



MEDCOM NOW
A newsletter highlighting the challenges, successes and personnel of Army Medicine.

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JCS will evaluate quality of Wounded Warriors' health care

by **Gerry J. Gilmore**
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, May 1 – An advisory panel recently established by the military's top uniformed officer will evaluate all medical programs for wounded warriors and their families, a senior U.S. officer said here yesterday.

The panel, known as the Wounded Warrior Integration Team, was created by Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler told reporters at a Pentagon news conference.

The panel's purpose is "to take a look at all programs across all agencies that impact on the wounded warriors and their families," Sattler, the Joint Staff's director for strategic plans and policy, explained to reporters.

The panel held its first meeting April 28, Sattler said, noting that he chairs the group.

"We will look at all the practices, everything that's being done," Sattler told reporters.

"We will look for best practices. And we will report back to the chairman bi-weekly and to the service chiefs as the chairman directs as to what this integration team finds."

The military's health-care system partners with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide several specialized health care centers for wounded

warriors. They include:

— Walter Reed Army Medical Center Amputee Care Center and Gait Laboratory in Washington, D.C.;

— National Naval Medical Center's Traumatic Stress and Brain Injury Program, in Bethesda, Md.;

— Center for the Intrepid state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility and Brooke Army Medical Center, at Fort Sam Houston, Texas;

— Naval Medical Center San Diego Comprehensive Combat Casualty Care Center; and

— Multi-site Defense Department/Veterans Affairs-operated brain injury centers for patient care, education and clinical research.

Sattler saluted continuing efforts performed "by a lot of great people across the spectrum" on behalf of wounded warriors and their families.

The panel, among other things, is tasked to evaluate the medical care system that attends to wounded warriors to determine if there are duplications of effort that may cause an unnecessary expenditure of resources, Sattler said.

The group also will look for possible customer-service glitches contained within the wounded warrior medical care system, the general said.

"And, if there may be unintentional gaps and seams, we can overcome those," Sattler said.

IMCOM supports Warriors in Transition

IMCOM news release

Army Medical Command is responsible for providing the medical attention necessary to heal our Wounded Warriors, but they are not the only Army organization directly involved with providing assistance to our Wounded Warriors.

The next steps in the Army Medical Action Plan (AMAP) are under way with the development of the plan for providing new facilities that will consider the unique needs of Wounded Warriors.

Instead of continuing to use renovated and retrofitted existing facilities that may be scattered across an installation, new ones will be constructed in a campus-style complex near existing medical facilities in order to facilitate easier access to medical care.

As a result of FY07 year-end contracting activities, Headquarters Installation Management Command has taken a step forward with the plan for providing Warriors in Transition (WT) with permanent facilities from which they will live, work, and most importantly, heal.

HQ IMCOM contracted with the U.S. Army Engineering and

Support Center, Huntsville to develop the WT project.

The project has two parts:

— Development of the overarching Area Development Plan. The ADP establishes the overall guidance and programming requirement for each of the Area Development Guides (ADGs) described below. It presents an idealized WT Complex for all installations, using standard WT facility footprints. The ADP validates the optimum functional relationship for WT facilities, presents examples of conceptual design guidelines and standards, and lays out the facility programming requirements for each WT campus.

— Development of 32 subsequent Area Development Guides (ADGs), one for each of the programmed installations. The ADGs establish the design intent for each site. Since each installation has its own architectural theme as well as unique manning requirements for WT units, the individual ADGs will establish programming requirements and specific facility footprints. The ADG presents the requirements, methodically steps through

an interactive process, and ultimately presents a conceptual graphic solution. Each ADG will serve as a planning guide that graphically depicts the architectural development required to create an environment conducive to the healing and transition of injured soldiers. Included with each ADG is a CD containing a model “flythrough” video of the proposed campus.

The WT Campus consists of three facility elements with some, or all, being programmed at each installation and sized based on the established needs for each installation:

- (1) Soldier and Family Assistance Center (SFAC).
- (2) Barracks.
- (3) Unit Operational Areas.

The ADP has been completed. Huntsville is moving forward with the development of the individual ADGs. On site “Kick Off” meetings are conducted at the individual installations on a schedule that began in December 2007.

The first ADG for Fort Riley is at the 95 percent complete stage with the remaining ADGs being worked on a tight schedule that runs through June 2008.

Officials report improvements in care for warriors

American Forces Press Service

Two officials from DoD and the VA cited a laundry list of changes in wounded warrior and Family care for the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

Dr. Lynda Davis, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for military personnel, and Kristin Day, chief VA consultant for case management and social work, co-chair the case-management reform action group.

Big steps included creating a senior oversight committee from both departments, improving the disability

evaluation system, starting a center of excellence for psychological health and TBI, starting a federal recovery coordination program, and improving data sharing between DoD and VA.

Developing medical facility inspection standards and improved delivery of pay and benefits are also key, they said. They cited several initiatives to improve integration of the departments’ services. Also, the departments are developing a joint Family handbook and website with information on benefits and services.

Wounded get experience in internship network

story/photo by Lisa Medrano

Army News Service

FORT RILEY, Kan., May 12 — While Army installations around the country have improved services and dedicated additional staff to taking care of wounded warriors, officials at Fort Riley are going a step further with an internship program for Soldiers in the post's Warrior Transition Battalion.

Fort Riley's WTB and supporting medical units have partnered with the Junction City, Kan.-based Welcome Home to Heroes Foundation to develop the ground-breaking Warrior Internship Network.

Soldiers in the WIN program are placed as non-paid interns within approved businesses to experience different vocations and give them practical experience in securing employment.

"The WIN provides a mutually positive opportunity for the Soldiers and the community," said Col. Lee Merritt, commander of Fort Riley's WTB. "This is Fort Riley stepping out to do right by our injured and ill Soldiers, and this benefits the Greater Fort Riley Community by putting valuable Soldier skills, experience and discipline assets into the local business community."

Soldiers are first screened to determine not only the types of jobs they're capable of but also the type of jobs they would enjoy doing.

"The workplaces and the Soldiers have to be mutually right for each other," said Tom Kelly, guidance counselor for the WTB's Soldier and Family Assistance Center.



Capt. Derrick Miller works at a home development site in Junction City, Kan., taking advantage of the Warrior Internship Network — a new program for Soldiers in the WTB.

"The businesses must be safe, ergonomically sound and provide a positive work experience based upon a good match with a Soldier-intern."

Soldiers have a vast array of internship options under WIN. They may head to one of the many construction sites around this post.

Soldiers may turn a wrench working on cars, motorcycles or airplanes. They might learn the art of massage therapy or work as a deejay at a local radio station.

Sgt. John Iaukea was trained as a tank mechanic and uses his analytical and mechanical skills at Geary Community Hospital.

"This is the best thing the Army has ever done," he said, adding that filling his days with productive, meaningful work is much better than

dwelling on his injuries and reduced physical abilities.

The WIN is different from the Army Career and Alumni Program in that Soldiers employ their skills in resume writing and interviewing and actually go to work.

The program is meant to reduce the level of uncertainty and stress associated with exiting the military.

First Lt. Mike Stewart considers the WIN program invaluable for young Soldiers whose only work experience is the U.S. Army.

"They have the opportunity to explore other career fields and make career adjustments, and still have the Army to fall back on," the lieutenant said.

(Lisa Medrano works for the Irwin Army Community Hospital Public Affairs Office)

Wounded warriors say health care on track

American Forces Press Service

Most severely wounded warriors say the military health system is on the right track, and is doing all it can and should for their care, a new Zogby International survey shows.

The poll of 435 service members wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan shows 77 percent are satisfied the military health system is doing all it can to meet their health-care needs. Nearly 60 percent said their trust and confidence in the system has increased since they began receiving treatment for wounds.

The poll was commissioned by the TRICARE Management Authority, the Defense Department office that manages the TRICARE military health plan.

Those questioned were ran-

domly chosen by Zogby.

A wide majority across all age groups agreed the system is doing all it should to meet their needs. The older the service member, the more satisfied.

Among men, 78 percent agreed, while 69 percent of women said the system is doing all it should.

Among those who had been home six months or less, 64 percent felt the system was doing all it could. But 84 percent of those who had been home between 19 and 24 months, and 93 percent of those who had been home 25 to 36 months were more pleased with their health care, saying they thought the system was doing all it should be doing.

Service members who had

returned home from deployment within the last six months were least likely to feel their trust and confidence in the health system had increased, but trust and confidence grows over time, and then dissipates somewhat among those home longer than three and a half years.

When asked whether they believed conditions had improved since widely publicized reports about conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 71 percent said they think the military health system is now on the right track, while 10 percent said it is not, and another 19 percent were unsure.

A majority of the injured said their expectations for recovery have increased since they returned from their deployments.

WTB opens new facilities

Heather Talbot holds 12-month-old Lillie, as her husband Spc. David Talbot and son, Aiden, 2, help Warrior Transition Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Tyra White, SSgt. James Hicks and his wife Irene cut ribbon on WTB's interim campus at Fort Stewart. MEDDAC Commander Col. John Collins looks. The facilities consolidate battalion headquarters, admin offices, ombudsmen, nurse case managers, dining facility, shoppette and Soldier and Family Assistance Center. (Photo by Randy Murray)



Cowboy-Soldier launches Wounded Warrior sports

story and photo by Tim Higgs
FMWRC Public Affairs

LAS CRUCES, N.M. – Purple Heart recipient Spc. Jake Lowery launched the Wounded Warrior Sports Program with an inspirational team-roping performance at Denny Calhoun Arena May 10-11.

Lowery, 26, of Fort Richardson, Alaska, lost his right eye and sustained massive head injuries when hit by an improvised explosive device in Iraq in 2007.

Less than a year later, the lifelong cowboy, was back on a horse and roping steers despite a traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder.

“This pretty much keeps me going – it’s the only thing that does,” he said.

The Wounded Warrior Sports Program gives active-duty Soldiers with life-altering injuries a chance to compete by paying for their athletic attire, registration fees, transportation, lodging and per diem.

“This is one of the best things the Armed Forces could have done because it’s just therapy for these guys who feel like ‘I lost this. I lost



Spc. Jake Lowery competes in team roping in Las Cruces, N.M., as part of Army’s new Wounded Warrior Sports Program.

that,’” said SFC (ret.) Pete Escobedo, Lowery’s grandfather.

“I’m not back to where I was, by any means,” Lowery said. “I just keep practicing and hope it eventually comes back.”

Pete has faith that Jake will overcome TBI and PTSD. Putting him on a horse is the best therapy he knows. At age 83, Pete derives inspiration from his grandson.

“His motivation is the love for this sport, and that keeps him want-

ing to get better instead of finding excuses as to why he can’t do something,” he said. “He’s finding ways and reasons to do whatever he can. We really don’t worry too much about him.”

Instructions for the Wounded Warrior Sports Program application process are available at www.ArmyMWR.com. Or contact mark.dunivan@us.army.mil, 719-526-3908, or peggy.hutchinson@us.army.mil, 703-681-7211.

Wounded Warrior Program honors four years of service

U.S. Army Human Resources Command

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) marked four years of committed service to severely wounded, injured, and ill Soldiers and their Families as of April 30.

AW2 provides severely wounded Soldiers individualized lifelong support wherever they are located and regardless of their military status. It helps Soldiers who have, or are expected to have, an Army disability rating of 30 percent or more in specific categories.

Each AW2 Soldier is assigned to an advocate who

helps the Soldier and his or her family obtain full benefits, educational opportunities, financial and career counseling, as well as helping those who want to stay in the Army continue their service.

Soldiers with extensive medical needs are simultaneously assigned to a WTU and the Army Wounded Warrior Program. Originally called the Disabled Soldier Support System, the program became the Wounded Warrior Program in 2005. It currently helps more than 2,700 soldiers. For more information, call 1-800-237-1336 or visit: www.AW2.army.mil.

Association helps wounded get back in swing

story and photo by **Tim Hipps**

FMWRC Public Affairs

OLNEY, Md. – The Salute Military Golf Association has helped hundreds of combat-wounded service members get back into the swing of life, physically and psychologically, with free instruction, golf clubs, balls and practice facilities.

Most who enjoy clinics at Olney Golf Club in Maryland are from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Some come on prosthetic legs. Some hold the club in one hand, maintaining balance with a metal hook on the other arm. Some have never played golf. Some may never again play as well as they once did.

All, however, seem to leave more content than they came.

“You can feel sorry for yourself all you want, but it’s not going to make your situation any better,” said Army Spc. Saul Bosquez, who lost a leg in Iraq. “So why not try

to do something?”

That spirit is what inspired Jim Estes, former PGA Tour player and director of instruction at Olney, to create the Salute Military Golf Association to offer rehabilitative golf experiences for wounded Soldiers.

“Most people, if they don’t do it well, they quit,” Estes said. “These guys, they don’t quit at anything, so they’ve got a perfect mentality.”

Disabled Sports USA partnered with the PGA of America to support the Salute Military Golf Association. Disabled Sports USA has also taken wounded warriors white-water rafting, biking, climbing, scuba diving and skiing.

Monetary donations to help cover costs for the nonprofit organization can be made payable to Salute Military Golf Association at 11308 Willowdale Drive, Germantown, Md., 20876 or online at www.golfsalute.org. For information, call (301) 802-5215.



Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command program analyst Trace Kea, a PGA professional, works with Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Tim Lang during a clinic at Olney Golf Park.

New pharmacy opens to support Warriors and Families

Story, photo by **Jen Rodriguez**

Brooke Army Medical Center

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — COL Thirsa Martinez has a motto: Let’s take care of our Warriors. Implementing it meant organizing a dedicated pharmacy and team for Warriors in Transition and their Families at Brooke Army Medical Center.

BG James Gilman, BAMC and Great Plains Regional Medical Command commander, presided at a ceremony opening the Warrior Pharmacy April 14.

The WT pharmacy team has a pharmacist and two technicians. They are collocated with the Urgent Care Pharmacy outside the Emergency Department.

The mission is to enhance patients’ understanding of their medications, e.g., how they should be taken, what interactions are possible, what side effects to look

for, what happens if a medication isn’t taken as prescribed, what to avoid, and how to refill medications.

“We’ve all heard it countless times: ‘Do you have any questions for the pharmacist?’” said Martinez, director of the Department of Pharmacy. “Most of us politely say no and walk away, even though we might be clueless about this new medication.”

“Know your Medicine; Know Your Pharmacist” is the Warrior Pharmacy logo.

“Our pharmacists play a vital role in our health care, besides being the expert in the preparation and dispensing of medications,” Martinez said.

She added that Warriors should always carry their current medication lists with them and never leave home without them. “It can save lives if they are away from the hospital.”