



NAVY MEDICINE'S SUPPORT TO HEALTH DIPLOMACY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

"Medicine is a common language that bridges barriers and language. Military medical partnerships provide a foundation of hope, comfort, and stability that are the seeds of building and strengthening trust among the U.S. and our partners around the world. These relationships not only benefit the global community, they are integral to our national security strategy."

Vice Admiral Adam M. Robinson Jr., MC
Surgeon General of the Navy

BACKGROUND:

The 2011 *National Military Strategy* states that "our military power is most effective when employed in support and in concert with other elements of power as part of whole-of-nation approaches to foreign policy." Navy Medicine plays a vital support role in this strategic mission. After responding to two tsunamis in six years, two earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti, and a hurricane in the Gulf Coast, we have proven the necessity of a robust expeditionary military medical force to bring hope and stability to places and people in dire need, which ultimately leads to more peace, security, and prosperity in the broader world. Japan is but the latest reminder of the importance of our ability to partner with others to provide medical surge capabilities.

These partnerships are translating into a host of new medical advancements in areas like disease prevention, wounded warrior care, and Traumatic Brain Injury treatment, and especially the care we are providing our warriors directly on the battlefield. Embracing joint, interagency, whole-of-nation, multi-national, and public/private partnerships is where we must go if we are to truly have a enduring impact on global health issues.

PARTNERSHIPS IN SUPPORT OF HEALTH DIPLOMACY:

- USNS Comfort is finishing a 5-month deployment to South America, Central America and the Caribbean in support of *Continuing Promise 2011* and USNS Mercy returned from their 5 month *Pacific Partnership* mission last August after caring for over 210,000 citizens from 13 countries. These are proactive humanitarian civic assistance missions that include combined assets from partnering nations, and a variety of non-governmental and intergovernmental agencies (NGOs/IGOs) that work with host nations to assist in civil-military operations in response to future crises. These missions are illustrative of how we as a nation are creating "whole-of-nation" solutions by enlarging our engagement with others around the world. They are also a key component of our maritime strategy. (See www.navy.mil/maritime)
- Our partnerships also extend to countries such as Botswana, Djibouti, Egypt, Vietnam, and Peru where we house research and development labs and work directly with our host nation military medical counterparts. These partnerships provide needed resources and diplomatic tools for the interagency to develop their own initiatives with foreign governments. Our engagement programs include partnerships in undersea and aerospace medicine, vaccine and infectious disease research, environmental health and toxicology, and surgical and reconstructive research, including regenerative medicine. Our forward presence overseas enables us to provide preparedness regarding potential threats – infectious, toxic and environmental – existent on six continents.

KEY THEMES:

- Our method of providing "shoulder to shoulder" medical science, infectious disease and health hazard support to host nation governments has been repeatedly cited as their best practice model for building more trust, cooperation, and collaboration with the United States. To that end, we have held extensive international engagements and development relationships in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia-Pacific for more than 66 years.
- Partnerships are translating into a host of new medical advancements in areas like disease prevention, wounded warrior care, and TBI treatment, and especially the care we are providing our warriors directly on the battlefield. Embracing joint, interagency, whole-of-nation, multi-national, and public/private partnerships is where we must go if we are to truly have a enduring impact on global health issues.
- These broad activities represent only a fraction of what Navy Medicine provides in support of our nation's national security, diplomatic, and development missions. They highlight our enhanced and enlarged global footprint of health diplomacy. These partnerships should serve as a model to grow and sustain our own capacity as well as the capacity of interagency programs for the future. As global health diplomats and ambassadors, we are key element of our nation's "global force for good."