

Female Force Readiness Clinical Community

Quarterly Recap | FY21 (February 2021 – April 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

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources: Infertility, Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding

The OWH developed resources to inform service members about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine as it pertains to family planning, pregnancy and breastfeeding. Getting vaccinated is an important choice as COVID-19 can cause serious health complications. The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists strongly recommend that pregnant individuals have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Women under age 50 including pregnant individuals can receive any Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized COVID-19 vaccine available to them. However, they should be aware of the rare risk of blood clotting after receipt of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine and that other COVID-19 vaccines are available (i.e., messenger RNA vaccines such as Pfizer and Moderna). For most individuals, getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible is the safest choice.

Embedded Women's Health Provider (EWHP) Pilot

The EWHP Pilots at Naval Stations Norfolk and Mayport continue to increase access to timely and convenient women's healthcare. As of 01 May 2021, 456 patients were seen by an EWHP at the Waterfront, saving an estimated 758 duty hours since Pilot launch in October 2020. To support expansion efforts, the OWH curated the EWHP Playbook, designed to feature the success of the Pilot program and serve as a guide to stand up the program at additional sites. The EWHP Playbook includes a customizable template to propose establishment of an EWHP Program to Command leadership and a data workbook to track key metrics related to patient demand, services provided, and patient satisfaction.

Women's Health Education and Behaviors Study

The FFRCC developed the Navy Deployment Readiness Education for Service Women (DRES) Handbook in Feb 2020. Due to the success of the DRES Handbook, a Defense Health Agency (DHA) tri-service DRES Mobile App is in development. Following release of the App, the OWH will conduct a longitudinal study to understand the impact of the App on service women's health literacy and behaviors that impact readiness (e.g., contraception use to prevent unplanned pregnancy, recognition of abnormal women's health symptoms, etc.). Results of the study will inform future women's health training and education efforts for female Sailors and Marines.

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/groups/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/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/womens-health/Pages/default.aspx>

Key Points of Contact BUMED OWH:

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Mental Health Sub- Community Board (MHSCB) Chair:

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Family Planning Sub- Community Board (FPSCB) Chair:

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CLINICAL COMMUNITY UPDATES

I. Female Forces Readiness Advisory Board

- The FFRAB oversees the three sub-communities listed below and two Working Groups (WG) focused on women's health training development.
- The Operational Provider Training Development WG is currently developing a women's health training for frontline providers (i.e., GMOs, 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.
- The Women's Health Training Toolkit WG is currently developing a 'Toolkit' to include curriculum and content for individual operational medical units to host educational and engaging trainings for service women on women's health and female force readiness.

II. Mental Health Sub-Community Board (MHSCB)

- The MHSCB is collaborating with the FPSCB to develop a resource to support service women who are struggling with infertility and provide information on the available support services.
- The Cultural Competency Training WG is in the final stages of developing a Guide for operational providers to convey the importance of cultural competency to force readiness.
- The Mental Health Provider Survey aims to assess mental health provider knowledge of and willingness to treat female-specific mental health concerns. The survey closed with a sample size that is approximately 40% of the total active duty Navy Medicine mental health provider population. The Survey Team is now in the data analysis phase of the project.

III. Neuromusculoskeletal Sub-Community Board (NMSK SCB)

- An NMSK SCB Tiger Team is developing a nutrition resource for service women that will compile information that is detailed in specific, valuable measures beyond calorie counts to equip service women with concrete information that can be incorporated into eating habits.
- An NMSK SCB Tiger Team is writing a point paper with recommendations to address gender disparities in the Navy Body Composition Program. In the point paper, the Tiger Team will provide evidence-based recommendations for optimal 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 developed a contraception fast facts informational resource for Navy and Marine Corps recruiters with guidance on the policy for bringing contraception to boot camp, using contraception at boot camp, and replenishing prescriptions at boot camp.
- The FPSCB developed a resource with guidance for clinicians to support patients after early pregnancy loss has been diagnosed and treated. The FPSCB also created an accompanying patient resource for clinicians to give to patients during a primary care follow-up after an early pregnancy loss.
- The FPSCB is reviewing and updating the Provider Treatment Algorithms – an easy-to-use tool created by the OWH to help operational providers recognize common women's health issues and determine whether to treat or escalate female patients to a higher level of care.

Upcoming Meetings 2021

FFRAB

- 17 May
- 21 June
- 19 July

MHSCB

- 20 May
- 17 June
- 15 July

NMSK SCB

- 02 May
- 07 June
- 07 July

FPSCB

- 06 May
- 02 June
- 07 July

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Development of the Urogenital Self-test and Self Treatment Kit

Female warfighters experience gender-specific hygiene challenges, especially in operational areas and austere environments where water and sanitation materials are often less readily available. CAPT Lisa Braun and Dr. Kostas-Polston, in collaboration with their research team, have developed a self-test, self-diagnosis, and self-treatment kit customized for service women and designed to treat the most common urogenital infections. The urogenital self-test and self-treatment kit is durable in austere environments and includes a combination of testing, diagnosis algorithm, and appropriate medications. The Self-Test and Self-Treatment kit is currently in the final stages of clinical trials.

Use of Hormonal IUDs for Emergency Contraception

The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) published results from a three-year (2016-2019) randomized controlled trial by researchers at the University of Utah. The study compared the effectiveness of two intrauterine devices (IUDs) when used for emergency contraception, levonorgestrel 52 mg IUD (known as Liletta) and the copper T380A IUD (known as Paragard). Researchers found that the levonorgestrel 52 mg IUD is just as effective for use as emergency contraception as the copper T380A IUD. Furthermore, the study concluded the levonorgestrel 52 mg IUD is effective when used as a quick-start method of contraception (read the study [here](#)).

Women's Health Education for Line Leadership

The Women's Health Education for Line Leadership (WHELL) WG finalized the Leadership Guide for operational leaders to increase their understanding of women's health needs and female medical readiness requirements. The Guide includes key factors of women's readiness and leadership's role in fostering a supportive environment for women to proactively manage their health.

Expanded Postpartum Exemption Period for Fitness and Body Composition Standards

Effective as of 08 February 2021, the [Marine Corps MARADMIN 066/21](#) expanded the pregnancy/postpartum exemption period from 9 months to 12 months. Pregnant Marines are now exempt from participating in the Body Composition Program (BCP), Military Appearance Program (MAP), Physical Fitness Test (PFT), and Combat Fitness Test (CFT) for 12 months after giving birth. Following the 12-month period, postpartum Marines are expected to meet body weight standards at the next weigh-in.

Spiritual, Physical, Environmental and Resiliency (SPEAR) Pilot Program

The SPEAR program is a preventive program that is designed to provide interventions and support for service members before an individual would need to seek clinical services. The program combines the efforts of chaplain, dieticians, Occupational Therapists (OTs), Command Fitness Leaders (CFLs), and the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) training to deliver a holistic approach that combines the values of each community that has a vested interest in optimizing human performance. The multidisciplinary team targets four domains: physical performance, nutritional readiness, cognitive and resiliency performance, and spiritual readiness. The SPEAR program approach was briefed to Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) and will be piloted at Naval Station San Diego over the next year.

Navy Women's Health Webpage

The OWH developed a [Women's Health Webpage](#). This webpage offers patient, provider and leadership resources developed by the OWH and FFRCC as well as relevant Navy and Marine Corps policies.