



UNITED STATES ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND

Public Affairs Office

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Health Risk Management Portfolio

Mission

Health risk management is the science and art of identifying, evaluating, selecting, documenting and implementing measures to reduce or prevent risk to human health. The Health Risk Management Portfolio provides comprehensive health risk management support and expertise to worldwide military commanders, decision-makers and military preventive medicine personnel to ensure and enhance their readiness.

Background

The Health Risk Management Portfolio is one of the newer portfolios in the U.S. Army Public Health Command. Although elements of the portfolio existed as early as 1996, the portfolio was formally developed in 2001, as a response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and subsequent anthrax attacks in the United States.

Clients

The portfolio's clients are DOD leaders, commanders and organizations, including medical leaders, medical treatment facilities and deployed units. The portfolio focuses on population-based assessments in order to determine the potential effects of hazards and threats on military operations in both garrison and deployed settings.

Structure and Organization

The Health Risk Management Portfolio is one of nine portfolios that comprise the Army Institute of Public Health, a subordinate command of the U.S. Army Public Health Command. The portfolio is comprised of five programs and one office:

*** Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program** — This program focuses on providing reliable and understandable environmental health risk information to Army stakeholders to help them define the health consequences of decisions. Experts in this program are primarily concerned with exposures and health outcomes associated with chemical and biological hazards found in or introduced into the environment. If a site is found to contain these hazards, the program's experts determine the health risk to personnel and the environment. The program supports forward-deployed operations, installations and

garrisons, chemical-agent demilitarization programs, force health protection initiatives, chemical and material management decision-makers, emergency management, and defensive chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear programs.

*** Environmental Surveillance Integration Program** — This program focuses on developing information management/information technology solutions for the DOD preventive medicine community's use in maintaining and integrating preventive medicine data. Experts in this program are responsible for the DOD's Military Exposure Surveillance Library and are the Army's functional lead for environmental surveillance aspects of the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System, also called DOEHRS. One example of this program's work is its creation of a registry of DOD personnel who were in Japan during the military-led U.S. effort to respond to the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. This registry will track these individuals to document any potential health effects as a result of exposure to radiation.

*** Deployment Environmental Surveillance Program** — This program focuses on providing multi-service preventive medicine assets with information needed to detect, assess and counter environmental hazards and threats in worldwide deployment locations. They coordinate with DOD's preventive medicine community to facilitate deployment occupational and environmental health surveillance activities including the collection and laboratory analysis of air, water and soil samples from worldwide deployment locations. This program provides technical reach-back assistance, surveillance planning, equipment and media, laboratory results and assessments. They have provided support for deployment locations in every combatant command.

*** Global Threat Assessment Program** — This program focuses on assessing pre-deployment occupational and environmental health threats (or hazards) for worldwide locations. Experts in this program identify potential health risks and threats from the environment and



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infectious diseases at various locations prior to the deployment of U.S. forces. All this information is incorporated in the Phase I pre-deployment occupational and environmental health assessments. These assessments are tools to be used for planning purposes to protect deployed military and civilian forces against potential environmental and physical hazards.

*** Health Risk Communication Program** — This program focuses on assisting Army and DOD personnel with effectively and clearly communicating scientific and technical information to a non-expert audience. Experts in this program provide a variety of training and consultation services to help anticipate, plan for, prepare and effectively address public concerns regarding health, environmental, deployment and similar issues that could affect mission success. Program experts offer risk communication courses that teach scientists and technical experts to communicate their findings and knowledge in an understandable manner. The program's experts are also capable of deploying rapidly to assist various DOD agencies with communicating during a crisis.

*** DOD Lead Agent for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Office** — The ATSDR (part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and DOD work together to prevent exposures at hazardous waste sites and to prevent any potential adverse health effects associated with such exposures. USAPHC serves as the lead agency for both the DOD and the Army in this effort. Experts in this office provide health and environmental services and education to the communities surrounding DOD installations. Some examples of how this program supports public health include studying groundwater contamination at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and communicating that health risk to DOD personnel and the general public.

Health Risk Management's People

Approximately 70 people work in the Health Risk Management Portfolio. They include military, civilian and contract personnel in a broad range of scientific disciplines. Environmental scientists, environmental engineers, biologists, meteorologists, health risk communication specialists, and administrative personnel are just some of the occupations within the portfolio. In addition to their professional experience, most staff members hold advanced academic degrees. The portfolio supplements its expertise from multidisciplinary public health experts within USAPHC and establishes working partnerships with other government and military organizations, various colleges and universities. The portfolio also collaborates health risk management aspects with other federal organizations, including the Department of Commerce, the Department of State, the intelligence community, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Benefits for the Army

In addition to providing health risk management measures in garrison and deployed settings, the Health Risk Management Portfolio has developed and published chemical and biological military exposure guidelines to help decision-makers in identifying, evaluating and managing these types of occupational and environmental exposures. These exposure guides are used DOD-wide to identify acceptable exposure limits for industrial chemicals and biological agents for DOD personnel.

The Health Risk Management portfolio "goes anywhere troops go" to help examine, assess and report the environment and associated health risks from potential/known exposures. They also assist researchers and health professionals in assessing and evaluating veterans' health problems as a result of these exposures.