Women's Health Is a Readiness Issue: Addressing Health Disparities in the U.S. Military
For more than 30 years, HealthyWomen has remained true to its founding mission.

HealthyWomen is the nation’s leading nonprofit dedicated to educating women to make informed health decisions, to advocate for themselves, and to prioritize their health and wellness.
Research Findings – RAND, GAO, DHB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women make up 17% of the U.S. Military.</th>
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<td>Women are 28% more likely to leave the military than their male counterparts.</td>
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<td>Noted reasons</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender discrimination in healthcare</td>
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<td>• Family planning and reproductive health concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contraceptive access</td>
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<td>• Pregnancy and postpartum care</td>
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<td>• Access to quality childcare services</td>
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<td>• High rates of injury or illness, including musculoskeletal injuries, urogenital infections and mental health issues</td>
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Ready, Healthy & Able

Servicewomen and Service Members Assigned Female at Birth

• Empower to be their own health advocates in a system that wasn’t designed for them
• Educate about preventive health measures and common health conditions and symptoms
• Reduce stigma of common health conditions

Medical Providers

• Evidence-based, clinically sound education
• Accredited for all medical providers
• Offered online and in-person

Military Doctors Told Me I Had UTIs — It Ended Up Being Bladder Cancer

By the time I was diagnosed, I had stage 4 cancer

READ MORE »

It’s Your Period Again? Really?

When endometriosis makes your periods unbearable, navigating a male-dominated career means crossing a minefield of dismissal and disbelief

READ MORE »

Real Servicewomen, Real Stories
A Valuable Partner to the DoD

Toni Marengo, MD, FACOG
CMO, Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest
U.S. Navy Veteran
Introduction – Dr. Toni Marengo

ENS Toni Marengo with her father, Sgt. Maj. (ret) Anthony H. Marengo
OIS Graduation 1997
Newport, RI

Toni Marengo, MD, FACOG
Chief Medical Officer
Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest
(2018-Present)
Gaps in Care for Active Duty Women

- Musculoskeletal Health
- Reproductive and Urogenital Health
- Mental Health
From the 2020 DHB Report on Active-Duty Women’s Health Care Services: The Career Lifecycle and Attrition Factors
2020 Defense Health Board Report on Active-Duty Women’s Health Care Services was specifically asked to:

- Determine how the DoD should improve research, quality of care, and access to health services for active-duty women, while maintaining a focus on readiness;
- Address psychological and mental health conditions with gender-specific epidemiology;
- Evaluate access to reproductive health services, including preventive care, for active-duty women throughout the deployment cycle; and
- Identify best musculoskeletal injury prevention practices for active-duty women.

HealthyWomen has been working to answer some of the major findings in the report.
Healthcare Provider Education
Published Modules

Published virtual modules to date

1. Contraceptive Methods
2. Fibroids Treatment Options & Shared Decision-Making
3. Hormonal & Mental Health Implications of Contraception
4. Mental Health 101
5. Menses 101
6. Osteoporosis & Nutrition
7. Preventive Screening Part 1 (Biological)
8. Preventive Screening Part 2 (Psychological & Social)
9. STIs Evaluation, Prevention and Treatment
10. Surgical Abdomen
11. Vaginal Discharge
CONTRACEPTION IN THE MILITARY

This training provides foundational information about contraception access, use and methods with a focus on women in the military. With the understanding that women in the military have unique considerations when choosing a contraceptive method, this training focuses on the different options available, benefits and risks, and the mechanisms of action. This training also provides evidence-based decision-making tools to aid healthcare providers in discussing contraceptive options with patients.

1.0 CME/CE • Free • Online Activity

MENTAL HEALTH 101

This introductory training provides foundational information about common emotional reactions and mental health concerns among women military service members. With recognition that women in the military experience more mental health symptoms than their male counterparts, the training focuses on risk factors, diagnostic and biological considerations, and gender-based differences in mental health presentations. Practical and evidence-based information is provided for addressing and managing these concerns.

0.5 CME/CE • Free • Online Activity

On the Horizon

Additional virtual modules in final production phase

1. What’s New in GI in the Last 5 Years
2. What’s New in Fibroids Treatment
3. Fibroids Treatment Options & Shared Decision-Making
4. Reproductive Health: Expected Symptoms vs. Symptoms of Concern
5. Chronic Pelvic Pain and Trauma-Informed Care
6. Benefits of Contraception: Regulating & Stopping Menses
7. PMS vs. PMDD
8. Reproductive Health Mood Disorders
Live & Live-Streamed Lectures

- **USUHS - July 13**
  - Topic: The Surgical Abdomen & Its Differentials
- **Fort Riley - July 28 & 29**
  - Topics: Contraception, Mental Health, Preventive Care, STIs
- **ACOG Armed Forces District Meeting - September 25**
  - Accredited lecture during the meeting
  - Topic: Fibroids Treatment & Shared Decision-Making

Upcoming Opportunities for Live Lectures

- Fort Riley – Part 2
- Women’s Symposium at Camp Pendleton & Balboa Naval Hospital
- Fort Novosel (formerly Fort Rucker)
- Fort Leonard Wood
Patient Education
Patient Education Topics

Published 64 original educational pieces, 3 podcast episodes, and 1 op-ed in The Hill with 10 additional pieces in production

- Contraception
  - Access challenges, method comparison, 101
- Mental Health
  - Rates and readiness, preventive mental healthcare, navigating HCP conversations, 101, resources
- Pelvic Pain
  - Ask the Expert conversations, HCP implicit bias, navigating HCP conversations, fast facts and 101s, fibroids treatment, tips to reduce pain
- Repro Health 101
  - Infertility, feminine hygiene, menstrual cycle basics
Patient Education Topics

- **STIs**
  - Rates, 101, STI comparison, chlamydia

- **UTIs**
  - Prevention, 101

- **Gastrointestinal**
  - GI & pregnancy, navigating HCP conversations, Ask the Expert conversation, Gi condition comparison

- **Uterine Health**
  - Stress and trauma, implicit bias for LGBTQ+ pain patients, shared decision-making tools, PCOS, managing periods on missions, endometriosis, types of HCPs managing uterine health conditions

- **Military Sexual Trauma**
  - What the military is doing about MST, mind-body connection, intimacy after trauma, what is consent, how to report
Women of the Military Podcast: Mental Health in the Military

Psychologist Tiffany Lange and veteran Amanda Huffman cover mental health challenges servicewomen and service members with female biology face

By HealthyWomen Editors  |  February 28, 2023

The A to Z of Fibroids Treatments

When it comes to treating fibroids, you may have more options than you might think

By Michelle Sabia, MPH, CPH  |  August 3, 2023
Successes

✔ Expert consortium made up of healthcare providers, veterans, active-duty personnel and experts in the industry motivated to improve the quality of healthcare provided to servicewomen and service members AFAB

✔ Robust series of clinically relevant (and free!) CME lectures geared toward military HCPs and civilian HCPs treating service members

✔ Extensive health education content for active-duty women, spouses and veterans presented in a variety of formats

✔ Continuing education provided online via live lectures, recorded webinars and in-person at medical meetings and events at military treatment facilities

✔ Two congressional policy briefings

✔ White paper outlining the pilot program by HealthyWomen and the success of our initial efforts
Diana Brown
U.S. Army Veteran

healthywomen

Diana Brown
U.S. Army Veteran
ATTENTION
50 METERS
TO BORDER
Fears of Toxic Shock Alter Buying Habits
Black and female troops make up 10% of the Army.

Separate Status Ends
Permitted to Supervise White Men
First General
First West Point Grads
Granted permanent permission to serve
Semi-Official Units

Year
Length of time in years it took to reach each representative milestone in the U.S. Army

Bureau of Colored Troops, Army Nurse Corps are uniformed but not “Regular Army” units.

Black Americans legally authorized to serve. Nurses granted Regular commissions

Henry O. Flipper
Andrea Lee Hollen (Rhodes Scholar)
Benjamin O. Davis
Anna Mae Hays

Both in 1951
Segregated and semi-official units abolished; assigned the same as any other soldier.

10% Black/female troops make up 10% of the Army.
Col. Ada D. Stewart, M.D.
Family Physician, U.S. Army Reserves
Cooperative Health
Addressing the Needs Of the Female Soldier

My Recent Mobilization
Ft. Bliss , TX
Unique Approach

- Closing health gaps takes a multifaceted approach
- Engaged both service members and their healthcare providers
  - Educational topics were parallel to encourage shared decision-making
Program Effectiveness: Service Members

- Pre- and post-test survey design
  - Random sample of 100 service members and veterans
  - Measured changes in knowledge and participants’ ability and intention to integrate information into decisions, behaviors, and/or clinical practice
- Increases in knowledge were as high as 30%
- 92%-97% found the Real Women, Real Stories to be informative
  - Up to 86% indicated they already did or were inspired to make choices to advocate for themselves after reading
- 69%-89% were more aware of health topics and symptoms
- 76%-94% were more informed
- 73%-89% were more confident
- 67%-85% found the content useful
Healthcare Provider Engagement

204 HCPs engaged with the accredited education

PROVIDER SPECIALTIES ENGAGING WITH CONTINUING EDUCATION CONTENT

- Nurses: 58%
- Physicians: 18%
- Physician's Assistants: 14%
- Other (pharmacists, medics, etc.): 10%

healthywomen
Program Effectiveness: Healthcare Providers

- Pre- and post-test survey design
- **Up to 93%** were confident in their ability to identify and treat mental health symptoms after viewing mental health modules
- **Up to a 51%** increase in knowledge of symptoms, screening guidelines and risk factors after viewing urological health modules
  - **Up to 91%** of providers selecting the correct post-test responses
- **Up to a 48%** increase in knowledge of symptoms, screening guidelines and risk factors after viewing reproductive health modules
  - **Up to 100%** of providers selecting the correct post-test responses
The Future of Ready, Healthy & Able

In its second phase, the Ready, Healthy & Able program will:

1. Conduct needs assessments to identify additional gaps and educational opportunities pertaining to the health and readiness of servicewomen and service members AFAB

1. Expand its target audience for health education to include veterans and spouses

1. Continue developing virtual CE modules for HCPs to parallel additional educational areas of need

1. Provide on-base, in-person, accredited education to military HCPs
Calls to Action

Military Healthcare Providers & Civilian Healthcare Providers Treating Service Members

● Utilize the RHA-accredited training courses.
● Invite HealthyWomen to bring free, in-person, accredited lectures to their military treatment facilities.
● Share HealthyWomen’s patient-facing educational resources with the service members AFAB in their care.

Servicewomen & Service Members Assigned Female at Birth

● Utilize RHA’s educational resources to increase knowledge and feelings of empowerment.
● Share their personal stories with HealthyWomen.
● Inform their healthcare providers about the RHA educational resources.
Calls to Action

**Congress**
- Allow the Defense Health Agency to include HealthyWomen as an authorized education partner.

**Department of Defense and Defense Health Agency**
- Publicly recognize the RHA program as an effective educational resource.
- Share the RHA program resources with military healthcare providers on the Defense Health Agency (DHA), J-7 Education and Training Directorate, and Continuing Education Program Office (CEPO) websites.
- Share the RHA service member educational resources on the Military Health System’s Women’s Health website.

**Military Base Leadership**
- Invite HealthyWomen to provide free, in-person, accredited health education symposiums to your healthcare providers.
- Authorize duty assignments for training days.