy

*CPT Andy T. Vu, DDS, Deputy Director, Joint Force Fitness, Operation Live Well,
OUSD(P&R)/Personnel Risk & Resiliency*

The Secretary of Defense's strategy to expand the military's competitive edge focuses on rebuilding military readiness through the development of an agile and resilient force, strengthening alliances and attracting new partnerships, and reforming business practices for greater performance and affordability. The Office of Joint Force Fitness seeks to fulfill that strategy through Operation Live Well's efforts aimed at increasing the deployability and resiliency of the Joint Force. These efforts are guided by the Total Force Fitness Framework, which addresses eight domains of fitness—psychological, spiritual, social, behavioral, medical/dental, physical, nutritional, and environmental—for Military Service members and their families.

Joint Force Fitness leverages internal and external partnerships, monitors legislation, conducts research, develops machine learning and data visualization tools, broadens and supports the Global Force Management Data Initiative, and integrates best practices. The portfolio also includes three behavior change campaigns, which focus on tobacco cessation, responsible alcohol consumption, and the reduction of substance misuse among young, Active Duty Military Service members.

The objective of Joint Force Fitness is to develop a better capability to assess the Total Force Fitness Framework among Military Service members and target interventions to increase individual readiness, decrease individual non-deployability, prevent force loss in theater, and predict force availability for and during deployments. These efforts will enable the Department to prioritize programs that enhance readiness and reduce force loss; to increase the readiness and lethality of the Total Force; and to enhance the Total Force's ability to adapt, fight, and win in every operational environment.

Joint Nutrition Initiatives

Military Nutrition Environment Tool (mNEAT) and Joint Buyers Guide

Lt Col (ret) Tammy J. Lindberg MS, RDN, LD, FAND, HQ Air Force Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA) Health Promotion

The military environmental assessment tool (m-NEAT) is used to evaluate policies and environmental factors at the community level that support healthy eating. The tool was developed by a DoD working group to help commanding officers, health promotion professionals and others stakeholders measure accessibility to healthy food options. The m-NEAT is based upon evidence-based recommendations for a healthy eating environment and is in alignment with:

- Chief, Joint Chief of Staff's Total Force Fitness framework
- National Prevention Strategy
- Center for Disease Control's "Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the U.S."
- *Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities*. Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2017
- 2015 - 2020 United States Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Evaluation includes 11 different sections: Community Programs, Dining Facility (Permanent Party), Dining Facility (Training), Fitness Center, Restaurant (Fast-Food), Restaurant (Fast-Food), Restaurant (Sit-Down or Fast-Casual Restaurant), Snack Shop (locate in Billeting/Lodging), Stores: (Convenience), Stores: (Commissary), Vending: (Refrigerated and Non-Refrigerated), and Worksite. Generated resulting scores are used in the development of a Local Action Plan.

The Joint Services Buyer's Guide is tool for the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps Food Programs to communicate detailed guidance and specifications to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Troop Support, which acts on behalf of the Services to purchase the food used in the dining facilities. The Guide is an ongoing collaboration between the Joint Military Services Buyer's Guide work group, Joint Subsistence Policy Board (JSPB) and the Department of Defense (DoD) Nutrition Committee.

Go for Green nutrition labeling system in military dining facilities

Beth Moylan, RD, Director of Performance Nutrition, Consortium of Health and Military Performance, Uniformed Services University

Go for Green® 2.0 (G4G) is a joint service performance-nutrition initiative targeting military dining facilities. G4G 2.0 improves the food environment where Military Service Members (MSM) live and work, with the overall aim to optimize performance, readiness, and health of our MSM.

G4G originated with the Soldier Fueling Initiative in 2008, where its signature stoplight-color labeling was introduced. From 2014–2016, G4G was rebranded as DoD-wide G4G 2.0, with a new logo and entirely new programmatic approach, which incorporates the latest in health

promotion science and behavior change. Beyond stoplight-color labeling, G4G 2.0 also includes: choice architecture strategies (behavioral design) that nudge diners towards healthier, Green-coded choices; menu standards that require a minimum number of Green-coded options; promotion of Green-coded choices through featured meals, displays and samples; and a robust marketing campaign through print and social media messages.

Pilot testing and military-specific research have demonstrated how G4G can function within the unique DoD feeding environment to maximize impact on the nutritional status of Service Members. To achieve replicability and scalability, the program has been standardized, Program Requirements written, and numerous toolkits developed to support users. A G4G 2.0 website allows seamless access to resources.

G4G 2.0, currently being adopted across all branches of the military, is governed by the DoD Nutrition Committee (DoDNC) and Joint Subsistence Policy Board (JSPB). Currently, the Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) at the Uniformed Services University serves as a program office and hub for G4G 2.0-related programmatic developments, resources, research, and training.

Service Specific Initiatives

Army

MAJ Tamara E. Osgood, MS, RD, LD, Division Chief, Health Education and Applications, U.S. Army Public Health Center Performance Triad, Nutrition Lead

The Army is addressing threats of poor nutrition, suboptimal activity, and obesity through strategic and tactical initiatives at multiple levels of the social ecological framework. These include but are not limited to: Fit for Performance (the Army's standardized weight management program), Army Wellness Centers (standardized wellness initiatives to empower sustainable behavior change through health education and technology), and the Performance Triad (Sleep, Activity and Nutrition education). Program evaluation studies from these initiatives have yielded promising results related to nutrition and weight-related outcomes among Soldiers; findings also reveal challenges with systematic widespread adoption and implementation. For example, similar to civilian weight loss programs, Fit for Performance evaluation activities found difficulties with standardized implementation and participant recruitment, retention, and follow up. Results from an AWC client outcome evaluation suggest that nearly 60% of AWC clients with at least one follow-up assessment experience improvements in body fat percentage and body mass index. Soldier participation in Performance Triad education activities is associated with improved knowledge and nutrition behavior changes but not changes in BMI. Results of several evaluation studies across these initiatives indicate Soldiers' desire improved access to and availability of healthy food options on the installation environment and the importance of policy changes. The Healthy Army Communities initiative is striving to address this gap through a coordinated, Army-wide effort to improve the food environment on military installations via assessment and modifications. Through advocacy, intervention, and evaluation, the Army is implementing multiple solutions to promote and sustain wellness for the Total Army Family.

Air Force

Lt Col Jennifer B. Harward, MS, RD, Deputy Chief, Air Force Health Promotion, Air Force Medical Support Agency

The United States Air Force is currently testing initiatives to enhance the health and nutrition of Airmen, dependents, and retirees. One of the resources the Air Force has utilized is the CDC's Community Guide for the selection of programs to incorporate Community Preventive Services Task Force guidelines and recommendations.

Tele-Medical Nutrition Therapy was selected to expand medical nutrition therapy services to beneficiaries who did not have access to care from a local registered dietitian. This initiative uses video teleconferencing technology to provide nutrition counseling, behavior therapy, health and wellness coaching, health education and counseling as components of preventive, therapeutic, and restorative health, to include obesity.

Healthcare to Health, which is an umbrella for two programs, Group Lifestyle Balance and Military Families 5-2-1-0 is also being tested at select bases. The Group Lifestyle Balance is a diabetes prevention program and 5-2-1-0 strives to improve knowledge and health behaviors in families.

Health Coaching is being tested at two bases within the primary care clinic to provide a resource to the provider to refer their patients for modifiable behaviors to help improve their patient's health. The patient can select from four standard programs: weight management, stress management, tobacco cessation, and improved physical activity.

Air Force Smart Fueling Initiative stemmed from a decrease in recruits meeting the weight standard and active service members failing to meet the weight standard. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is leading the team of numerous stakeholders to work synergistically to improve the nutrition environment with the ultimate goal of ensuring Airmen are afforded healthy food options.

Marine Corps

Brian J. McGuire, MS, ATC, CSCS, Deputy Director, Force Fitness Division, USMC Training and Education Command

As professional warrior-athletes, every Marine must be physically fit, regardless of age, grade, or duty assignment. Fitness is an essential component of Marine Corps combat readiness. Furthermore, physical fitness is an indispensable aspect of leadership. The habits of self-discipline and personal commitment that are required to gain and maintain a high level of physical fitness are inherent to the Marine Corps way of life and must be a part of the character of every Marine. Marines who are not physically fit are a detriment and detract from the combat readiness of their unit. The Marine Corps Physical Fitness Program is in a continual state of analysis, design, development implementation and evaluation in collaboration with fitness, health and medical subject matter experts. Based on this process, the Marine Corps has recently

made a number of profound changes to its general fitness, occupational fitness and associated programs to optimize the fitness and health of Marines. Among the more significant of these changes are the institution of a Force Fitness Instructor Program, implementing a Post Exercise Nutritional Supplementation Program, utilizing a Performance Nutrition Pack to complement dining facility offerings, and linking performance on fitness tests to body composition program decisions. There are other enhancements as well such as placing Civilian Certified Athletic Trainers in training and operational units and expanding the strength and conditioning equipment available to Marines in austere settings. These enhancements are coupled with the enduring setting of high fitness and body composition standards and ensuring accountability with related policies.

Navy

James Sherrard, Head of Health Promotion and Wellness at Naval Hospital Pensacola

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) is the Navy and Marine Corps' center for public health services. NMCPHC provides leadership and expertise to ensure mission readiness through disease prevention and health promotion in support of the National Military Strategy. Within NMCPHC, the Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department provides programs to help sailors and their families improve nutrition choices, physical activity, and other lifestyle factors to influence better weight management. These programs are both clinical and non-clinical to improve access to care within the fleet, however, individual participation is not usually mandatory. Active duty sailors, with access to a medical treatment facility, one-on-one appointments with a registered dietitian are available, however, some duty locations afford less access to this asset. ShipShape, the Navy's official weight management program, is a non-clinical, facilitator-led weekly course to address nutrition, activity and behavioral changes. ShipShape is open to all DoD beneficiaries and can be easily conducted at virtually every location where our sailors serve. Additionally, NMCPHC provides abundant HPW resources intended to be used for every command-level health promotion efforts. This HPW toolbox is usable by all clinical and non-clinical health promoters throughout the fleet to help improve access to credible information and to improve readiness.

Veterans Affairs Programs

MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans

Susan D. Raffa, PhD, National Program Director, Weight Management National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Veterans Health Administration

Nearly 80% of Veterans seen in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities are overweight or obese. To address growing rates of overweight and obesity, in 2006 VHA implemented the MOVE!® Weight Management Program for Veterans (MOVE!), an evidence-based, population-focused approach. MOVE! assists Veterans who are obese or overweight with an obesity-associated condition (e.g., hypertension, type 2 diabetes and prediabetes, dyslipidemia) to achieve clinically significant weight loss. The program adheres to evidence-based recommendations from the [Department of Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense \(VA/DoD\) Clinical Practice Guideline for Screening and Management of Overweight and Obesity \(CPG\)](#),

which include comprehensive lifestyle intervention (CLI) as a critical component of successful and sustained weight loss programs. Other VA/DoD CPG recommendations include: yearly screening and documentation of overweight/obesity; pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery as adjuncts to CLI; shared decision-making among providers and patients to support patient engagement based on individual values and preferences; and repeated assessment of response to treatment, with adjustments as needed to ensure clinically-meaningful weight change. Facility-based MOVE! Coordinators and Provider Champions lead program activities and tailor programming to the population of Veterans they serve. More than 800,000 Veterans have participated in MOVE! since program inception. Approximately 20% of Veteran participants achieve clinically meaningful weight loss, i.e., weight loss of at least 5% of initial weight. For Veterans with intense and sustained participation in MOVE!, i.e., 8 sessions over 4 months, approximately 30% achieve clinically meaningful weight loss.

Veterans Affairs Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program

Sean Walsh, RD, CSC (Certified Sous Chef), Co-Lead National Healthy Teaching Kitchens

Scientific research has shown that nutrition plays an important role in both the prevention and management of common chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension. A healthy diet is a key component of overall wellness for everyone and can be enjoyed by all. One way to promote good nutrition is to experience healthy, nutritious food that is delicious. Culinary education classes can increase self-efficacy related to cooking skills, fruit and vegetable intake, and nutrition knowledge of the participants. Group cooking classes allow a variety of participants to be actively involved in open discussion while learning to cook and discussing healthy food topics. Cooking classes that focus on healthy, quick, and affordable meals motivate participants to engage in a healthier lifestyle at home. A culinary program that incorporates hands-on nutrition and culinary skills, in a social setting, provides a greater chance of behavioral change when compared to other education tools. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) has implemented the Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) initiative in order to provide culinary education for our Veterans and family members with the goals of 1) increasing use of fresh foods, 2) increasing healthy food choices, and 3) learning skills to progress toward personal health goals. Since there are different levels of implementation, NFS is collecting basic information via the NFS Annual Report such as costs associated with HTK Program, the number of classes given each fiscal year, and the staff hours required to provide the classes.