



Defense Department Advisory
Committee on Women in the
Services (DACOWITS)
2003 Report



Introduction

- March 2002: new DACOWITS charter added review of family issues
- FY03: reconstituted DACOWITS
 - 13 members
 - New mode of operations
 - No individual installation visit reports
 - One report at end of year
 - Added research base



Introduction

- Three issue areas for FY03:
 - Personnel Retention
 - Support During Deployment
 - Women's Health Care
- Received numerous policy/program briefs
- Visited 15 installations, documenting 61 focus groups, and interviewing over 530 Service and family members
- Worked closely with a contractor to attain additional research



2003 Report

- Focus Group results reinforce Data
- All 3 areas have shown improvement, but more to be done
- Communication, communication, communication



Personnel Retention Recommendations

- That **benefit eligibility for Guard and Reserve** members and families during activation be consistent with the benefit eligibility of active component members and their families, both CONUS and OCONUS.
- That the Department and Services continue to explore additional options that affect **personal/family time**.



Personnel Retention Recommendations

- That the **personal and family leave programs** instituted by the Coast Guard (i.e., Care for Newborn Children and Temporary Separation programs) and contemplated by the Navy be evaluated as soon as possible for their impact on retention and that this information be disseminated to the other Services and to military personnel and families.



Personnel Retention Recommendations

- That **commanders** continue efforts to ensure that the **work environment is neither hostile nor discriminatory** and is conducive to optimal utilization and retention of highly qualified female officers.



Support During Deployment Recommendations

- That the **official chain of command** be emphasized as the primary source of information on deployment timetables and support services, and that this **information be repeatedly disseminated on a timely basis by all available means** to military and family members to reduce the opportunity for misinformation.



Support During Deployment Recommendations

- That the Department evaluate the effect of enhanced family communication opportunities and short-term rest and recuperation (R&R) programs during extended deployment on Service member morale and family stress levels.



Support During Deployment Recommendations

- That the Services investigate more effective ways to communicate information about, and encourage the use of, **support services, particularly to junior enlisted personnel and families who live off base.**
- That activated **Guard and Reserve** Service members and their families be given immediate access to all services for which they are eligible (e.g. DEERS registration, exchanges, and commissaries.)



Support During Deployment Recommendations

- That, when possible, **greater predictability** be integrated into the deployment process.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- That DoD/Service/installation/MTF policies and practices regarding the importance and **availability of care** for female military personnel and female family members during the **first trimester** of pregnancy be consistent with the recommendations of the **American Colleges of Obstetrics and Gynecology** guidelines.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- That information on the above policies and practices, and the benefits of early access to OB/GYN care, be given to all military personnel, especially those in leadership positions, through regular mandatory briefings on family planning, pregnancy, physiological changes, advisable health care regimens, and job performance expectations of pregnant personnel.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- That DoD direct the **Service Surgeon Generals** to develop and implement a highly visible informational outreach campaign concerning the importance of early pregnancy identification and prenatal care, in addition to the information provided by TRICARE contractors.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- The wide dissemination of and education on the **policies related to** job assignment, duties, and responsibilities of **pregnant Service members**.
- That the system of **appointment availability and scheduling** be improved to increase access to care on a routine and emergency basis for OB/GYN patients.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- The printing and distribution of “Pregnancy and Childbirth - A Goal Oriented Guide to Prenatal Care” (published by DoD & VA, December 2002) to all DoD MTFs for all prenatal care patients.



Women's Health Care Recommendations

- That, in the event of **undue delay** in access to MTF OB/GYN health care providers, the Services **outsource** OB/GYN care for female military personnel.



Data Recommendation

- That the Department provide guidance to the Services to **maintain relevant standardized data** for effective personnel policy.



Next Steps

- Report distributed
- Recommendations tasked to Services and/or specific divisions within USD (P&R) for responses by April 2004
- Committee continuing its efforts in the three topic areas in FY04



Questions?

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