

Female Force Readiness Clinical Community

Quarterly Recap | FY21 (September 2021 – November 2021)



The Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) Office of Women's Health (OWH) developed this Recap with the purpose of highlighting current initiatives, updates, decisions, and discussions which took place during the previous three months. We will regularly disseminate the Recap to the Female Force Readiness Clinical Community (FFRCC) members and women's health advocates across the Navy Medicine Enterprise to increase visibility and communication on matters pertaining to women's health and readiness.

BUMED OWH Updates

Provider Treatment Algorithm Refresh

The BUMED OWH and Family Planning Sub-Community Board (FPSCB) collaborated to refresh 11 Provider Treatment Algorithms. The algorithms are instructional tools to aid healthcare providers in triaging common women's health conditions in remote settings. Each algorithm is an interactive PDF that includes easy-to-use navigation, so that users can quickly jump to their desired content. The Provider Treatment Algorithms can be found [here](#) on a CAC-enabled milSuite website.

Navy and Marine Corps COVID-19 Vaccine Requirements

Pregnant and breastfeeding servicemembers are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine (per the Defense Health Agency (DHA) memorandum ("[Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members](#)"). Servicemembers may request a 30-day temporary medical exemption from COVID-19 vaccination if deemed appropriate by their provider. The OWH developed a [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) resource](#) to provide guidance to Marines and Sailors regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Women's Health Training Toolkit Working Group (WG)

The Women's Health Training Toolkit WG developed a Training Toolkit to equip medical personnel to lead engaging women's health seminars for the members of their unit. The Toolkit provides standardized, evidence-based educational content that promotes active engagement and interactive learning with diverse student audiences. Toolkit topics include women's health and deployment, pregnancy and motherhood in the Navy and Marine Corps, and navigating the Military Health System. The Toolkit also connects servicemembers to resources to proactively manage their healthcare needs. The Toolkit will be piloted at select locations, including an operational unit at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Hill, and shared with FFRCC members following finalization and BUMED Public Affairs Office (PAO) approval in December 2021.

Neuromusculoskeletal Sub-Community Board (NMSK SCB) Chair Transition

CAPT Michael Arnold, Family Medicine Physician, Uniformed Services University, has recently accepted a new role as Family Medicine Specialty Leader and will be stepping down from his role as NMSK SCB Chair. The NMSK SCB thanks CAPT Arnold for his time and dedication and welcomes CDR Janelle Marra, Family Medicine Physician, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, as the new NMSK SCB Chair.

KEY INFORMATION

MilSuite

The following link can be used to access the Navy Medicine FFRCC milSuite site, as well as various sub-community sites:
<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/group/s/navy-medicine-womens-health-community>

Women's Health Website

The following link can be used to access the NMCPHC Women's Health Website:
<https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-Marine-Corps-Public-Health-Center/Womens-Health/>

Key Points of Contact

BUMED OWH:

CAPT Catherine Luna,
catherine.a.luna2.mil@mail.mil

Female Force Readiness Advisory Board (FFRAB) Chair:

CDR Shari Gentry:
shari.l.gentry@navy.mil

FFRAB Vice Chair:

CDR Monica Ormeno:
monica.d.ormeno.mil@mail.mil

Mental Health Sub-Community Board (MHSCB) Chair:

CDR Francine Segovia
francine.segovia.mil@mail.mil

MHSCB Vice Chair:

LCDR Ashley Clark
ashley.n.clark@usmc.mil

Neuromusculoskeletal Sub-Community Board (NMSK SCB) Chair:

CDR Janelle Marra
janelle.m.marra.mil@mail.mil

Family Planning Sub-Community Board (FPSCB) Chair:

CDR Candace Foura
candace.r.foura.mil@mail.mil

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CLINICAL COMMUNITY UPDATES

I. Female Force Readiness Advisory Board (FFRAB)

- The FFRAB oversees the three sub-communities listed below and two WGs focused on women's health training. The FFRAB approved the *Women's Health Training Toolkit* package in October 2021.
- The Operational Provider Training Development WG is developing women's health training curriculum for frontline providers (i.e., General Medical Officers (GMOs), Independent Duty Corpsmen (IDCs), Flight Surgeons, Undersea Medical Officers, and Operational Medical Officers) to ensure they are equipped with basic capabilities to support women's health and deployability in the operational environment.

II. Mental Health Sub-Community Board (MHSCB)

- A MHSCB Tiger Team is developing a *Normalization of Mental Healthcare* resource to include information relevant to maintaining a security clearance while seeking mental healthcare, medical vs. non-medical mental health resources, and what information must be shared with Chain of Command about seeking mental healthcare.
- The MHSCB collaborated with the FPSCB to develop an *Infertility Resource for Service Women*. This resource supports service women who are struggling with infertility and provides information on support services available to the active duty population (e.g., infertility groups, online resources, etc.) and how to access them, deployment and career goal considerations, and relevant Navy and Marine Corps policies. The resource is available on the [Women's Health Webpage](#).

III. Neuromusculoskeletal Sub-Community Board (NMSK SCB)

- NMSK SCB members developed a draft point paper of recommendations to support pre-enlistment injury prevention training that is currently under NMSK SCB member review before moving to FFRAB member review.
- An NMSK SCB Tiger Team is currently developing a self-directed video exercise program and drafting supplemental nutrition information to prevent back and hip injuries among service women.
- An NMSK SCB Tiger Team is developing a point paper with recommendations to address gender disparities in the Navy Body Composition Program. In the point paper, the Tiger Team provides evidence-based recommendations for optimal body mass index (BMI) range, estimated body fat percentage calculation, and female warrior performance standards for Physical Readiness Tests (PRT) to modify the current Navy height-weight standards.

IV. Family Planning Sub-Community Board (FPSCB)

- The FPSCB finalized a resource for service women on menstrual management strategies. This resource covers managing menstrual symptoms through over-the-counter (OTC) medications or lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating, hydration, and stretching, as well as guidance on which menstrual symptoms are typical and what symptoms may be signs of a more serious issue. The resource is available on the [Women's Health Website](#).
- The FPSCB supported Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes in their efforts to refresh the Life Skills curriculum as the course will now be included at the conclusion of boot camp rather than during A-school. The FPSCB members recommended incorporating the Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) video brief provided by BUMED into the Reproductive Health curriculum and facilitating training sessions for non-medical boot camp instructors who present the Reproductive Health curriculum.
- The FPSCB is developing a reference resource to guide IDCs and GMOs in counseling patients on fertility and family planning.

**Upcoming
Meetings
2021/2022**

FFRAB

- 20 Dec
- 17 Jan
- 21 Feb

MHSCB

- 16 Dec
- 20 Jan
- 17 Feb

NMSK SCB

- 01 Dec
- 05 Jan
- 02 Feb

FPSCB

- 02 Dec
- 06 Jan
- 03 Feb

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Experience of International Military Training Officer and Gender Advisor for the Office of Defense Coordination

Dr. Catherine Lantigua's role as an International Military Training Officer and Gender Advisor has made a lasting impact on the implementation of the 2019 Women's Peace and Security Strategy. Over the last three years, Dr. Lantigua and her colleagues have launched multiple initiatives designed to deliver military development courses and mobile training teams with the objective of reaching the Mexican Armed Forces female population. Through their work, they have collaborated with Mexico to adopt a holistic approach to gender integration, leverage a value-based approach to providing resources to servicemembers, and address topics of high global concern including gender-based violence and mental health.

TRICARE Childbirth and Breastfeeding Support Demonstrations

Starting 01 January 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) will launch a five-year demonstration pilot to examine the costs and care outcomes of covering extra-medical maternity care under TRICARE. The services will include certified labor doulas, certified lactation consultants, and certified lactation counselors. The DoD hopes to determine whether adding access to these services and specialists improves maternal and fetal outcomes. At this time, the demonstration will only apply to purchased care. However, if the pilot is successful, it may support service expansion to all TRICARE beneficiaries.

Cultural Competency Guide

This MHSCB developed a *Cultural Competency Guide*, a self-paced learning resource for Navy and Marine Corps leadership to identify knowledge gaps and promote further learning. The Training Guide introduces cultural competency and its importance for service women's readiness, covers eight high priority needs for female Sailors and Marines, and details suggested actions that leaders can take to address each need. The Guide is available on the [Women's Health Webpage](#) and will be embedded into the training curriculum at the Senior Enlisted Academy and Marine Corps Company Commander's Course.

The Women and Infant Clinical Community (WICC) Podcast *Wise Health for Women is Live!*

The WICC has developed the *Wise Health for Women Warriors* podcast to support primary care managers who need additional information when caring for women warriors. The new resource, narrated by LTC Erin Keyser, is now live on all major platforms and ready for sharing! You can find the series at the following links:

- iTunes ([here](#))
- Stitcher ([here](#))
- Spotify ([here](#))
- SoundCloud ([here](#))

Remote Physiological Monitoring

Clinical grade, bluetooth-enabled, remote blood pressure monitors are now covered under TRICARE and high-risk pregnancy conditions, such as preeclampsia and chronic hypertension, are considered ideal use cases for this new technology. The blood pressure monitoring machine is available for purchase via [Durable Medical Equipment \(DME\) guidelines](#).

Women's Mental Health in the U.S. Military – Where Are We Now?

CAPT Cazares and CDR Segovia recently published a literature review in the Military Mental Health section of the *Current Psychiatry Reports Journal*. The article reviews recent research related to service women's mental health, specifically addressing perinatal mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and gender isolation. The article can be accessed [here](#).