



# Advancing Female Force Readiness

**CAPT Catherine Luna**

**Chief, Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED)  
Office of Women's Health (OWH), M332**

12 July 2022





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# OWH Priorities



# OWH Priorities

The mission of Navy Medicine's Office of Women's Health (OWH) is to keep as many Active Duty female Sailors and Marines in full duty status as possible by supporting their medical readiness and ensuring that women's health is an integral component of total fleet health.



## Health Literacy

**Improve health literacy** and empower self-care among service women.



## Medically Ready Force

**Equip a medically ready force** to provide quality women's healthcare.



## Cultivate Culture

**Cultivate a culture** that encourages proactive management of female readiness to support service women throughout their careers.



## Shape Policy

**Shape Navy and Marine Corps policy** to advance women's healthcare and solidify comprehensive women's health standards.



# **OWH Ongoing — Process Improvement — Efforts**





# Embedded Women's Health Provider (EWHP) Pilot

The EWHP Pilot was designed to meet demand for increased access to comprehensive women's healthcare and promote force readiness. The Pilot took place from October 2020 to June 2021 at Naval Stations Norfolk and Mayport.

## PURPOSE & IMPACT

- Shifted women's health providers to a more readily accessible location for the active duty population, (e.g., the waterfront).
- Services included contraception, well-woman care, menstrual management, screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pap tests, and point-of-care pregnancy tests.
- Due to the success of the EWHP Pilot, the OWH recommends **EWHP Program expansion** throughout the Fleet to further increase force readiness and support operational providers.



### READINESS IMPACT

**987** estimated duty hours have been saved due to EWHP access.

**67** IDCs and GMOs have received formal women's healthcare training from the EWHP.





# Access to Contraceptive Services

Operation Process Improvement for Non-Delayed Contraception (PINC) established clinics to offer same-day contraceptive services to service women.

## PURPOSE & IMPACT

- Currently, 23 PINC Clinics are open (14 Naval, 4 Air Force, 3 Army, 2 National Capital Region locations), offering easy access to same-day contraceptive services, improving patient satisfaction, and targeting service women at risk for unintended pregnancy.
- In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many PINC clinics shifted to either a telehealth platform, or asking service members to call ahead of arrival to encourage social distancing.



### READINESS IMPACT

In 2020, an estimated **46%** of female Sailors' pregnancies were unplanned.<sup>1</sup> **3,440,387** non-deployable days result from unintended pregnancy annually<sup>2,3</sup>

Improved long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) rates among service women, resulting in **increased operational readiness** of service members.



# Virtual Women's Health (VWH) Clinic Pilot

Appointments through the VWH Clinic Pilot focus on contraceptive counseling and prescriptions to decrease unplanned pregnancies, one of the largest drivers of non-deployability in the Navy.

## PURPOSE & IMPACT

- The VWH Clinic Pilot was established in in December 2021 in partnership with the Virtually Integrated Patient Readiness and Remote Care Clinic (VIPRR) to **provide contraceptive counseling and prescriptions** to decrease unplanned pregnancies.
- The pilot is administered by a certified nurse midwife at Naval Health Clinic Oak Harbor who offers **15 virtual women's health appointments weekly**.



### PATIENT IMPACT

**55%** of patients were provided with a contraception prescription.

**4.9** out of 5.0 is the average patient score for scheduling ease, satisfaction with care, and likelihood to use the offering again.







# Responding to *Roe v. Wade*

The OWH is continuing to monitor and analyze the impact of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* for patients and providers across the country.

## CURRENT CHALLENGE AND NEXT STEPS

- On 24 June 2022, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by the Supreme Court; access to abortion care will be determined by state law.
- Currently, TRICARE-covered abortions (for a pregnancy that is the result of rape, incest, or would endanger the life of the pregnant person) can be **performed at military treatment facilities (MTFs) and civilian health facilities by TRICARE-authorized providers**. Consultation with **Defense Health Agency DHA/ Office of the General Counsel (OCG)** required to navigate changes in designated state laws.
- Abortions not covered by TRICARE will require the service member to comply with state laws and pay out of pocket (travel may be required).
- The OWH is collaborating with Navy leadership, all Services, and DHA to mitigate impending barriers to access and ensure service members and beneficiaries can exercise their right to reproductive care.
- Unplanned pregnancies will continue to be a threat to force readiness. The OWH will continue to ensure access to contraceptive care to reduce this risk.



### DEMAND FOR CARE

**26** states are certain to attempt to ban abortion now that *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned.<sup>5</sup>

After the Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, **U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin** stated “I am committed to taking care of our people and ensuring the readiness and resilience of our Force. The Department is examining this decision closely and evaluating our policies to ensure we continue to **provide seamless access to reproductive healthcare** as permitted by federal law.”



# **Female Force Readiness Strategy and 2022 Summit**





# Female Force Readiness Summit

From 09-10 March 2022, BUMED OWH hosted the virtual 2022 Female Force Readiness Summit. Outputs from the Summit were used to refresh the 2022 Female Force Readiness Strategy.

## SUMMIT OVERVIEW

- The 2022 Female Force Readiness Summit included **55+ diverse Navy and Marine Corps Leaders**, representing 31 duty stations and various specialties across Navy Medicine.
- Attendees reflected upon recent advancements in women's health and readiness, discussed new challenges and priorities, and identified strategic objectives aligned to the evolving needs of the force.
- **The outputs of the Summit are being leveraged to refresh the Female Force Readiness Strategy.**

## STRATEGY SIGNIFICANCE

- Comprehensive women's healthcare is **inconsistently available** and sex-specific barriers to medical readiness still exist, placing both force readiness and Naval superiority at risk.
- The OWH and FFRCC will continue to conduct efforts to rectify this problem and **refresh the current Female Force Readiness Strategy** to guide efforts to increase medical readiness, resiliency, and retention of the female force and to improve comprehensive care delivery to female Sailors and Marines.

## 2022 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Improve health literacy** and empower self-care among service women through educational outreach.
- **Increase access** to women's healthcare in all settings, including operational environments.
- **Equip a medically ready force** to provide quality women's healthcare by standardizing women's health proficiencies, education, and training for operational providers.
- **Cultivate a culture** among leaders, providers, and service members that encourages proactive management of female readiness to support service women throughout their careers.
- **Shape Navy and Marine Corps policy** to advance women's healthcare and solidify comprehensive women's health standards.



# Future Policy Goals



# Future Policy Goals

Looking to the future, the OWH and FFRCC will continue to drive policy revisions that support the advancement of the female force and total force readiness.



*The OWH, in tandem with the FFRCC, continues to identify opportunities to further include and support service members through policy action. Policy revisions are an essential tool to ensure the needs of service women are being considered at the leadership level and implemented down at the deckplate.*

1

## Fertility Support

Support service members in need of or undergoing fertility treatment by shaping policy to allow for increased opportunities or **temporary additional duty** (TAD) options for service members receiving fertility treatment.

2

## Pregnancy Loss Support

Provide policy support for service members who experience a pregnancy loss by **standardizing convalescent leave periods**, and **exemption periods for body composition and physical fitness testing**.

3

## Collaborative Efforts

Collaborate with DoD Health Affairs, DoD Women in Service Working Group, DHA Women and Infant Clinical Community, Veteran's Affairs (VA), and other bodies to support various women's health policy initiatives.

4

## Pregnancy Termination

Identify policy areas to **protect a service member's access, and right to pregnancy termination** following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.



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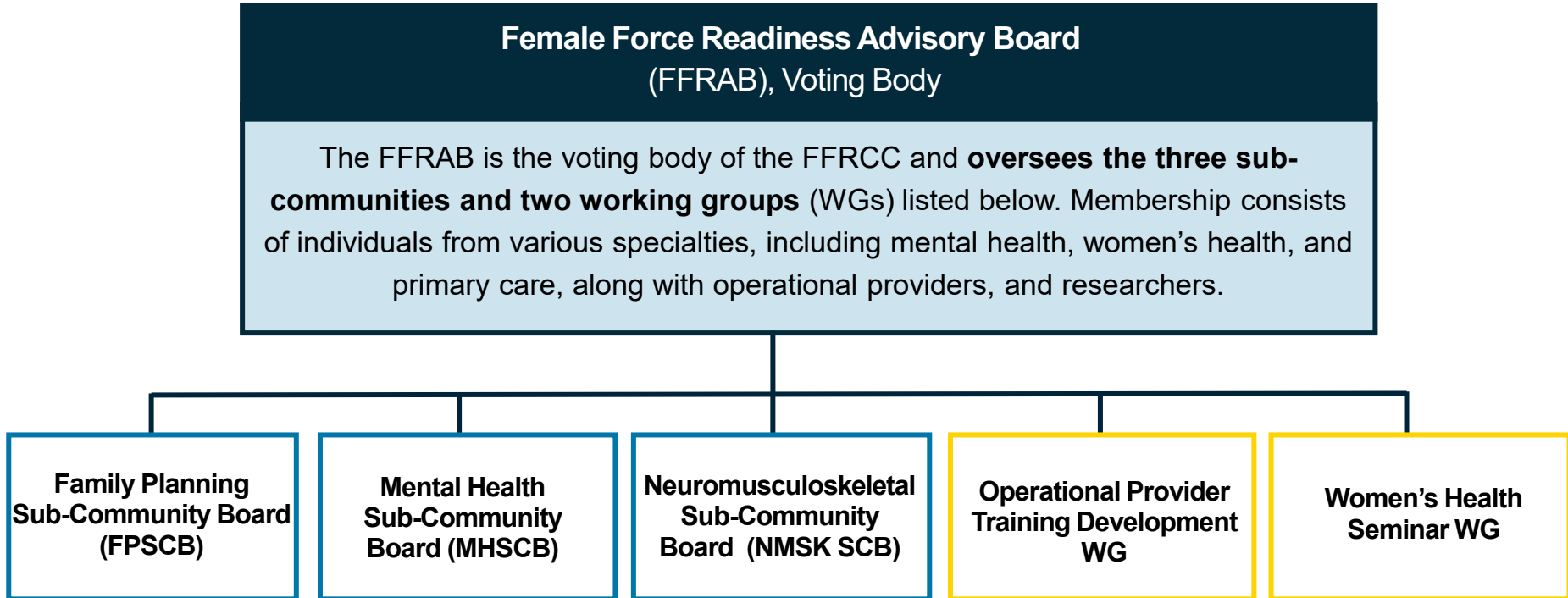
# FFRCC Overview

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# FFRCC Structure

The FFRCC is a multidisciplinary body of Navy and Marine Corps leaders and providers that collaborate with the OWH to optimize medical readiness, resiliency, and lethality of the female force.







# Family Planning Sub-Community Board (FPSCB)

The FPSCB consists of more than 25 members from various specialties including obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN), family medicine, certified nurse midwives (CNMs), and pharmacy.

## MISSION

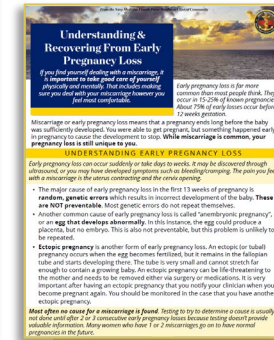
*Provide comprehensive family planning care by promoting Navy-wide collaboration and PI to enhance health outcomes and optimize mission readiness for active duty female Sailors and Marines.*

## PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

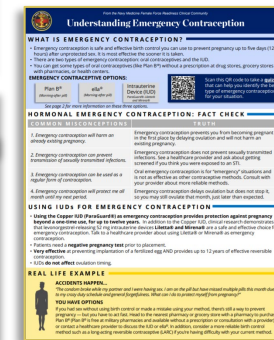
- Created and refreshed [11 Provider Treatment Algorithms](#) to assist operational providers in recognizing and treating women's health concerns within their scope of practice.
- Supported development of **Process Improvement for Non-Delayed Contraception (PINC) Clinics** to offer easy access to walk-in, same-day contraceptive services, targeting service members at risk for unintended pregnancy. There are currently 14 open Naval Walk-In Contraceptive Clinics.
- The FPSCB produced **resources to advance family planning care**, including:
  - [Service Member Guide: Recovery from Early Pregnancy Loss](#)
  - [Service Member Handout on Emergency Contraception](#)

## FUTURE GOALS

- The FPSCB is developing resources to empower service members and providers to optimize women's healthcare and promote readiness, including:
  - A new **nurse-run protocol to guide treatment of service members with vaginal discharge.**
  - A comprehensive resource on **ovarian cysts.**



*Service Member Guide: Recovery From Early Pregnancy Loss*



*Service Member Handout on Emergency Contraception*



# PINC Clinic Locations

There are currently 14 Walk-In Contraceptive clinics across the Naval Enterprise.

## WALK-IN CLINIC LOCATIONS

1. Naval Medical Center (NMC) Camp Lejeune, NC
2. NMC San Diego, CA
3. NMC Portsmouth, VA
4. Naval Hospital (NH) Twentynine Palms, CA
5. NH Bremerton, WA
6. NH Camp Pendleton, CA
7. NH Jacksonville, FL
8. NH Pensacola, FL
9. United States Naval Hospital (USNH) Guam
10. USNH Okinawa, Japan
11. USNH Naples, Italy
12. USNH Rota, Spain
13. USNH Sigonella, Italy
14. USNH Yokosuka, Japan





# Mental Health Sub-Community (MHSCB)

The MHSCB consists of more than 35 members from various specialties including psychiatry, social work, psychology, and behavioral health.

## MISSION

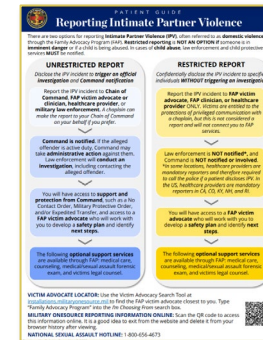
*Ensure the delivery of comprehensive, evidence-based mental healthcare-in support of active duty readiness and retention, as well as family member care, by promoting Enterprise-wide collaboration, formalization, and process improvement (PI) through education and research.*

## PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported development and execution of a **Mental Health Provider Survey** to assess Navy Medicine mental health providers' capabilities to treat female-specific mental health concerns. Survey was designed to identify gaps in current provider capabilities and inform future trainings.
- The **MHSCB developed guides / resources** for service members on various topics, including:
  - [Intimate Partner Violence](#)
  - [Normalizing Mental Healthcare](#)

## FUTURE GOALS

- Future potential initiatives include :
  - Developing a resource on **comprehensive well-being** focused on the critical nature of self-care and wellbeing to maintain warfighter strength, toughness, and resiliency.
  - Developing a resource to support the **reintegration of service members after deployment.**



*Reporting Intimate Partner Violence*



*Normalizing Military Mental Healthcare: Myth vs. Fact*



# Neuromusculoskeletal Sub-Community Board (NMSK SCB)

The NMSK SCB consists of more than 20 members from various specialties, including family medicine, nutrition, sports medicine, physical therapy, and occupational medicine.

## MISSION

*Provide comprehensive, evidence-based neuromusculoskeletal care by promoting Navy-wide collaboration and PI between Fleet, Marine, and medical assets to improve health outcomes, operational mission readiness, and retention rates for all active duty female Sailors and Marines.*

## PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

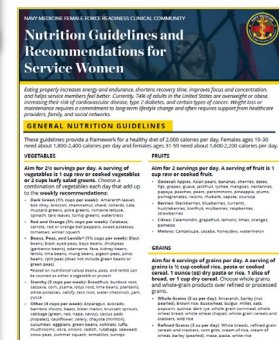
- Routed a point paper on Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy (PFPT) to the Medical Officer of the Marine Corps recommending different courses of action (COAs) to support PFPT for service members, based on demonstrated demand for this service.
- The **NMSK SCB developed guides / resources** for service members on various topics, including:
  - [Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport \(RED-S\)](#)
  - [Nutrition Guidelines and Recommendations for Service Women](#)

## FUTURE GOALS

- The group is developing a **self-directed video exercise program** to prevent back and hip injuries among service members.
- The NMSK SCB is currently developing two point papers:
  - Recommendations to **support pre-enlistment injury prevention training**, including additions to the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) App for Navy Recruits.
  - Recommendations to address sex disparities in the Navy Body Composition Program.



*Provider Guidance on RED-S*



*Nutrition Guidelines and Recommendations for Service Women*





# Working Groups

The FFRCC currently supports two WGs, both aimed at improving clinical proficiency in women's healthcare through trainings for operational providers on a wide variety of women's health topics.



## OPERATIONAL PROVIDER TRAINING DEVELOPMENT WG

- **Mission:** Promote clinical proficiency in women's healthcare through developing and implementing a training curriculum for operational providers with a focus on women's health and deployability in the operational environment.
- The OWH identified **5 key women's health proficiencies** for operational providers and has proposed to Navy Medicine leadership they be implemented as mandatory skills requirements. The OPTD WG is developing training to enable operational providers to maintain these proficiencies.



## WOMEN'S HEALTH SEMINAR WG

- **Mission:** Develop and execute a live Navy-specific virtual women's health training program designed for operational clinicians focused on basic, deckplate-level women's health concerns and medical readiness topics.
- Seminar topics include preventative healthcare, common women's health concerns, women's health considerations prior to and during deployment, and mental healthcare.
- The Seminar is currently planned for **November 2022**, offering continuing education credits for all who are able to attend.



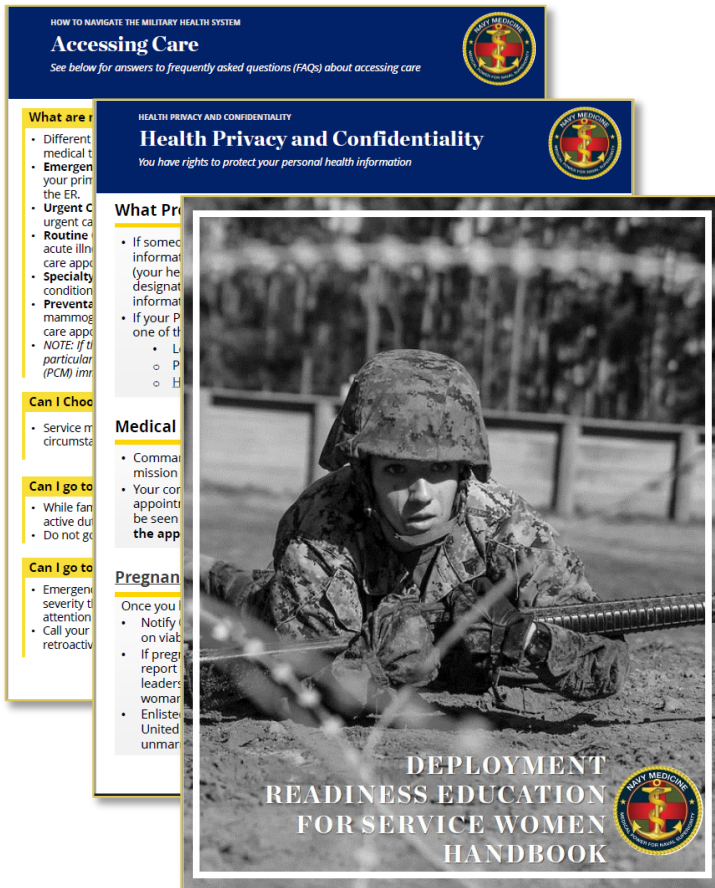
# Past FFRCC Accomplishments





# DRES Handbook

The Deployment Readiness Education for Service Women Handbook includes information on healthy practices and available resources to support service women's healthcare needs and challenges before and during deployment.



## DRES HANDBOOK

- The OWH and FFRCC developed the DRES Handbook, a user-friendly digital resource that covers important healthcare information for service women to reference pre-, during, and post-deployment.
- The DRES Handbook was developed into a tri-service Mobile App by the DHA.



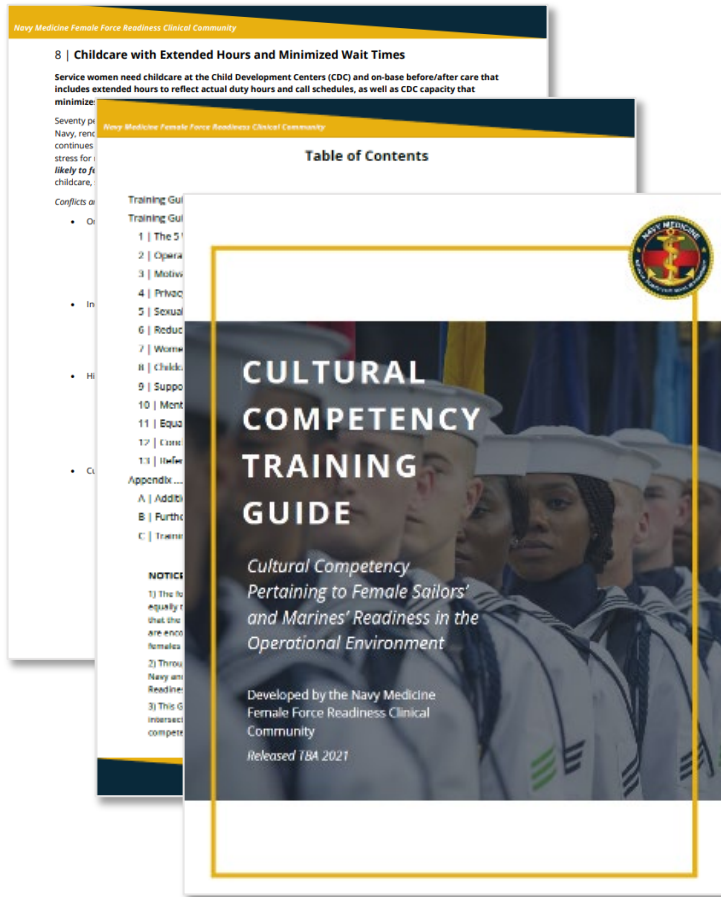
Scan the quick response (QR) code here to download the **DRES Mobile App**.





# Cultural Competency Guide

Resource for Navy and Marine Corps leadership to understand cultural competency and its importance for the readiness of service members.



## CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- This guide offers a self-paced learning resource introducing cultural competency and its importance to service members' readiness for Navy and Marine Corps leadership to identify knowledge gaps and promote further learning.
- The resource covers eight high priority needs for female Sailors and Marines, and details suggested actions that leaders can take to address each need.
- This Guide is available [here](#) on the Women's Health Webpage.







# Women's Health Training Toolkit

A toolkit designed to enable operational medical personnel to host educational sessions on key women's health issues.

## TRAINING TOOLKIT

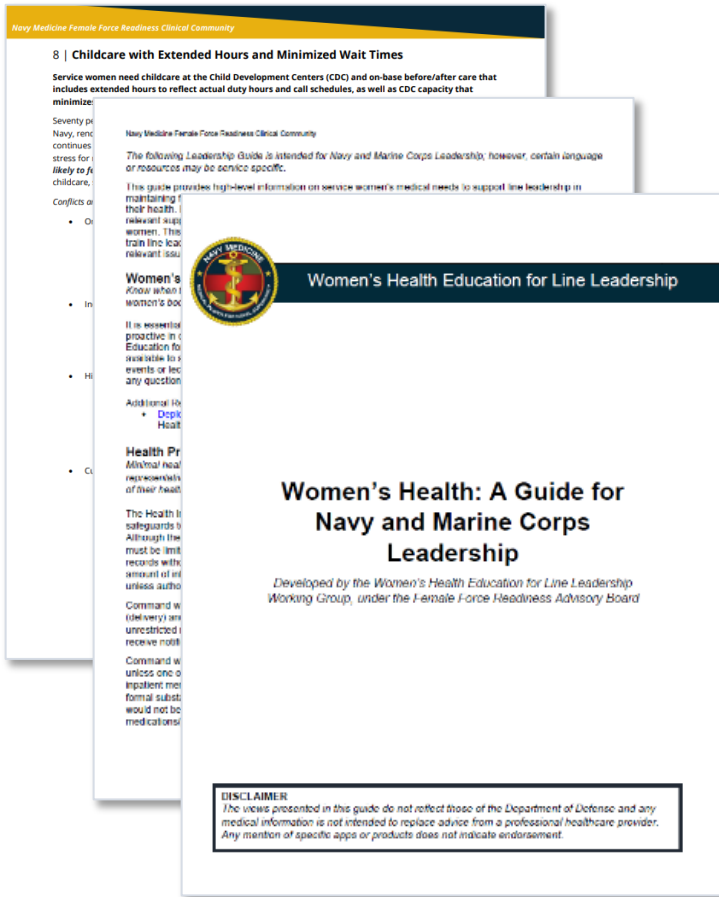
- This toolkit includes all components that a unit's medical department would need to host an educational and engaging women's health training, including topics such as mental and sexual health.
- Components of the toolkit include:
  1. A training planning guide to support medical personnel preparing to host a training.
  2. Curriculum and associated presentation materials (i.e., PowerPoint slides for each module) designed to educate service members on women's healthcare.
  3. A facilitation guide to enhance the training experience to be more interactive.
- This Toolkit is available [here](#) on the Women's Health Webpage.





# Women's Health Education for Line Leadership

A guide which summarizes key factors of women's readiness and leadership's role in fostering a supportive environment for women to proactively manage their health and readiness.



## LEADERSHIP GUIDE

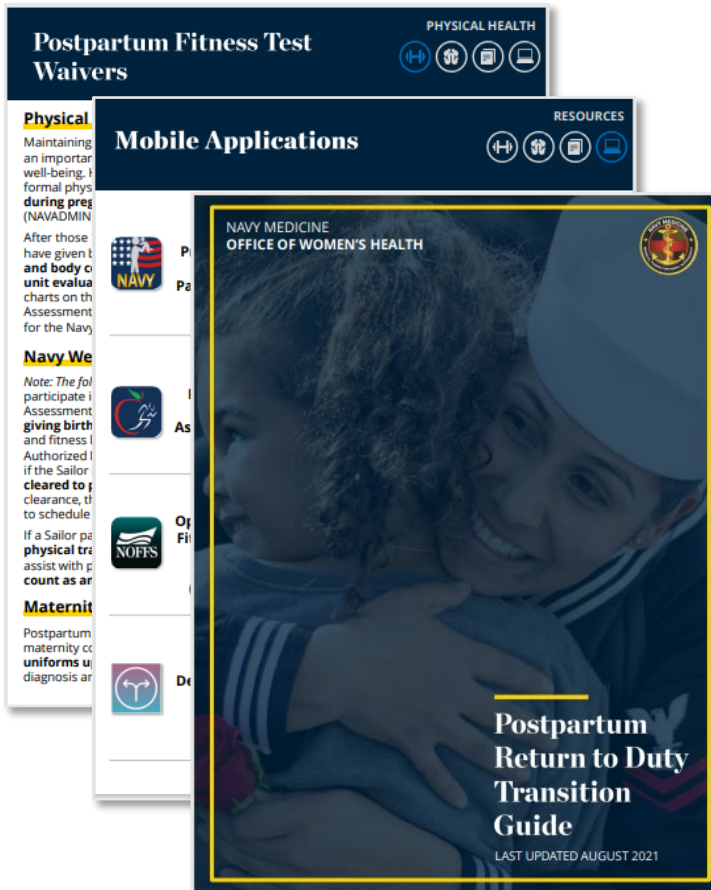
- Provides high-level information on service women's medical readiness needs to support line leadership in maintaining force readiness and fostering a supportive environment for women to proactively manage their health.
- The guide provides line leaders with an overview of relevant women's health knowledge, health privacy and confidentiality, and why understanding women's health is essential for increasing force readiness.
- Each section includes additional supporting resources (e.g., Navy and Marine Corps policies, relevant support services, and education resources) that leadership can make available to service members.
- This Guide is available [here](#) on the Women's Health Webpage.





# Postpartum Return to Duty Transition Guide

Shares information on physical and emotional recovery after giving birth, support resources for military families, and other relevant information to support service members' return to active duty following childbirth.



## POSTPARTUM RETURN TO DUTY TRANSITION GUIDE

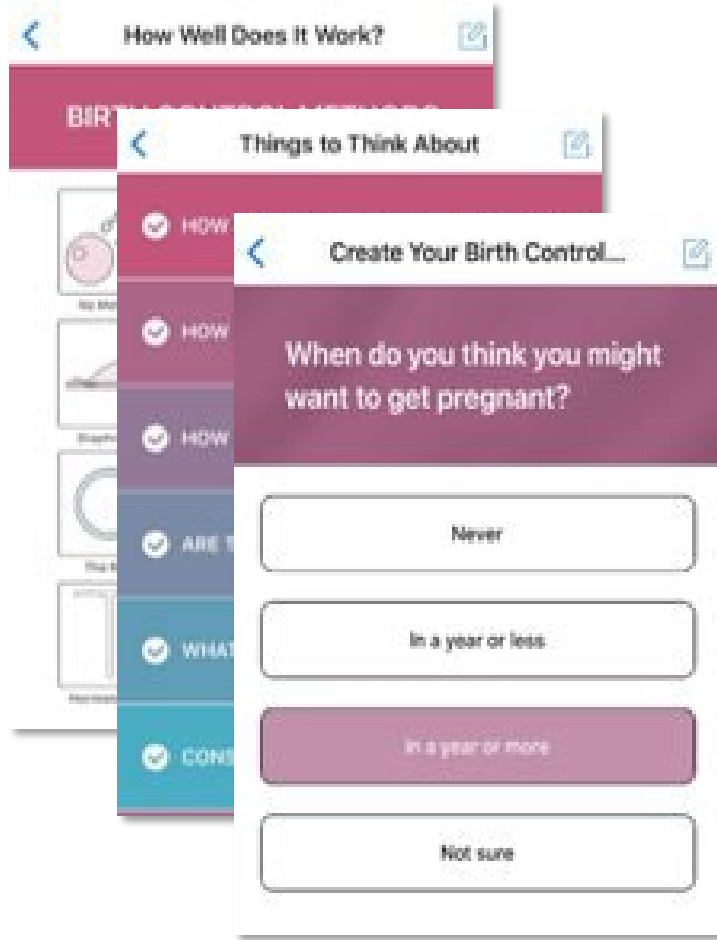
- Provides service members with high-level information on how to safely and effectively return to duty following a pregnancy.
- The guide includes information on physical fitness and mental and physical health.
- Each section includes additional supporting resources (e.g., Navy and Marine Corps policies, relevant support services, and education resources) that are available for service members.
- This Guide is available [here](#) on the Women's Health Webpage.





# DHA Mobile App: Decide + Be Ready

An interactive way to learn about birth control options and the key considerations to help determine the best birth control option for each service member.



## DECIDE + BE READY APP

- The [Decide + Be Ready App](#) explains the basics of different methods of contraception, including effectiveness, how it is used, and side effects.
- The App also offers a section on considerations for service members with information on menstrual management and how deployment may affect different forms of birth control.



Scan the quick response (QR) code here to download the **Decide + Be Ready** mobile app.



# Questions & Answer Session



## Q&A Session

*The FFRCC shapes its efforts based on the feedback received from service members. We want to hear from YOU!*

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Please share your **ideas and recommendations** on how the Female Force Readiness Clinical Community can support service members!

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Are there any additional **factors preventing** the female force from achieving peak performance and lethality?





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