

Department of Defense

Annual Report to Congress on Plans for the Department of Defense for the Support of Military Family Readiness



Fiscal Year 2011

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Department of Defense

**Plans for the Department of Defense for the Support of Military
Family Readiness**

**Annual Report to the Congressional Defense Committees
Pursuant to Section 1781b of Title 10, United States Code**

Fiscal Year 2011

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAFES	Army and Air Force Exchange Services
ACSI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
AP	Advanced Placement
ARRA	American Reinvestment and Recovery Act
CAHPS	Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems
CCSS	Common Core State Standards
CCS	Commissary Customer Service Survey
CFPB	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CONUS	Continental United States
CRP	Comprehensive Recovery Plan
CSI	Customer Satisfaction Index
CY	Calendar Year
DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DDES	Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDEA	Department of Defense Education Activity
DoDI	Department of Defense Instruction
DoDDS	Department of Defense Dependents Schools
DSLO	Defense State Liaison Office
EFMP	Exceptional Family Member Program
FAP	Family Advocacy Program
FRC	Federal Recovery Coordinator
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
FY	Fiscal Year
HCSDB	Health Care Survey of Department of Defense Beneficiaries
LSS	Lean Six Sigma
MCX	Marine Corps Exchange
MFLC	Military and Family Life Counselor
MHS	Military Health System
MOS	Military OneSource
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSEP	Military Spouse Employment Partnership
MTF	Military Treatment Facility
MyCAA	Military Spouse Career Advancement Account
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NEXCOM	Navy Exchange Services Command
NPSP	New Parent Support Program
ODASD (MC&FP)	Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy
ODASD (WWCTP)	Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy

OUSD (P&R)	Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
OSN	Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
P&R	Personnel and Readiness
PCMH	Patient Centered Medical Home
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
PSD 9	Presidential Study Directive 9
PTR	Pupil-to-Teacher
RCC	Recovery Care Coordinators
RCP	Recovery Coordination Program
RCPSS	Recovery Care Program Support Solution
ROI	Return on Investment
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SECO	Spouse Education and Career Opportunities
SCAADL	Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living
STEM	Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TPCC	Transition Policy and Care Coordination
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VA	Department of Veteran Affairs
WARP	Warrior Athletic Reconditioning Program
WWCTP	Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is submitted in accordance with section 1781b of title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), which requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to submit an annual report on the plans for the support of military family readiness for the next five fiscal years by March 1 of each year. This annual report provides a summary of strategic plans for the next five years pertaining to military family readiness and the fiscal year (FY) 2011 assessment results based on DoD-wide goals and metrics in 15 major family readiness program areas.

The Office of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)) Strategic Plan for FY 2012-2016 identifies promotion of the well-being of the Total Force, including individuals, their families, and communities, as a strategic goal. Consistent with the P&R Strategic Plan, the Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (ODASD(MC&FP)) has formulated and continues updating its FY 2012-2016 strategic plans quarterly to guide family readiness programs through managing a dynamic portfolio of initiatives. The MC&FP strategic goals pertaining to family readiness include:

- Ensure excellence in educational opportunities and engagement to encourage a culture of life-long learning within the military community to develop and empower them to be contributing 21st century citizens;
- Improve the well-being and resilience of the individual, their families and communities to contribute to a ready force;
- Transform policies, services and service delivery to meet the needs of the 21st century military community;
- Create collaborative partnerships and leverage resources to optimize MC&FP core priorities supporting the military community.

Below are the highlights of DoD-wide assessment results from FY 2011.

- In FY 2011, four additional states adopted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, resulting in a total of 39 states that have adopted the Compact, covering 89 percent of military children.
- The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) collects data on prevention of child neglect and abuse and of recidivism of domestic abuse. In FY 2011, the prevention of recidivism among domestic abusers who completed treatment marked 97 percent; the percentage of New Parent Support Program (NPSP) participants who were not reported in child abuse or neglect for 12 months after the program completion marked 96 percent. Despite these very positive figures, DoD further refines the metrics to measure the effectiveness of these programs.
- The results from the 2011 Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Customer Satisfaction Survey suggest that outdoor recreation and fitness programs have the highest impact on the overall satisfaction with MWR programs and consequently on mission readiness.

Unlike other Defense programs, the very nature of family readiness programs poses a unique challenge in program assessment for family readiness programs. The majority of family readiness programs are community-based, prevention-oriented, and voluntarily participated programs, for which outcomes are often difficult to be quantified with short-term measures. DoD has been trying to resolve this challenge through its own initiatives, working groups and inter-agency efforts, which are aligned with agency-wide efficiency efforts. DoD will continue its efforts to develop a comprehensive set of standardized and bench-marked goals and metrics across the Services to measure program effectiveness and performance in the next five years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, more than 2.2 million U.S. Service members have deployed in support of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The heightened operations tempo and multiple deployments have been posing considerable burdens on Service members and their families. In December 2011, the United States officially declared the end of the military operation in Iraq after nearly nine years. Simultaneously, a series of large-scale drawdowns of U.S. forces from Afghanistan have been taking place. These transitions will significantly alter the deployment patterns of both Active and Reserve Component personnel in the coming years, which might require major shifts in military family support systems and program delivery. DoD needs to reassess the program offerings to meet families' sustaining and emerging needs in fiscally responsible and efficient ways through family needs assessments, promoting the adaptation of research-based programs, and developing measures for the effectiveness of family readiness programs.

This report to Congress is pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1781b, which requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to the congressional defense committees annually. This report provides:

1. The plans for DoD for the support of military family readiness for the five-fiscal year period beginning with the fiscal year in which the report is submitted.
2. An assessment of the discharge by DoD of the previous plans submitted.

The report will begin with an overview of the DoD-wide strategic plans on military family readiness programs, followed by a summary of the goals and metrics with the FY 2011 assessment data in 15 major program areas. Each program section concludes with plans on program implementation and assessment for the next five fiscal years.

2. STRATEGIC PLANS ON MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

DoD has recognized the significance of family readiness and its impact on readiness, performance, retention and recruitment. A recent DoD study shows that a family's support for the Service member's military career has a significant impact on actual retention behavior of Service members.¹ Family readiness, which is defined as a family's preparedness to effectively cope with unique life challenges in the military service, is closely linked to well-being of Service members and their families and identified as a critical component in personnel readiness constructs and frameworks.²

President Obama has made the care and support of military families a top national security policy priority and initiated policy review under Presidential Study Directive 9 (PSD 9): Meeting America's Commitment in 2010. The Interagency Policy Committee has identified four

¹ Defense Manpower Data Center. (2010). SURVEY NOTE: Spouse/significant other support to stay as a predictor of actual retention behavior: A logistic regression analysis (Note No. 2010-008; March 17, 2010).

² The Total Force Fitness Framework, which is a key component of readiness to the DoD's Force Health Protection Program and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Health of Force priorities, has identified family cohesion as a core element in the Social fitness domain.

priority areas to address the concerns and challenges of the families of Active Duty and Reserve Component Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard members, those who have fallen, and veterans.³ DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in collaboration with other Federal agencies have made commitments to address each need and started implementing strategic actions in many areas.

An overarching strategic plan on family readiness is imperative in guiding DoD to address the current and emerging issues of family readiness and continue providing high quality programs through fiscal responsibility. The OUSD (P&R) FY 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan issued in February 2011 provides DoD with actionable and result-oriented guidance to prepare the Total Force for combat and contingency operations in a fiscally constrained and constantly changing environment. Total Force readiness is a key outcome to achieve through this five-year plan. A series of recent strategic frameworks set forth by DoD emphasizes the significance of families in Total Force readiness. In September 2011, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an instruction on the Total Force Fitness Framework as a key readiness component to the DoD's Force Health Protection Program and the Chairman's Health of Force priorities. Family has been identified as a core element in the social fitness domain, which comprises one of the eight domains of the Total Fitness Framework.

One of the five P&R strategic goals addresses family readiness in a context of the wellbeing of the Total Force:

Strategic Goal 2 – Strengthen individual and mission readiness and family support, and promote wellbeing. This goal promotes the wellbeing of the Total Force, including individuals, their families, and communities by building resiliency and preparedness. Executing this goal requires actions to increase the customer-focus of services, optimize and leverage the full-spectrum of quality of life and family support programs, strengthen civilian personnel career pathways, and enhance support and care for Wounded Warriors. Success in this goal will be evident when Service members are confident that, when deployed, they will have the skills and support systems to overcome the stress of Warfighting and family separation, and that their families have the resources needed to meet their daily and future needs and overcome their deployment-related stressors. (OUSD (P&R) FY 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, p.4)

Within DoD, ODASD (MC&FP) plays a pivotal role in military family readiness by providing DoD-wide military family readiness policies and program and resource oversight. ODASD (MC&FP) sets forth strategic goals, aligned with the P&R Strategic Plan. Below are ODASD (MC&FP) strategic goals relevant to family readiness programs:

³ The final report is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/strengthening_our_military_families_meeting_americas_commitment_january_2011.pdf.

- Ensure excellence in educational opportunities and engagement to encourage a culture of life-long learning within the military community to develop and empower them to be contributing 21st century citizens;
- Improve the wellbeing and resilience of the individual, their families and communities to contribute to a ready force;
- Transform policies, services and service delivery to meet the needs of the 21st century military community;
- Create collaborative relationships and leverage resources to optimize MC&FP core priorities supporting the military community.

There have been a number of existing and newly established DoD initiatives, some of which have been collaborating with other Federal agencies, state and local government, academic researchers, industry experts and national and local non-profit organizations to leverage their expertise in achieving the strategic goals in military family readiness. In recent years, a great number of Federal and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations and entities have been working to help military families cope with unique life challenges in the military service. Over the past 10 years, DoD has offered extensive family readiness programs with flexible options to meet the families' varying needs. However, as addressed in the National Leadership Summit on Military Families in November 2009, the overwhelming numbers of DoD and non-DoD sponsored programs available to military families have become a source of confusion and duplication of programs and services.⁴ Consistent communication with military families regarding available resources to address their needs remains among the toughest challenges and top priorities. At the same time, building community capacity to support military families by leveraging the existing community resources is an innovative approach to family readiness in this total force era, in which military families are interwoven in civilian communities throughout the nation.

In May 2010, a partnership between the DoD Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (hereafter called "the DoD-USDA Partnership") was formally launched. This partnership sustains the interagency momentum developed through collaborations with USDA, including its affiliated 111 Land-Grant universities, and the Cooperative Extension Service in providing joint programs in support of military children, youth, and families. It is also responsive to Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations by creating the partnership for military families to address future cross-cutting issues and challenges in supporting military families, particularly those who are geographically-dispersed.

⁴ Major themes and recommendations from the Summit were synthesized in the report, "National Leadership Summit on Military Families," available at <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>.

3. DoD-WIDE GOALS, METRICS, AND PLANS FOR FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS

This section presents a summary of the current DoD-wide goals and metrics with FY 2011 assessment data for 15 major DoD family readiness programs and activities, each of which is closely tied to one or more initiatives and managed to achieve DoD strategic goals pertaining to military family readiness. The program-level goals laid out in this section are set to be actionable within five years or less, depending on the maturity of a program or the urgency of family needs to which the program pertains. Military family readiness programs cover a broad range of family life concerns. Each program area is assessed by one or more measures that represent the objectives of each program. Measures of effectiveness are used when they are available; measures of performance are used when they are not. DoD continues to develop better measures and methods to assess program effectiveness that can be uniquely attributed to individual programs. Research efforts are underway in some areas to collect outcome data using evaluation methods tailored to the particular program circumstances. The assessment results presented in this report are based on FY 2011 data, except for the Military Exchanges and the DoD schools. The Military Exchanges present calendar year (CY) 2010 data, as their data collection cycle follows the civilian retailers for benchmarking. The DoD schools present the 2010-2011 academic year data in this report.

3-1. Child Well-Being

3-1-1. Child Care

For Service members with children, child care is a key family program with high impact on family readiness and retention. Today, approximately 44 percent of Active Duty Service members are parents, supporting a total of over 1.2 million children. Among those military children, 42 percent are 5 years old and younger and 31 percent are 6-11 years old. Almost half of Active Duty spouses (48 percent) are employed in the civilian labor force or in the Armed Forces.⁵ The DoD Child Development System is serving over 200,000 military children from 0 to 12 years old, operating over 900 Child Development Centers and School Age Care facilities at over 300 locations worldwide and approximately 5,000 Family Child Care homes.

Goals and Metrics

The metrics for DoD child care services consist of service availability and its quality. Child care availability is measured by *demand accommodation rate*, the percentage of child care needs met through military child care programs, such as Child Development Centers, School-Age Care, and Family Child Care, or through partnerships with local care providers. For FY 2011, the demand accommodation rate was 75 percent. The goal for demand accommodation rate, 80 percent, is a long-term goal rather than a short-term goal that can be met within a few years.

⁵ Data Source: The 2010 Demographics Report: Profile of the Military Community, published by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (DUSD(MC&FP)).

In addition to availability, meeting high quality standards of child care is another important indicator to assess DoD child care services. DoD uses *accreditation rate* and *certification rate* to assess quality standards of DoD Child Development Centers. *Accreditation rate* is measured by the percentage of Child Development Centers on military installations that meet standards of quality established by a nationally recognized, independent accreditation body. *Certification rate* is measured by the percentage of Child Development Centers meeting DoD requirements validated by inspections conducted by Military Service Headquarters staff. As shown in Table 1, 97 percent of eligible programs were nationally accredited and 100 percent of programs were DoD certified in FY 2011. The goals for child care availability and quality will remain constant for the next five years.

Table 1. Goals and Metrics for Child Care Service for Military Families.

Outcome	Metric	FY11 Data	FY12 Goal
Meet child care needs of military families	Demand Accommodation Rate	Goal: 80%	80%
		Actual: 75%	
Provide high quality child care	Accreditation Rate	Goal: 100%	100%
		Actual: 97%	
	Certification Rate	Goal: 100%	100%
		Actual: 100%	

Five-Year Plans

DoD Child Development Centers are currently meeting the goals for quality standards assessed by accreditation and certification rates. All programs are under strict oversight and achieve high quality standards through a systematic inspection process that includes comprehensive unannounced inspections for all facilities and programs with a mandatory correction of deficiencies within 90 days. Programs are inspected on an unannounced basis four times throughout the year to include three inspections conducted by installation personnel and one inspection conducted by Military Service Headquarters staff. This comprehensive, systematic approach to meeting the child care needs of military families enables DoD to deliver high quality care for infants through school-age children.

Funding construction of on-installation facilities represents one solution of a multi-faceted approach to accelerate the increased capacity to provide child care. A robust construction program in FY 2008 and FY 2009 significantly increased child care capacity on the installation. Additionally, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding for construction of child development centers will help facilitate the construction program, in which 3,950 child care spaces are planned to be built or replaced. Through these efforts the Services have made a great deal of progress in meeting the demand for care; however, a shortfall of child care spaces still exists and there is a continued need for construction to repair and replace aging facilities.

Because approximately two-thirds of military families live off the installation, our efforts must reach into the civilian community. Efforts to expand the availability of quality child care programs have been implemented at targeted locations in 13 states. These states were identified through an analysis of multiple factors such as residential/demographic information and

locations where state's efforts to improve the quality of child care are in tandem with DoD. In addition, an analysis of state licensing standards and lack of oversight congruity with DoD subsidy programs in pilot states will guide efforts to provide training and technical assistance.

Central to the success of the strategy is the child care liaison who serves as a single point of contact for both the state and the Headquarters working group in each of the pilot states. This individual is tasked with developing communication strategies among various state partners to ensure duplication of effort is reduced and resources are effectively utilized. A comprehensive strategic plan developed in coordination with state stakeholders aligned state child care standards with DoD child care standards and identified ways to effect change through regulatory and non-regulatory processes and to leverage training resources. Assistance from the Defense State Liaison Offices (DSLO) supported legislative efforts to increase the quality and availability of child care.

As a result of this initiative, a total of 17 legislative actions intended to increase the quality of child care have been signed in the 13 child care expansion pilot states. In addition, states outside of the 13 pilots have begun to identify regulatory and legislative issues as possible avenues to increase the quality of child care for DoD and Coast Guard families. In addition, the DoD-USDA Partnership has leveraged the expertise of multiple university researchers in providing training and technical assistance to this initiative. A number of training resources have been deployed in phases in select counties within the pilot states. These training resources are formatted into three delivery areas: train the trainer, face-to-face training, and on-line training delivery methods.

3-1-2. DoD Schools

DoD schools continue to serve as a standard of educational excellence for the nation. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) currently operates overseas and domestic school systems, including a total of 194 schools in 14 districts located in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Approximately 8,700 educators provide high quality education to approximately 86,000 children of Service members and DoD civilians from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade attending DoDEA schools worldwide.⁶ All schools within DoDEA are fully accredited by U.S. accreditation agencies.

Goals and Metrics

DoDEA has an established and rigorous system-wide assessment program to measure educational effectiveness and student academic performance. This report presents goals and metrics for the following two areas: student academic performance and pupil-to-teacher ratio (PTR) as identified in the balanced score card. The assessment data from Academic Year 2010-2011 (hereafter referred to as the 2010 data) are presented in Table 2.

DoDEA uses performance measures of student progress on standardized tests, namely TerraNova and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which provide nationally comparable data. TerraNova is a standardized achievement test in which student scores are compared to the scores from a national representative sample of students. The goals are set to ensure military children

⁶ Data as of September 13, 2010. Data source: <http://www.dodea.edu/home/facts.cfm>.

are receiving an education comparable to their peers in stateside schools and to minimize the number of students performing at or near the margin of academic failure.

- TerraNova 3: As shown in Table 2, the target percentages of students who scored at above national average for 2011 were missed by one percentage point for reading, science, and social studies, two points in language arts, and five points in math. Although DoDEA set the goal to have no more than 7 percent of all students scoring below the 25th percentile in all tested subjects, the goal was missed by one percentage point in reading, science, and language arts and by four points in math.
- SAT: In 2011, DoDEA students' average score in critical reading was 503, six points above the national average score of 497. The DoDEA SAT writing score of 489 was at the national average score. The DoDEA average score in math was 495, 19 points below the national average score of 514.

Table 2. Goals and Metrics for DoD Schools.

Outcome	Metric	2011 Data		2012 Goals
By the end of Academic Year 2011-2012, at least 75% of all students will score at or above the 51st percentile (the top two quarters above the national average)	% of students who scored at or above the national average in each subject area of TerraNova Test	Goal¹	Actual	
		R 73	R 72	R 75
		LA 72	LA 70	LA 75
		M 70	M 65	M 75
		S 73	S 72	S 75
		SS 75	SS 74	SS 75
By the end of Academic Year 2011-2012, no more than 7% of all students will score below the 25th percentile (the bottom quarter)	% of the students below the 25th percentile in each subject area of TerraNova Test	Goal¹	Actual	
		R 7	R 8	R 7
		LA 7	LA 8	LA 7
		M 7	M 11	M 7
		S 7	S 8	S 7
		SS 7	SS 7	SS 7
Meet or surpass the National average	SAT Math Average Scores	DoDEA 495 Nation 514		Meet or exceed National average
	SAT Critical Reading Average Scores	DoDEA 503 Nation 497		Meet or exceed National average
	SAT Writing Average Scores	DoDEA 489 Nation 489		Meet or exceed National average
Maintain K-3 Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of not greater than 18; Maintain 4-12 PTR of not greater than 24	DDESS ² Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio	20.6:1 (K-12 PTR Average)		No less than 18.0:1 nor greater than 24.0:1
	DoDDS ³ Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio	20.6:1 (K-12 PTR Average)		No less than 18.0:1 nor greater than 24.0:1

¹Abbreviations: R = Reading; LA = Language Arts; M = Math; S = Science; SS = Social Studies.

²DDESS: Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DoD schools in the Continental United States)

³DoDSS: Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoD schools at overseas installations)

Five-Year Plans

Common Core State Standards Adoption: On December 15, 2011, the Director of DoDEA announced DoDEA's intention to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.

The CCSS were developed to create a rigorous common core of academic standards in English, language arts, and math for grades kindergarten through 12 (K-12). The CCSS are research and evidence based, internationally benchmarked, and aligned with college and workforce expectations. The standards are reflective of important cross-disciplinary skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, logical reasoning, communication and team work. They are clearly written and user-friendly to educators and parents. The CCSS will replace the DoDEA developed curriculum standards in Math and English Language Arts. Since the CCSS have been adopted in 46 of the states in the U.S., DoDEA's adoption of the CCSS will help mitigate the issues military children face when transitioning between states and overseas locations.

Instructional Enhancements: In the DoDEA school system, school administrators are implementing professional development support for teachers based on best practices in the area of differentiated instruction. DoDEA's professional development efforts entitled "Responsive and Inclusive Teaching and Learning" provide a system which maintains instructional quality while responding to the diverse needs of individual students. Additional strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing rigor in classroom instruction based on the inclusion of Critical Thinking Skills, Depth of Knowledge Levels, and standards-based instruction.
- Administering a K-3 Reading Diagnostic Assessment that measures the reading progress of students throughout the school year and across years with the goal of differentiating instruction and increasing reading proficiency.
- Adding Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Using student data to identify Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) students and provide additional instructional support in critical reading/writing skills that will lead to improved performance on AP, Preliminary SAT (PSAT), and SAT assessments.
- Using data to tell the story of student and school performance so that goals can be set to guide instruction.
- Preparing students for college and career readiness through a focus on Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
- Placing new mathematics, social studies, and English Language Arts curricular materials in schools to provide a focus on college and career readiness.

- Increasing the math requirements for students to increase rigor in our middle and high schools.

DoDEA School Attendance Policy: On August 26, 2011, DoDEA Regulation 2095.01, *School Attendance*, was signed by the then acting Director and immediately implemented in all schools for the 2011-12 school year. This new policy is consistent with those found in many public schools throughout the United States. DoDEA's school attendance policy is that all students are required to attend school for 180 instructional days per school year subject to the exceptions noted within their policy. DoDEA has found that regular school attendance correlates directly with success in academic work, improves social interaction with adults and peers and provides opportunities for important communication between teachers and students. Regular attendance also has a cumulative effect of establishing life-long positive traits — responsibility, determination, respect for rules of society — that are critical for developing career readiness skills, success in college and in life. School attendance issues have been identified as a serious issue for children throughout the country and military children are no exception. DoDEA's new attendance policy provides specific guidance on attendance, absences and identifies support services for students at risk for not fulfilling the grade or course requirements.

The policy also establishes a balance between the need for military families to spend time together following deployment, while emphasizing the importance of education. We have and will continue to be as flexible as possible in accommodating the precious time families have together, but flexibilities and accommodations have limitations, especially when they have an impact on student performance and attendance at school. Procedures for monitoring daily student attendance and communicating with families are established in this policy. Academic penalties will not be imposed for excused absences. Students at risk will be monitored by a Student Support Team and school administration to include the identification of supports and interventions. Additional consideration will be provided to military families regarding requests for extended leave during this first year of implementation. A review of the policy will be conducted in May 2012 to include eliciting feedback from military commands, stakeholders, and DoDEA leadership.

DoDEA 21st Century Teaching and Learning: In April of 2011, DoDEA initiated three symposia to define the requirements of a 21st century education and to determine how educational requirements subsequently affect school design. The first symposium, which included thought-leaders in education, contributed to definition of a 21st century education and identified skill sets needed for our students either to enter the work force or to continue on to higher education. The second symposium collected input from concerned DoDEA stakeholders to include students, teachers, administrators, military leaders and the community. The final symposium brought together architects and engineers from design firms already engaged in the design and construction of 21st century schools that provided the framework for subsequent education facilities specifications development.

The consolidated results of these symposia led to production of draft education facilities specifications. Comments concerning the draft facilities specifications were again solicited from our educational community through web outreach. Final review and incorporation of comments resulted in publication of new DoDEA Education Facilities Specifications supporting a 21st

century education. DoDEA Education Directorate is collaborating with all stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that addresses the professional development, communication, and transition required to transform DoDEA classrooms as models for 21st century education.

Key elements of 21st Century Teaching and Learning are:

- A student centered education;
- Differentiated instruction for students at different performance levels;
- Multi-modal instruction to account for the varying ways in which students learn;
- Blended instruction to integrate the use of technology;
- Project based learning for relevance to real-world situations;
- Multi-disciplinary instruction to illustrate synergistic gains versus discipline instruction in isolation.

The school facility will complement these elements by providing:

- Student-centered spaces for collaborative work;
- Variably sized spaces to support differentiated and multi-modal instruction;
- An infrastructure allowing access to current and envisioned technology;
- Greater use of the facility as a teaching tool to reinforce instruction;
- A facility allowing greater appreciation for sustainability and energy conservation;
- Flexible and adaptable construction allowing easier and more cost-effective changes to support evolving educational requirements;
- “Green” features to highlight sustainability, energy conservation, and energy production to focus student attention on these areas of increasing national concern. DoD schools continue to serve as a standard of educational excellence for the nation.

3-1-3. Minimizing Disruption for School Age Children of Military Families

Military children move across state lines and overseas much more often than most of their civilian peers. On average, military children attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Frequent relocations across state lines can hamper educational opportunities for military children because of different policies applied to transferring students between the “sending” state and the “receiving” state. Removing these educational barriers will help provide stability in the lives of military children during military moves. Some of the provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (here after called “the Compact”) also help support military school-aged children during parental deployments.

In cooperation with the Council of State Governments, DoD developed the Compact in collaboration with an array of Federal, state and local officials as well as national stakeholder organizations. DoD has identified the adoption of the Compact by states as one of the ten state-level key issues that have a strong impact on military families. The DSLO has been working to educate state lawmakers about the Compact since 2008. The goal of the Compact is to institute a comprehensive mechanism to assist transitioning military children by providing uniform policy

in every school district in every participating state across four key areas of transition issues: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation.

Goals and Metrics

Effectiveness of this effort is assessed by the percentage of military school-aged children (5 – 18 years old) covered by the provisions of the Compact (see Table 3). The percentage is based on the population of military school-aged children of each state, not the number of states covered. In FY 2011, four additional states adopted the Compact, for a total of 39 states, covering 89 percent of military children with its provisions (see Figure 1).

Table 3. Goals and Metrics for Minimizing Disruption for School Age Military Children.

Outcome	Metric	FY11 Data	FY12 Goal	Remarks
Increase the coverage of Military Children by Interstate Compact Provisions	% of Military Children Covered by Interstate Compact Provisions	Goal: 80% ¹	95% ²	Target for FY 2013: 100%
		Actual: 89%		

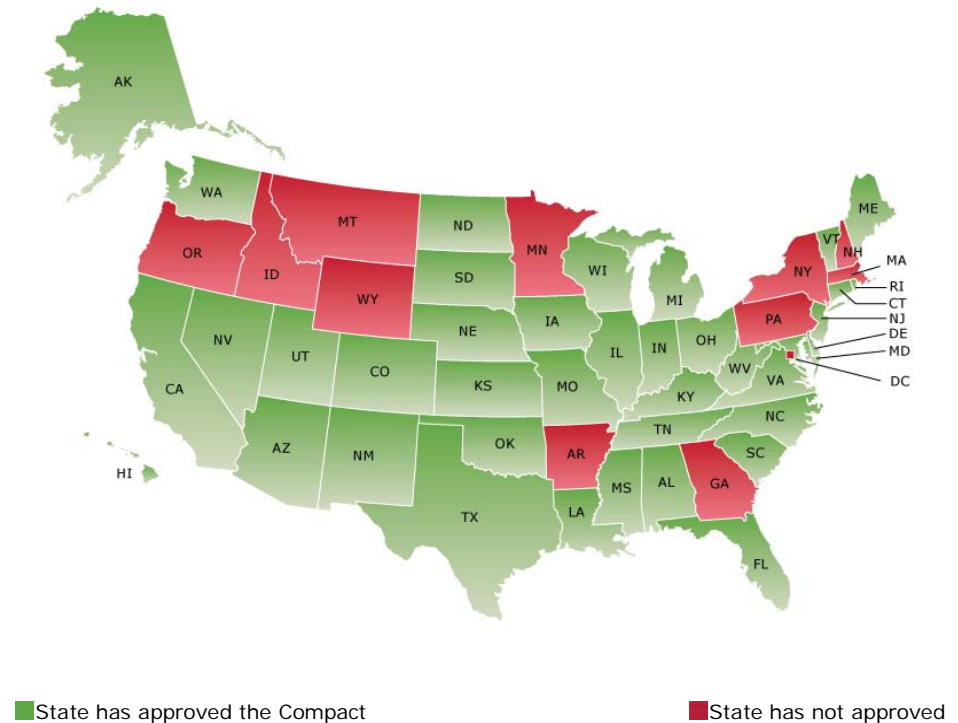
¹Percentage is number of children, not number of states.

² DoD has met its intended goal, to cover 75% of the military population in the U.S. by FY 2013. However, as there are additional states that wish to join the Interstate Compact, DoD has established additional targets for FY 2011 – FY 2013.

Figure 1. Status of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Five-Year Plans

In FY 2012, DSLO plans to continue educating and actively consulting with legislators and executive branch officials in interested states on this issue as part of the ten key issues. Of the 11 states not yet in the Compact, only a few have significant military child populations, and these will be especially targeted. Georgia, the largest of this group, has 40,592 school age military children, who are currently unprotected by the Compact.



Note: NE has approved the Compact to go into effect July 2012.

Data Source: USA4 Military Families, available at

http://www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=USA4:ISSUE:0:::::P2_ISSUE:3

3-2. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

3-2-1. Military Spouse Education and Career Opportunities

As a result of the demands of deployments and the mobile military lifestyle, military spouses find themselves with a unique set of challenges to the pursuit of education and workforce participation. These challenges include frequent relocations, long family separation, and extended periods of single-parenting. According to the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey 2007-2009, military families move 14 percent more often than their civilian counterparts and move more frequently across state lines. These relocations have significant undesirable effects on spouses' careers, preventing upward career movement, and disrupting efforts to pursue education. Results from a recent DoD survey for spouses of Active Duty members show that 85 percent of military spouses report that they want or need to work to make ends meet, to meet their work-life goals, or to have a good quality of life. Despite their needs or desire to work, one in four military spouses (26 percent) is unemployed, which accounts for 90,000 spouses.⁷ Furthermore, when they are employed, military spouses lag behind their civilian counterparts in income despite high levels of education that they hold.⁸ A recent study showed that military spouses with full-time jobs earned 25 percent less than their civilian counterparts.⁹ For military spouses, educational goals are also hard to pursue. In the aforementioned DoD survey, approximately 50 percent of military spouses reported that they would like to be in school, yet they identified the cost of education and the frequent relocations as major reasons to hold them back.¹⁰ DoD has an overarching goal to reduce the aforementioned 26 percent unemployment rate of military spouses and the 25 percent pay gap between military spouses and their civilian counterparts.

DOD Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) initiatives: DoD is committed to strengthening the SECO initiatives to continue the positive effects that spouse education and employment continuity have on overall satisfaction with military life, family financial stability, the health and wellness of the military community, and the overall readiness and retention of the Armed Forces. In 2011, SECO services were expanded to offer spouses from all the Services access to comprehensive work-life support services and resources.

SECO career counseling services are designed to help military spouses find sources of financial assistance to meet their education goals at all education levels (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Doctoral or Professional) by assessing career interests, skills and abilities; making portable career decisions at various stages of their military life; and finding financial assistance appropriate to their unique training and education needs. SECO counselors are available through the Military OneSource (MOS) Spouse Career Center. Spouses of all Active Duty and Reserve Components (including National Guard) members, regardless of their educational level, career

⁷ Defense Manpower Data Center. (2011). The 2010 Military Family Life Project Briefing (May 18, 2011).

⁸ Results from the 2010 Military Family Life Project Survey show that 84 percent of military spouses have some college, 25 percent have a bachelor's degree, and 10 percent have an advanced degree.

⁹ Kniskern, M. K., & Segal, D. R. (2010). Mean Wage Differences between Civilian and Military Wives. College Park, MD: Center for Research on Military Organization, University of Maryland, College Park.

¹⁰ Defense Manpower Data Center. (2011). The 2010 Military Family Life Project Briefing (May 18, 2011).

goal, or spouse's pay grade, are eligible to receive SECO counseling services. Through this program, spouses receive referrals and assistance with obtaining Federal grants and loans, scholarships, tools for evaluating college financial aid packages, and transferring Post 9/11 Education Benefits to family members. The MOS Spouse Career Center handles approximately 12,000 telephone calls monthly from military spouses regarding education and career opportunities.

My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Program: DOD offers the MyCAA program to the spouses of junior service members, who are serving on Title 10 orders and in the pay grades of E-1 to E-5, W-1 to W-2, and O-1 to O-2. MyCAA offers up to \$4,000 of financial assistance for education, training or occupational licenses/credentials needed for a portable career. In FY 2011, of 70,000 eligible spouses who established MyCAA accounts, 38,000 applied for and received financial assistance. The majority of military spouses used their financial assistance to obtain a career in the health care services. Other frequently sought career fields include business management, education, homeland security, and animal services. In FY 2012, DoD is planning to survey registered MyCAA spouses to examine why only about half of the registered spouses actually utilized the financial assistance benefit. DoD will continue to monitor MyCAA expenditures and administrative processes to ensure full access by eligible spouses and sufficient funding for future use.

Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) Program: DoD also offers military spouses connections to all Federal employers and nearly 100 Fortune 500 Plus employers through the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP). MSEP program is a comprehensive web-enabled employment and career partnership solution that connects military spouses to employers seeking a 21st century workforce with the skills and attributes military spouses possess. MSEP is designed to level the playing field for military spouses by offsetting the challenges of the frequent relocations of the military lifestyle. MSEP offers military spouses an opportunity for the same job consideration as their civilian counterparts with companies that are seeking loyal employees with the ability to team-build and organize while working in diverse settings: the very same skills military spouses acquire through their military lifestyle experiences.

Since the MSEP launch on June 29, 2011, MSEP business partners have hired over 13,500 military spouses and posted over 152,000 jobs on the MSEPjobs website. In 2012, DoD seeks to increase the number of MSEP partners to 200 and to facilitate MSEP partners hiring 10,000 additional military spouses. DoD will launch an improved MSEPjobs website in early 2012 that will offer spouses an opportunity to create a complete profile based on education and experience, a resume and cover letter builder, an enhanced job search capability, and job-matching technology that will automatically search and notify both spouses and employers of a resume and position match. The new MSEPjobs site will feature good news stories from both military spouses and MSEP employers. Jobs will be posted and updated on the website daily. Spouses who register on the MSEPjobs site also have the opportunity to directly link to comprehensive career counseling through SECO counselors available telephonically through the MOS Spouse Career Center.

Goals and Metrics

To increase educational opportunities for military spouses and improve employment continuity over the long-term, DoD remains committed to the following program goals:

- Increasing access to educational opportunities by offering financial assistance to spouses of Service members serving on Title 10 Active Duty orders and in the pay-grades of E1-E5, W1-W2, and O1-O2.
- Removing barriers to Federal careers and improving communications to energize spouse employment within the Federal workforce.
- Increasing opportunities for private-sector careers.
- Identifying and promoting state best practices for portability of occupational licenses and credentials.
- Improving communications with military spouses.
- Supporting expansion of states' unemployment compensation eligibility for trailing military spouses.

Five-Year Plans

ODASD (MC&FP) has established a team of experts to advance the multi-faceted goal of supporting the well-being of military spouses to include their education, careers, employment, social, financial, physical, and community/sense of belonging. The Military Spouse Ambassador Program in development for launch in FY 2012 is a key component of the DoD commitment to empower military spouses to promote career, education and well-being. The Military Spouse Ambassador Program will encourage military spouses to use SECO counseling services, to establish a MyCAA Account and enroll in a program of study leading to portable career employment.

DoD is also committed to renewing cross-agency partnerships with the U.S. Department of Labor to serve military spouses. Efforts will include increased communications regarding the eligibility of military spouses for Workforce Investment Act funded services through local CareerOneStop centers to leverage support and training services. DoD will also establish communications with community colleges supporting local and national workforce development efforts and establish a database of college scholarships available to military spouses.

3-2-2. Expansion of Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for Trailing Military Spouses

Compared with their civilian counterparts, military spouses are more likely to earn less and experience higher rates of unemployment.¹¹ One of the factors that indiscriminately and negatively impacts the military spouse's employment is frequent relocation due to a PCS of the Service member. Data from the 2008 Status of Force Survey of Active Duty Members indicates that 76 percent of Active Duty Service members with working spouses have experienced a PCS move in the past two years.¹² Frequent relocation often hinders the development of a spouse's

¹¹ Kniskern, M. K., & Segal, D. R. (2010). Mean Wage Differences between Civilian and Military Wives. College Park, MD: Center for Research on Military Organization, University of Maryland, College Park.

¹² Defense Manpower Data Center. (2009). November 2008 Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members: Tabulations of Responses (July, 2011).

career and can cause financial instability in the family due to the difficulty of maintaining seniority and finding a job with a comparable salary at the new duty location. The same survey also indicated that 27 percent of married Service members reported that their spouses experienced loss or decrease of income to a “large extent” or a “very large extent” for the most recent PCS move; 30 percent reported that their spouse experienced a problem with finding a job to a “large extent” or “very large extent.”

Although military spouses have no alternative choices in the matter, statutes and policies in many states view a spouse leaving a job due to a military move as voluntary. Granting unemployment compensation eligibility to working spouses in transition (those “trailing” the military member) provides a much-needed financial bridge for military families during mandatory moves, and supports spouses while they seek suitable employment.

Goals and Metrics

Expansion of unemployment compensation eligibility for trailing military spouses is one of the ten state-level key issues identified by the DoD as having a strong impact on military families. DSLO has been working with state lawmakers to resolve these issues since 2004. In the first year, 11 states provided unemployment compensation eligibility for trailing military

Table 4. Goals and Metrics for Expanding Unemployment Compensation Eligibility for Trailing Military Spouses

Outcome	Metric	FY11 Data	FY12 Goal	Remarks
Increase coverage of Trailing Military Spouses by State Unemployment Compensation	% of Military Spouses Eligible for Unemployment Compensation During Mandatory Relocation	Goal: 89%	89%	Targets for FY 2013: 100%
		Actual: 85%		

¹ Percentage is number of spouses, not number of states; some states have a proportionally larger number of military spouses over others.

² DoD has met its goal to have sufficient number of states comport with DoD guidance to cover 75 percent of target military population living in the United States by FY 2013. Since DoD has already reached the intended goal in 2009, and there are additional states that may be willing to grant access to unemployment compensation to military spouses, DoD has established additional targets for FY 2011 – FY 2013.

spouses, representing 37 percent of military spouses. Progress is measured by the percentage of spouses covered by state legislation affording unemployment compensation (see Table 4). To date, 39 states and the District of Columbia provide unemployment compensation to trailing military spouses, bringing the percentage of spouses covered under legislation to 85 percent in FY 2011, which was 4 percentage points below the goal for this fiscal year.

Five-Year Plans

The outlook of state fiscal health is not positive; even if economic improvement occurs, the states are not likely to feel its effects in 2012. This impacts a number of states, including the 11 states that currently do not offer unemployment compensation eligibility for transitioning spouses. This in turn may impact legislators’ desire to introduce legislation perceived in any way to bring additional economic strain on the state’s employers. Nevertheless, DSLO will continue to engage legislators from key states and provide research data showing the very small

percentage cost associated with adding eligibility for spouses. There remain 11 states in which state regulations do not presently follow this policy, including Virginia, which is host to 11.4 percent of Active Duty military spouses in the nation. DSLO will continue working with Virginia and the remaining states to remove unnecessary obstacles for trailing military spouses.

3-3. Financial Well-Being

3-3-1. Personal Finance

Personal financial readiness is a critical component of personal and family readiness. Emergencies or financial mismanagement stemming from poor financial literacy can quickly escalate into major financial problems and negatively impact personal readiness and mission readiness. Personal financial security helps Service members maintain the security clearances they need to perform their assigned duties. To ensure basic financial skills and access to helpful financial tools, each Service provides a wide variety of financial education programs and resources both online and in person through Personal Financial Managers at family centers on military installations or within the community.

Box 1. Eight Pillars of Financial Readiness

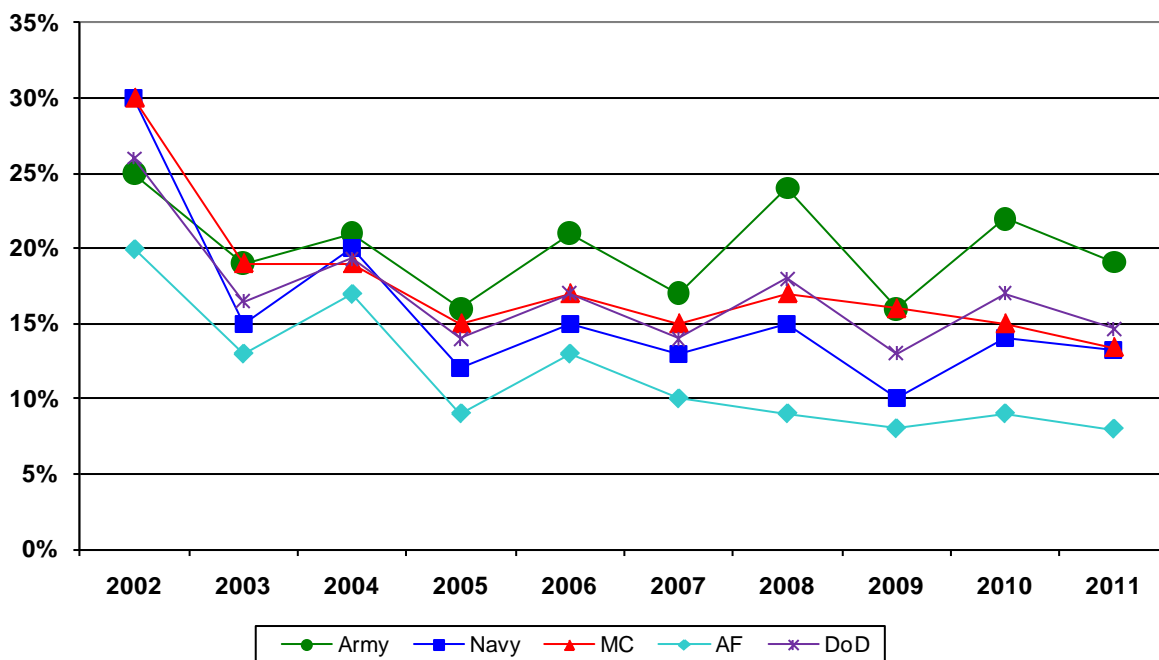
1. Maintain good credit
2. Achieve financial stability
3. Establish routine savings
4. Participate in the Thrift Savings Plan and Savings Deposit Program
5. Sustain the Service member's Group Life Insurance and other insurance
6. Encourage low-cost loan products as an alternative to payday lending and predatory loans
7. Use low-cost Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs
8. Preserve security clearances

DoD continues the Financial Readiness Campaign, launched in 2003 to provide additional financial readiness education, programs, and resources to Service members and their families, augmenting those already provided by the Services. The Campaign rests on the eight pillars of financial readiness listed in Box 1.

Goals and Metrics

In general, some military families are financially more vulnerable than others. Junior enlisted Service members and their families are most at risk for financial problems. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) June 2011 Status of Force Survey provides some insight into personal financial readiness, focusing on the financial health of junior enlisted Service members in pay grades E1 to E4. In this report, perceived financial condition is used to assess their overall financial health. Figure 2 shows the trend of the junior enlisted who reported their financial conditions as “not comfortable” from 2002 to 2011. In 2011, those percentages declined across the Services by one to three points from 2010. The trend data indicate that the proportion of the junior enlisted Service members who feel financially uncomfortable has been gradually declining over the past 10 years. Although we also present the data on self-reported problems with paying bills, the 2011 data has not been available due to the recent change in the survey data collection cycle. DoD will continue monitoring the trend of the junior enlisted Service members’ perception of their overall financial conditions.

Figure 2. E1-E4 Self-Assessment of Overall Financial Condition: Percentage of Reporting Financial Difficulties by Service (2002 -2011).



Note: The percentages presented in the figure are based on the number of E1-E4 choosing 4 or 5 from the following five choices to describe their overall financial condition: 1. Very comfortable and secure; 2. Able to make ends meet without much difficulty; 3. Occasionally have some difficulty making ends meet; 4. Tough to make ends meet but keeping your head above water; 5. In over your head.

Five-Year Plans

The goal of the Financial Readiness Campaign, particularly within the next five years, is to improve the personal financial readiness of the Total Force. However, developing meaningful metrics to link behavioral change to financial education is challenging, since few longitudinal studies addressing this issue have been conducted. Personal finance questions included in the Military Family Life Project, the large-scale, two-wave military family survey detailed earlier in this report, could allow us to look at the longitudinal aspect of financial readiness among military families. Program-level metrics for personal financial readiness, which directly assess the effectiveness of financial programs, are also currently being considered. DoD continues to explore the effects of financial stress on other areas of family and Service member support.

3-3-2. Promoting Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation

Predatory short-term loans are one of the financial practices that can cause financial problems for Service members and their families very quickly, which can negatively impact their quality of life and personal readiness. Financial problems may lead Service members to lose security clearances, which will impede their deployability while serving, as well as job opportunities after leaving the military. The significance of this issue prompted Congress to establish DoD authority to regulate certain predatory products and practices. The regulation, 32

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 232, “Limitations on Terms of Consumer Credit Extended to Service Members and Dependents,” which went into effect October 1, 2007, covers all financial institutions and sets limits on three forms of short-term credit: payday loans, vehicle title loans, and tax refund anticipation loans. All states follow the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Interagency Guidelines for the regulation when examining financial institutions; however, depending on the way their state statutes are written, not all states have the authority to enforce the regulation.

Goals and Metrics

Effectiveness was measured by the percentage of Service members residing in states that provide their financial regulators authority to enforce the predatory lending regulation or prohibit the short-term credit covered by the regulation. This percentage is calculated based on the military demographics of each state, not just the number of states covered. To date, 35 states enforce the regulation, providing protection for 73 percent of Service members and their families, which exceeded the fiscal year goal of 65 percent by 8 percentage points (see Table 5). In FY 2011, enforcement legislation was considered in 3 states (Arizona, Illinois, and Texas) and approved in 2 states: Illinois and Texas.

Table 5. Goals and Metrics for Promoting State Enforcement of the Predatory Lending Regulation.

Outcome	Metric	FY11 Data	FY12 Goals	Remarks
Protect Service members and their families from predatory lending practices	Percentage of military members "protected" ¹	Goal: 68%	74.0%	FY 2013 Goal: 75%
		Actual: 73%		

¹“Protected” = protected from these regulated lending practices either because the states do not allow those practices or have the ability to enforce 32 CFR Part 232.

Five-Year Plans

In July 2011, the Federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) became operational and will begin examining non-depository lenders offering payday loans. DoD will work with the CFPB and state regulators to enhance the enforcement of the regulation. DoD, through the DSLO, continues to work with the remaining states to modify their statutes to provide regulators with enforcement authority. In conjunction with this effort, the Services have been providing Service members with education programs to raise their awareness of predatory lending practices and improve their overall financial health.

This issue has been expanded for 2012 to consider predatory lending concerns outside of the three credit products covered by the DoD regulation. Some states have prosecuted companies for fraud, deception and other onerous practices against Service members and their families. The enforcement actions taken by these state agencies have depended on available evidence of abusive practices. To improve their capability to deal with alleged abuse, the DSLO will work with agencies within DoD, state regulators, offices of the state attorney general, and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to develop more efficient ways of collecting and

disseminating information to support enforcement. The FTC manages the Military Sentinel website, which allows Service members and their families to document allegations of abuse. FTC allows law enforcement and regulatory agencies to access this secure database upon completion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FTC. With this information, law enforcement and regulatory agencies can correlate cases across the states and also consider trends of abusive activities. DoD will ask financial counselors and legal assistance attorneys within DoD to assist their clients with submitting allegations to the Military Sentinel and also ask state regulators and attorneys general to sign MoUs with FTC. To date, 24 state regulatory agencies have signed an MoU with FTC.

3-3-3. Military Commissary Benefits

The commissary benefit is a major component of the non-monetary military benefit package to supplement military income and, as such, is critical to the financial readiness of military families. During FY 2011, the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) operated a worldwide network of 248 stores, providing groceries and household items to the military community. The total authorized patrons include approximately 12 million Active, Reserve, and Guard members, retirees, family members, and DoD civilian employees overseas; of these, approximately 5 million are the sponsors.¹³ Patrons save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial supermarkets – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four who consistently shop in the commissary. Patrons purchase grocery and household items from the commissary at cost plus a five percent surcharge. The surcharge is used for commissary replacement/restoration construction projects and recapitalizing stores. Commissary operations are funded with an annual appropriation to the Defense Working Capital Fund.

Goals and Metrics

FY 2011 was DeCA's sixth year using the Balanced Scorecard concept. This management tool assesses performance and helps achieve long-term strategic goals that optimize customer satisfaction and business productivity. The DeCA Balanced Scorecard provides excellent data for program evaluation by specifying expected performance during FY 2011-2015. Table 6 presents the data extracted from the DeCA Balanced Scorecard. The key metrics for the commissary benefit consist of the following measures: value of the benefit, cost control, surcharge obligations, customer savings, and customer satisfaction.

In FY 2011, actual annual commissary sales reached \$5,957.7 million (97.4 percent) against the projected sales of \$6,118.1 million. Customer savings are measured annually by comparing commissary prices to commercial supermarket competitors worldwide. By pricing commissary goods at cost plus a five percent surcharge, the customer savings in FY 2011 reached 32.0 percent, exceeding this year's goal of 30 percent. When considering the return on investment, the value of the benefit consisted of \$2.08 savings to the customer for each appropriated dollar of taxpayer cost. DeCA continues to keep costs within budget authority and operations within approved resource authority; commissary costs, when adjusted to FY 2000

¹³ Defense Commissary Agency. FY 2011 Performance and Accountability Report, available at <http://www.commissaries.com/documents/whatsnew/PAR.pdf>.

base-year costs in constant dollars, were \$942.8 million in FY 2011, or 92.5 percent of the projected goal (less than \$1,019 million). Surcharge obligations, which reflect capitalization programs for the stores, executed at \$295.4 million, 98.8 percent of the annual goal of \$299.1 million. Levels of customer satisfaction are measured externally by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)¹⁴ and internally by the Commissary Customer Service Survey (CCS). In the fourth quarter of CY 2011, DeCA achieved a score of 81, exceeding the ACSI grocery industry average of 76. The score for CCS in FY 2011 was 4.72, which exceeded the goal of 4.67.¹⁵

Table 6. Goals and Metrics for Military Commissaries

Outcome	Metric	FY 11 Data	FY 12 Goal	Remarks
Achieve a return on investment (ROI) consisting of 2:1 savings to the customer divided by the cost of operations of the commissary	Value of the Benefit	ROI > \$2.00 Customer Savings to \$1.00 Appropriated Costs	ROI > \$2.00 Customer Savings to \$1.00 Appropriated Costs	ROI exceeded target
		Actual \$2.08		
Achieve results less than or equal to FY 2000 base year costs, when adjusted to FY 2000 dollars	Cost Control (\$M) in FY 2000 dollars	Goal \$1,019	\$1,019	Executed 92.5 % of goal
		Actual \$942.8		
Achieve results less than or equal to Surcharge obligation authority provided by OUSD (C)	Surcharge Obligations (\$M)	Goal \$299.1	\$320.7	Surcharge obligations are 98.8% of target
		Actual \$295.4		
Maintain 30% of customer savings	Sustain Customer Savings	Goal 30.0%	30%	Customer savings above target
		Actual 32.0%		
Meet annual grocery industry average ACSI score	American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)	Goal 75	Meet or exceed Industry Average	Customer satisfaction above target
		Actual 80		
Meet or exceed annual goal for CCS score	Commissary Customer Service Survey (CCS)	Goal 4.67	A: 4.6-5.0	Customer satisfaction above target
		Actual 4.72		

Five-Year Plans

DeCA has continued to expand efforts to increase benefit accessibility to the Reserve Components (including the National Guard) members and their families. Delivering the benefit to the Reserve Components in FY 2011 resulted in 143 events that served approximately 58,000 patrons, generated sales of \$7.8 million, and resulted in \$3.6 million customer savings. Fifty-four percent of the National Guard and Reserve units in the United

¹⁴ The ACSI is used by major retailers and grocery stores nationwide to measure customer satisfaction. Meeting or exceeding the ACSI provides a good indication of how exchanges and commissaries compare with their private sector counterparts.

¹⁵ On a scale of 1.0 – 5.0, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

States are located more than 20 miles from the nearest commissary, so DeCA conducts outreach and on-site sales events at locations with no commissary. Guard and Reserve sales feature 300-400 case-lot items. When feasible, sale efforts were combined with military Exchanges. There were 10 joint events in FY 2011.

Workforce special emphasis programs have been implemented to target and increase recruitment of military spouses, wounded warriors, individuals with targeted disabilities, and minorities, as well as focusing on leadership development and succession planning in the workforce. DeCA continues to be a key provider of military-related employment with nearly 63 percent of the commissary workforce being composed of military spouses and other family members, Guard and Reserve members, military retirees, and servicecompensable veterans. Additionally, a significant percentage of employees of our industry partners, who provide store support, are military family members.

The Agency continued refinement of business processes supporting the DoD-wide initiative, using Lean Six Sigma (LSS) methodology, completing 11 key LSS projects during FY 2011. A key process improvement was the centralized reorganization of DeCA's support functions, focusing on Agency functional processes to ensure the organizational structure was aligned with DoD goals and strategies. This restructuring eliminated 90 positions by reducing overhead and supervision, widening the ratio of supervisors to employees. It also eliminated areas of service overlap and Headquarters and region areas of duplication, resulting in reengineered processes that increased the value of the benefit and reduced costs for FY 2011 and out years. The process bench-marked state-of-the art business practices with major national manufacturers, brokers, and distributors and improved the Agency's internal governance posture, while streamlining business processes and providing maximum support to store operations.

Finally, DeCA expanded its innovation venues to leverage employee ideas better and increase feedback for inclusion in DeCA's decision making process. Venues included: the first Director's Innovation Challenge initiative to the workforce, executed via e-mail, which resulted in idea submissions for consideration and vetting by an Agency review team; fielding the Idea Factory Program, a social networking cross-collaboration site for workforce innovation submissions; and revitalizing the Agency's IDEAS program as a Web-based vs. paper system, resulting in increased submissions over the previous year.

3-3-4. Military Exchange Benefits

The Armed Services Exchange programs form an integral part of the non-pay compensation for Active Duty personnel. The mission of the Armed Services Exchange programs is two-fold: (1) to provide authorized military patrons with merchandise and services at a savings and (2) to generate nonappropriated earnings as a source of funding for military morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) programs. The Armed Services Exchange Programs are provided through three separate Exchange systems: the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), and Marine Corps Exchange (MCX). The Exchanges operate retail stores on 300 military installations worldwide, on board 161 ships at sea, in 76 deployed locations and contingency operations, and at the site of

emergency and disaster relief efforts. The Exchanges also offer options for patrons to shop online and through catalogs.

Goals and Metrics

The Military Departments assess the effectiveness of their Exchange systems through measures of customer savings, sales, profits, and customer satisfaction. Table 7 summarizes metrics and goals for calendar year (CY) 2010.¹⁶ The Military Departments set savings and sales volume goals that will produce profits to support recapitalization of Exchange facilities and a steady stream of dividends for MWR programs. Those goals are consistent with DoD guidance to achieve a minimum average of 15 percent savings on a market basket (excluding alcohol and tobacco products) that is compared to commercial shelf price (excluding sales tax). In CY 2010, all three exchanges exceeded the savings goals of 15 percent for AAFES and NEXCOM and of 20 percent for MCX, by 1 to 9 percent. MCX adjusted the goal of 20 percent savings to 15 percent for CY 2011. Exchange customer satisfaction is measured annually in two ways: ACSI, which is an independent, nationally recognized benchmarking tool to compare commercial counterparts and the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), which is an indicator based on customized customer surveys to measure and understand what drives customer satisfaction in their stores. ACSI scores in CY 2010 are reaching the industry average score for department and discount stores. CSI scores exceeded the annual goals in CY 2010 and continue to improve for all three Exchange systems.

Five-Year Plans

AAFES

- **Workforce Initiatives:** AAFES is helping to combat rising unemployment rates affecting veterans returning from war by participating with Joining Forces: Veteran Military Spouse and Family Employment programs. Veterans account for 13 percent of the total workforce and AAFES goal for 2012 is to increase veteran hires by 10 percent. Since 2008, AAFES veteran hires have increased by 30 percent; about 3,000 were hired since 2010. AAFES partners with several organizations that offer career assistance and create opportunities for those who have selflessly served.
 - Approximately 30 percent of AAFES associates are military family members.
 - In 2011, more than 5,200 spouses were hired. Over 1,100 received promotions.
 - The Spouse Continuity and Employment Preference programs allow spouses to build a career alongside their sponsor with each relocation.
- **Patron Outreach:** AAFES is taking actions to include right sizing inventory, offering an expanded assortment both online and in-store, and listening to customers, through a new customer comment program and a variety of social media channels. The Exchange Online Store improved by accepting gift cards online, as well as offering customer reviews and ratings of products. The Click-to-Brick program allows customers to purchase more than 3,000 products online and have them shipped to the exchange store of their choice. Customer outreach events include partnering with

¹⁶ The Armed Services Exchange programs adopt the calendar year data cycle to benchmark program performance in comparison with the commercial retail industry. Therefore, the timing of publishing this report relative to the availability of metrics and goal establishment precludes inclusion of data from CY 2011 for this report.

Table 7. Goals and Metrics for Military Exchanges.

Outcome	Metric	CY 2010 data		CY 2011 goal
Achieve customer savings of 15% in all Exchange systems	Customer savings			
	AAFES	Goal	15%	15%
		Actual	24%	
	NEXCOM	Goal	15%	15%
		Actual	22%	
	MCX	Goal	20%	15%
Actual		21%		
Maintain sales volume and profitability that supports a steady stream of capital investment and MWR dividends	Sales and profits			
	Sales (\$M)			
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 8,316.6	\$8,415.10
		Actual	\$ 8,224.0	
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 2,569	\$2,626.00
		Actual	\$ 2,640	
	MCX	Goal	\$ 944.5	\$953.00
		Actual	\$ 925.3	
	Profit (\$M)			
	AAFES	Goal	\$ 330.5	\$366.10
		Actual	\$ 390.9	
	NEXCOM	Goal	\$ 61.8	\$43.40
		Actual	\$ 68.8	
	MCX	Goal	\$ 62.5	\$74.60
Actual		\$ 73.6		
Meet or exceed ACSI department and discount store industry average	ACSI Customer Satisfaction			
	AAFES	Goal	75	Goal 76
		Actual	73	
	NEXCOM	Goal	75	Goal 75
		Actual	73	
	MCX	Goal	75	Goal 75
Actual		75		
Meet or exceed past 3 year average customer satisfaction index (CSI)	Exchange Customer Satisfaction Index			
	AAFES	Goal	76	Goal 77
		Actual	76	
	NEXCOM	Goal	81	Goal 83
		Actual	83	
	MCX	Goal	73	Goal 77
Actual		78		

Army Wives Talk Radio, Military One Source and similar programs to communicate the benefit and value of the Exchange. The Exchange exhibited at 60 events in 2011, which included Yellow Ribbon events and partnering with DeCA while visiting all of the retiree communities in the U.S. Customer sensing sessions were conducted with the Exchange buying staff via video teleconference with customers around the world to gain insight on their needs. Additionally, in support of a National Guard and Reserve outreach initiative, the general managers in the continental United States (CONUS) supported 343 events to help communicate the benefit and value of the Exchange to those members.

NEXCOM

- NEXCOM remains committed to providing employment opportunities to Navy family members. Of NEXCOM's 14,000 associates, approximately 26 percent are Navy family members. NEXCOM also maintains a Continuity of Employment Program to support Navy family members when they transfer to new duty stations with their Service member spouses.
- As part of the focus on Navy families, NEXCOM completed the 14th successful year of the Navy Exchange A-OK Student Reward Program. During the 2010 - 2011 school year, NEXCOM awarded \$44,000 in savings bonds to qualified students of military families. The total value of savings bonds awarded to students since the inception of the program is now well over \$500,000. This program is fully funded by NEXCOM's business partners.
- In partnership with installation-level activities, NEXCOM participates in a wide variety of family events, such as health and wellness fairs, holiday celebration events, family appreciation events, fitness fairs and wedding fairs.
- Customer centric initiatives: NEXCOM analyzes store demographics by segmentation, allowing tailoring of merchandise to an individual store's customer base. By utilizing customer input through annual satisfaction surveys and focus groups, NEXCOM provides key merchandise and services the military customer desires. Examples include providing name-brand merchandise, including Macy's exclusive labels, offering food concepts that satisfy installation customers, and enhancing customer service training to improve the customer shopping experience.

MCX

- Keeping faith: Keeping faith with Marines and their families means ensuring relevancy to their environment and lifestyle. MCX continues its focus on "Brilliance in Execution" in order to deliver relevant, meaningful merchandise assortments and programs, as well as serving as a support arm to the Commander, and strategically communicating with genuine dialog. The MCX program continues to provide a valued non-pay benefit of products, food, and services sold below market price, which supports the social and family resiliency pillars for the Marine Corps. The savings families receive on life necessities contribute to the financial health of military families. Examples include the "Our Cost is Your Cost" program which

provides everyday staples at cost, and “Geared Up” which provides discounted motorcycle safety equipment to Marines who have completed the requisite safety training. MCX is committed to collaborative efforts with First Lady Michelle Obama’s initiative “Joining Forces,” Sister Services, and industry organizations to promote veteran and family member employment and communicate MCX value offering. MCX launched MyMCX.com, and utilizes YouTube and Facebook as tools in connecting with Marines and families in a current, relevant way.

- Resource optimization: MCX continues to modernize and improve programs and facilities to meet the needs of Marines and their families better so as to provide a “best in class” experience. This is a major focus area in both business and financial planning. These programs offer a balanced synergy to the holistic portfolio of benefits that solidifies the strength of the community, which is the bedrock of readiness.
- Leverage technology to gain efficiencies, reduce redundancies, and gain a competitive advantage: MCX is focusing on efficiencies in logistics and transportation as a priority, as well as optimizing human capital.

3-4. Personal and Family Life

3-4-1. Non-Medical Counseling

DoD offers worldwide access to confidential, non-medical, short-term counseling services at no cost to members of the Active Duty component, the National Guard and Reserve, and their families through Military OneSource (MOS) and the Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC) program in addition to the non-medical counseling services that the military Services offer. The purposes of non-medical counseling services is to help Service members and their families with the normal range of reactions to life challenges caused by deployments, reintegration, and the military lifestyle, and to prevent the need for more specialized medical services.

MOS provides 24/7 non-medical counseling worldwide via telephone, on-line or face-to-face sessions. MOS professionals provide sessions in a traditional 50-minute hour, and MFLC sessions may vary in duration from a few minutes to 2 hours on as-needed basis. All face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions (CONUS only) are provided within 15 miles or 30 minutes of the service member/family member at the MOS professional’s office within the community. MOS provides continuous support to National Guardsmen and Reservists regardless of activation status as well as Active Duty personnel and their families. MFLCs provide in-person counseling and briefings, both on and off the installation, using the following three flexible service delivery options: rotational assignments of qualified and well-trained counselors for up to 90-days on military installations; on-demand for the Reserve Components; and full-time counselors.¹⁷ In FY

¹⁷ For National Guard and Reserve members and families who live too far from military installations, the Joint Family Support Assistance Program. MFLC’s offer non-medical counseling and on-demand support for pre-

2011, MOS counselors provided nearly 313,000 in-person counseling sessions; MFLCs provided approximately 6.9 million face-to-face contacts, to include both children and adults. MFLC support has been enhanced to offer “surge” counseling support. Surge support highlights the flexibility of the MFLC Program by allowing Commanders to request up to 20 MFLCs and six Personal Financial Counselors for 45 days to support members of a unit returning from combat. During Surge support, MFLCs spend time with each Service member discussing reintegration issues. After the initial 45 days of surge support, Commanders may request an extension if they determine additional support is needed. During FY 2011, MFLCs provided 49 surge supports. This surge capacity has also been effective with addressing short term non-medical counseling needs arising from emergency incidents such as the Ft. Hood shooting and the Japan earthquake/tsunami.

Goals and Metrics

Non-medical counseling is aimed at preventing the development or exacerbation of psychological challenges that may undermine military and family readiness. The confidential nature of the counseling program addresses the concern that Service members and their families have: seeking help could reflect poorly on a military career. Although confidentiality of the counseling may reduce the stigma associated with seeking help, this very nature of the service makes it significantly more difficult to assess program outcomes. DoD has been developing outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of non-medical counseling services. In the meantime, we rely on usage and satisfaction data to assess program performance.

Tables 8 and 9 show the top five reasons for receiving MOS in-person counseling and for receiving MFLC in-person consultations, respectively. A significant portion of non-medical counseling services provided through the two programs helps military families cope with stress-related issues. In FY 2011, almost half (49 percent) of the MOS counseling sessions dealt with stress management; 22 percent of MFLC in-person consultations dealt with stress/job stress. The top reason for MFLC counseling sessions for adult clients was issues related to deployment and reintegration (23 percent), which was somewhat expected because some installation commanders have made contact with an MFLC mandatory for all Service members returning from a combat deployment.

Table 8. FY2011: Top 5 Reasons for Receiving MOS In-Person Counseling

Rank	MOS	%
1	Stress Management	49%
2	Marital/Intimate Relationships	35%
3	Family Relationships	14%
4	Personal Growth	8%
5	Anger Management	5%

Table 9. FY2011: Top 5 Reasons for Receiving MFLC In Person Consultations

Rank	MFLC (Adult Clients) ¹	%
1	Deployment/Reintegration Issues	23%
2	Stress/Job Stress	22%
3	Communications	15%
4	Marital/Relationship Counseling	13%
5	Family Dynamics	8%

¹Data were extracted from adult MFLC monthly utilization reports.

deployment, deployment, and reintegration events, in addition to its work with the DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Five-Year Plans

DoD has sponsored two research studies to improve measures of effectiveness of non-medical counseling. In 2010, DoD commissioned Virginia Polytechnic University to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the MFLC program. Nearly 2,800 people who received MFLC counseling participated in a survey. Results from this survey showed that 98 percent of respondents reported that MFLC counseling helped them deal more effectively with their problems; 99 percent reported that they would recommend MFLC counseling to a friend; 99 percent reported that they received the type of counseling they wanted; 98 percent reported that they would use MFLC counseling again if needed. DoD continues its efforts to identify outcome measures that provide quantifiable measures of program effectiveness through collaboration with university researchers and industry experts in the area of program evaluation.

Recent MOS non-medical counseling enhancements have been made to clarify scope of service and streamline operations. Ongoing quality assurance processes are utilized to monitor and modify counseling services to ensure relevant issues are addressed appropriately throughout the world. Results from the DoD 2010 Military Family Life Project survey indicates spouses of Active Duty members identified MOS counseling is the second most utilized source of counseling, second to TRICARE, and over half of them found it “very useful.”¹⁸

3-4-2. Health Care

The Military Health System (MHS) provides comprehensive health care benefits through different TRICARE options to about 9.7 million eligible beneficiaries, including Active Duty and eligible Reserve Component personnel, retirees, and their family populations.¹⁹ The MHS operates 56 hospitals and medical centers and 365 health clinics supported by a network of over 400,000 civilian care providers serving the beneficiaries.²⁰ A high quality health care benefit is also a key non-monetary incentive that impacts Service members’ enlistment and retention decisions.²¹

The Department remains committed to building and sustaining an integrated health care system that fosters, protects, sustains and restores health for military health care beneficiaries. Since the fall of 2009, military health care leaders have pursued the Quadruple Aim strategy, focusing on the primacy of readiness and continuous efforts to improve our population’s health and our beneficiaries’ experience of care, while managing per capita costs. To achieve the vision, leadership developed a number of strategic imperatives with measures and initiatives designed to close performance gaps. Each of these strategic imperatives supports improved performance in

¹⁸ Data Source: Defense Manpower Data Center. (2011a). The 2010 Military Family Life Project Briefing (May 18, 2011).

¹⁹ The number of enrolled beneficiaries was 5.5 million ending FY2011. Data source: DoD. 2012. *Evaluation of the TRICARE Program: Fiscal Year 2012 Report to Congress*. Eligible Reserves include those on activated status, those deactivated but using the TRICARE Assistance Management Program, and those enrolled in the premium-based TRICARE Reserve Select or TRICARE Retired Reserve benefits programs.

²⁰ The data are as of the end of FY 2011. Data source: DOD. 2011. *Evaluation of the TRICARE Program: Fiscal Year 2012 Report to Congress*.

²¹ DoD. 2008. *Report of the Tenth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation*.

one of the four elements of the Quadruple Aim. The Quadruple Aim and strategic imperatives will guide the Military Health System for the next three to five years.

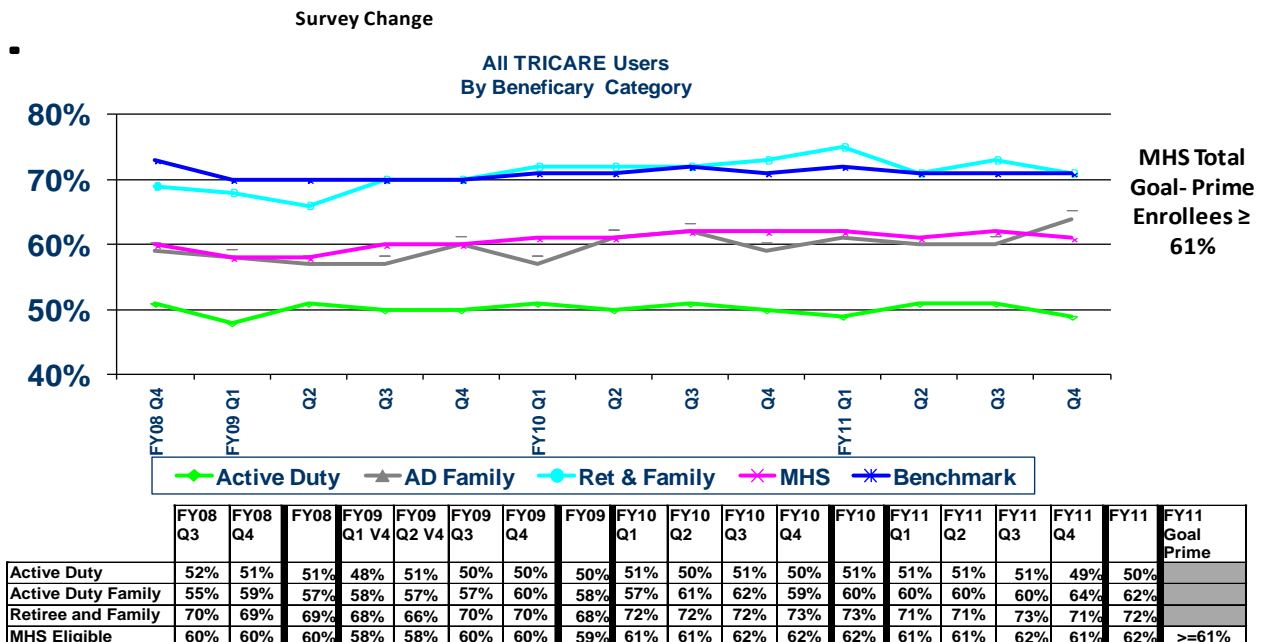
Goals and Measures

Satisfaction with the MHS continues to be a high-priority issue for DoD. Beneficiary satisfaction is a component measure of “better care,” the goal of which is to provide a care experience that is patient and family centered, compassionate, convenient, equitable, safe and of the highest quality. The perceptions of beneficiaries over an extended period provide the Department with valuable feedback to develop an integrated health care system that meets expectations of beneficiaries. Measures for health care satisfaction presented in this report are based on two questions in the Health Care Survey of Department of Defense Beneficiaries (HCSDB): satisfaction with health care and satisfaction with health care plan. The former is beneficiaries’ satisfaction with the quality of health care that they receive from healthcare providers and the latter is that with the health care plan that they have. The adult HCSDB is a population-based survey of 50,000 randomly-selected adult TRICARE eligible beneficiaries each quarter. The sample is stratified by beneficiary category and enrollment status, irrespective of whether the beneficiary used the Military Health System or not. Questions on satisfaction with health care are closely modeled on the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS), a nationally recognized, standardized survey questionnaire on patients' health care experience. This data compatibility with CAHPS allows HCSDB data to be compared and benchmarked with over 350 civilian health care plans.

Satisfaction with Health Care

In HCSDB, beneficiaries are asked to assess their overall satisfaction with health care in the past 12 months: “Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst health care possible and 10 is the best health care possible, what number would you use to rate all your health care in the last 12 months?” The percentages for responses of 8, 9, or 10 are presented in Figure 3. This

Figure 3. Satisfaction with Health Care by Beneficiary Category



Data Source: Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries (HCSDB).

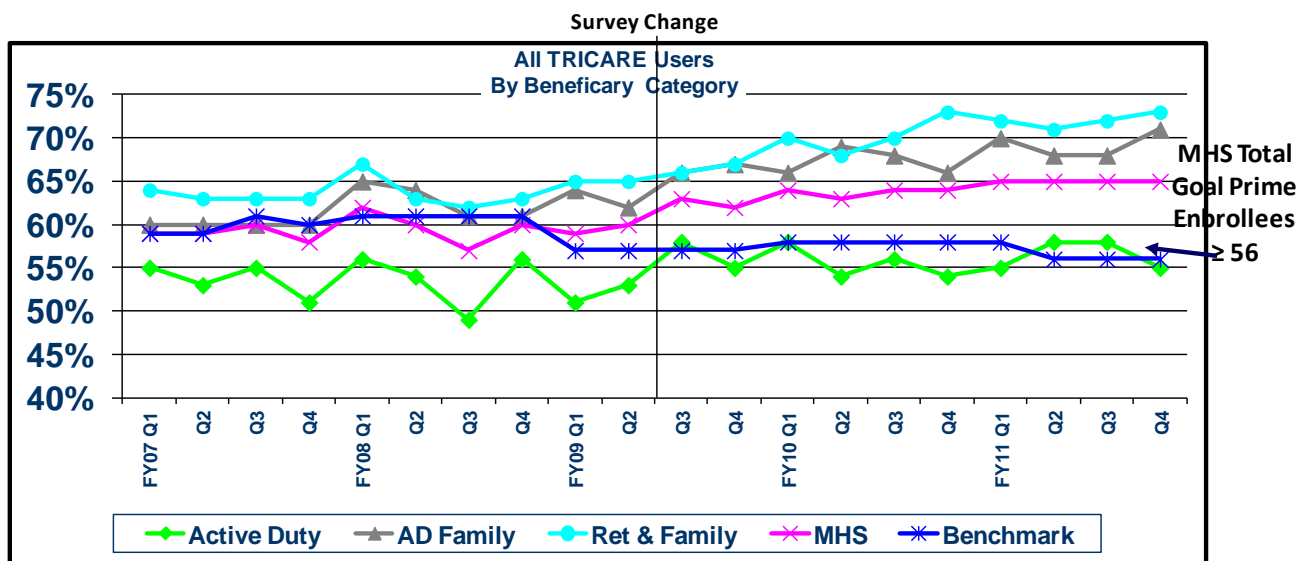
question is an overall indicator of success in meeting the needs of patients over the past year, not merely from their visit immediately before taking the survey.

For this measure, MHS leadership set a short-term goal for FY 2011 of 61 percent for TRICARE Prime enrollees, with the intent on improving each year to close the gap between current performance and the civilian benchmark. Retirees and their family members continued reporting the highest overall satisfaction rating among all beneficiary categories by meeting or exceeding the 71 percent civilian benchmark, while Active Duty Service members were the least satisfied — averaging 50 percent for FY 2011. The contrast in the level of satisfaction by age was somewhat expected as younger populations are generally more critical about health care than older populations. Nevertheless, increasing Active Duty Service member satisfaction will continue to be the focus of the Departmental efforts in FY 2012.

Satisfaction with Health Care Plan

Military Health Beneficiaries are asked to assess their overall satisfaction with their health care plan in the last 12 months: “Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst health plan possible and 10 is the best plan possible, what number would you use to rate your health plan?” The percentages indicated in Figure 4 are responses of 8, 9, or 10. The MHS leadership has set a goal for FY 2011 of 56 percent, which is the average percentage score based on the CAHPS benchmark database.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with Health Care Plan by Beneficiary Category



	FY08 Q3	FY08 Q4	FY08	FY09 Q1 V4	FY09 Q2 V4	FY09 Q3	FY09 Q4	FY09	FY10 Q1	FY10 Q2	FY10 Q3	FY10 Q4	FY10	FY11 Q1	FY11 Q2	FY11 Q3	FY11 Q4	FY11	FY11 Goal Prime
Active Duty	49%	56%	53%	51%	53%	58%	55%	54%	58%	54%	56%	54%	55%	55%	58%	58%	55%	56%	
Active Duty Family	61%	61%	63%	64%	62%	66%	67%	64%	66%	69%	68%	66%	67%	70%	68%	68%	71%	69%	
Retiree and Family	62%	63%	64%	65%	65%	66%	67%	66%	70%	68%	70%	73%	70%	72%	71%	72%	73%	72%	
MHS Eligible	57%	60%	59%	59%	60%	63%	62%	61%	64%	63%	64%	64%	64%	65%	65%	65%	65%	65%	56%

Data Source: Health Care Survey of DoD Beneficiaries (HCSDB).

Overall, satisfaction with DoD's health plan has been gradually improving over the past five years, and the MHS as a whole has continued exceeding the civilian benchmark of 56 percent, reaching 65 percent overall in FY 2011, 56 percent for Active Duty, and 72 for retirees. Satisfaction with health plan provides insight into how much DoD beneficiaries value their TRICARE health benefit and customer support such as in the accuracy and timeliness of processing their TRICARE claims, benefits and cost information, and customer service. In many cases, satisfaction with the plan is related to how well problems are resolved once identified.

Five-Year Plans

The MHS is implementing the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model, which is an established model for primary care that improves continuity of care and enhances access through patient centered care and effective patient-provider communication. One of the core principles of the PCMH is that patients have a consistent relationship with their provider and team that delivers first contact, continuous, and comprehensive care. The PCMH model is designed to help patients establish trust with their provider, lower utilization of hospital services, and lower overall cost of care by focusing on prevention and effective coordinated management of chronic illness. These attributes of the PCMH model are associated with better outcomes, reduced mortality, fewer hospital admissions for patients with chronic diseases, and increased patient compliance. Additionally, the PCMH model will enable the Military Health System for primary care to look similar to the eyes of the patient across all of DoD's military treatment facilities.

The PCMH policy was established on September 18, 2009, based on recommendations from a Tri-Service working group. Each of the Service Surgeons General has committed to making the PCMH the cornerstone of our health care delivery system. The plan is to implement these PCMH concepts in all of our military treatment facilities and to work with our managed care support contractors to do the same over the next three to five years. The PCMH is a major initiative that directly impacts all elements of the Quadruple Aim. The MHS strives to provide comprehensive care for its beneficiaries through a team of healthcare providers responsible for a given number of patients. Patients also are assigned to individual providers who play a central role in promoting coordinated care and who encourage engagement of their patients receiving care. Early data from established PCMHs in military treatment facilities have shown improvement in access to care, quality health outcomes, patient satisfaction, staff satisfaction and total health costs per patient.

In addition to implementation of PCMH, expanding psychological health care capacity for military families is another primary issue to be addressed. This needs to be addressed on three fronts in the next five years or less: the shortfall of care providers who accept TRICARE, bridging the cultural differences between military and civilian providers, and outreach to local community providers. In addition to the services provided through TRICARE, DoD is working with USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services to build community capacity for psychological health care for military families.

3-4-3. Support for the Wounded, Ill, and Injured and Their Families

Continuous support for our Wounded Warriors and their families and caregivers is one of the Department's top priorities. In response to concerns raised by families of the wounded, the Department has been making concerted efforts to build a streamlined care management system from the beginning of treatment to the transition stage: either returned to military duty, or reintegrated back into the civilian community as an honored veteran.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2008 required the establishment of Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs), Comprehensive Recovery Plans (CRPs), and standardized training for RCCs in order to provide improved care, management and transition for all Active Duty wounded, ill and injured recovering Service members. Under this direction, the USD(P&R) published DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1300.24, "Recovery Coordination Program," in December 2009 and assigned the execution and program oversight to the Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy (ODASD (WWCTP)). The instruction defines the roles and responsibilities of RCCs and provides the parameters for the CRP. The CRP is a roadmap for Wounded Warriors and their families outlining goals for transitioning through the phases of recovery, rehabilitation, return to duty or reintegration into the community. The Recovery Care Coordinator develops and oversees the CRP in collaboration with the Wounded Warrior, family, medical, and non-medical multi-disciplinary teams. The CRP is designed to be a fluid document allowing for changes that may occur during the continuum of care. The RCC reviews the CRP with the Wounded Warrior and family or designated caregiver as frequently as necessary based on the Wounded Warriors' needs and during transition phases such as changes in location, familial, marital, financial, disability evaluation system, employment, medical, or retirement status.

The Department is committed to Service members through the Wounded Warrior Education and Employment Initiative which engages recovering Service members early in the recovery process to identify skills they have, career opportunities that match those skills, and any additional skills they will need to be successful. This process operates on a regional basis and involves an innovative collaboration with VA to provide vocational rehabilitation services earlier in the recovery process than ever before. Regional Managers overseen by ODASD (WWCTP) identify and coordinate existing resources to ensure a consistent experience for recovering and transitioning Service members.

The Department is also committed to ensuring Service members are afforded the opportunity to participate in Federal internships through the Operation Warfighter Program. This Federal internship program is open to all wounded, ill and injured Service members assigned to a Service Wounded Warrior Program. Each Service member must be medically cleared to participate, and the internship assignment must not interfere with a participant's medical profile or adversely affect his or her well-being and recuperation. Operation Warfighter is a wellness program designed to help Service members better prepare for a smooth transition into the workforce.

The Warrior Athletic Reconditioning Program (WARP), previously named Paralympic Military Program, is now aligned with ODASD (WWCTP). Service members can benefit from WARP for several reasons:

- Benefits of physical activity include reduced stress, increased quality of life, lower blood pressure, weight management and the enhancement of the rehabilitative process;
- Recovering Service members in Warrior Transition Unit detachments miss camaraderie and the unit support network;
- Athletic reconditioning sports allow Service members to focus on a team and contribute to that team's success;
- Grief after becoming wounded, ill or injured can develop into harmful psychological and physical conditions with negative behaviors begetting more negative behaviors, leaving a Service member less fit and subject to weight gain during recovery.

Planning is currently underway for the 2012 Warrior Games, held annually in Colorado Springs, Colorado and hosted by United States Olympic Committee. ODASD (WWCTP) will assist each Service with Warrior Games trials as required and requested.

The NDAA for FY 2010 granted the Secretary of Defense discretionary authority to compensate catastrophically injured or ill Service members requiring continual medical management, or who are at a high risk for personal safety and cannot live independently in the community without caregiver support. Under this direction, the USD(P&R) published DoDI 1322.12, "Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL)," in August 2011. ODASD (WWCTP) manages the SCAADL program's execution and oversight.

DoD determined that all eligible catastrophically wounded, ill or injured Service members, who cannot live independently in their homes without caregiver support and require aid and attendance after hospitalization, would be eligible for compensation for caregiver support. The instruction stipulates that an eligible Service member must have a catastrophic injury or illness incurred in the line of duty; be an outpatient; and be certified by a licensed physician to be in need of significant assistance from another person to perform the personal functions of everyday living or require supervision to prevent harm to self or others. Without caregiver assistance with activities of daily living, the Service member would require residential institutional care.

The SCAADL program compensates Service members for the time and assistance caregivers provide at home in lieu of the government providing residential institutional care. The amount paid to catastrophically wounded, ill or injured Service members is based on the member's level of dependency and caregiver assistance required. The Services' wounded warrior program offices are the points of contact for administering this program. As of November 30, 2011, the Services have determined 292 Service members qualified for SCAADL compensation.

Goals and Metrics

To date, ODASD (WWCTP) and the Services have recruited and trained over 171 RCCs for Wounded Warrior Programs in all Service branches. These RCCs are assigned to 84 locations throughout the United States and overseas. The training is being conducted using standardized curriculum that was created by ODASD (WWCTP). At the conclusion of each

training event, RCCs are provided the opportunity to offer feedback and rate their satisfaction with the training experience. For the entire FY 2011, the overall satisfaction rating of RCCs was 96 percent.

ODASD (WWCTP) developed the Recovery Coordination Program Support Solution (RCPSS) to house the CRP electronically. The RCPSS allows ODASD (WWCTP) to collect data for program evaluation and demographic information on our Wounded Warrior population. Additionally, this web-based tool has the capability to interface with other systems already in use across the Services and eliminates duplicative, hand-written paperwork. RCPSS helps to minimize the administrative time required by RCCs so that they may focus their efforts on the recovering Service member and their families. All RCCs receive RCPSS training which is part of the required standardized core curriculum.

Operation War Fighter has ensured the placement of over 500 Service members in Federal internships for FY 2011. The program is averaging 36 National Capital Region outreach events per year. Approximately 105 Federal agencies and subcomponents are actively participating in the program.

Five-Year Plans

ODASD (WWCTP) is also establishing a Recovery Coordination Program (RCP) evaluation process to provide for a coordinated review of the policies, procedures and implementation of the program. In November 2010, ODASD (WWCTP) staff members completed site assistance visits to locations where RCCs are assigned, interviewing a representative sample of the 31 original RCCs who have been on the ground since the program's inception in November 2008. The purpose of the site assistance visits was to:

- Assess the uniformity of services provided to recovering Service members and their families;
- Identify progress made during the first year of the RCP;
- Establish a baseline for future outcome measures;
- Provide staff assistance per DoDI 1300.24.

Standard interview questions were developed and focused on five areas: training, operations, tools, communications and RCP impact. Interview results showed improvements in RCC training as compared to the initial RCC training in 2008. RCCs, Wounded Warrior Program Directors, and Commanders reported that RCCs have established working relationships at the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) and installations, resulting in an increase of referrals to the RCP. It was also reported that RCCs had designated facility work space at MTFs and installations and were using the hard copies of the CRP, but were looking forward to an electronic version via RCPSS.

ODASD (WWCTP) made the following improvements to the RCP based on interview responses: additional training on PTSD and TBI have been added to the RCC core curriculum and a Wounded Warrior Care Coordination Summit was held in March 2011 to address broader recommendations.

The Summit consisted of four chartered working groups each focused on a key area: Education and Employment, Best Practices, Federal Recovery Coordinator (FRC)/RCC Collaboration and Wounded Warrior Family Resilience. Working group participants were leaders from across the public and private sectors, including participants from multiple Federal agencies (VA, Department of Labor, ODASD (MC&FP)), as well as representatives from each of the Military Services. Several recommendations are currently being carried out by the RCP or its component programs. Additional recommendations are being carried out by other participating agencies. Actions for implementation of recommendations are being tracked as well as metrics for the programs under RCP. Current metrics focus on training of RCCs, referrals to FRCs and other RCP programmatic metrics. Other metrics focus on services provided to support Wounded Warriors with their reintegration including internships, employment and education support and athletic reconditioning programs.

3-4-4. Family Advocacy Program

The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is the DoD program designated to address child abuse and domestic abuse²² in military families in cooperation with civilian social service agencies and military and civilian law enforcement agencies. The Services' FAPs provide comprehensive prevention, early identification, advocacy, and treatment in response to child and domestic abuse with the goal of strengthening family functioning and resiliency to increase the competency and self-efficacy of military families.

Goals and Metrics

FAP has developed a set of metrics to measure program outcomes for leadership FAP awareness, child abuse prevention, domestic abuse victim advocacy, and domestic abuser treatments. For some metrics, however, reporting standards still require further refinement to ensure data consistency across the Services. This report presents the metrics for the following two key FAP programs: the New Parent Support Program (NPSP) and treatment programs for substantiated spouse abusers. Table 10 shows the data from FY 2011 and the goals for FY 2012.

NPSP: In an effort to strengthen the protective factors associated with decreasing the risk for child abuse and neglect, DoD adopted an intensive, voluntary home visitation program, NPSP. This model was developed specifically for vulnerable parents in the Active Duty component who live on or off the installation. The service is offered to expectant parents and to parents of children ages 0-3 years through self-referrals and referrals from health care providers and other service providers in the community.

²² DoD defines domestic abuse as both domestic violence, including violation of a military or civilian protective order, and a pattern of behavior resulting in emotional/psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty that is directed toward a person who is a current or former spouse, a person with whom the abuser shares a child in common, or a current or former intimate partner with whom the abuser shares or has shared a common domicile.

Table 10. Goals and Metrics for Family Advocacy Programs.

Outcome	Metric	FY11 Data	FY12 Goals
No child abuse or neglect in high-risk families who received intensive NPSP services (at least 2 visits/month)	% of families who received 6-month intensive NPSP services who are not reported in incidents that met criteria for child abuse or neglect within 1 year after the program completion.	Goal: 85%	85%
		Actual: 96%	
Allegedly abusive spouses who do not recidivate after completing FAP treatment	% of allegedly abusive spouses who successfully completed FAP treatment and are not reported in incidents that met criteria for spouse abuse within 1 year after treatment completion.	Goal: 75%	75%
		Actual: 97%	

The outcome of NPSP is measured by the percentage of Active Duty families who received a minimum of 6-month intensive NPSP service and are not reported in incidents that met FAP criteria for child abuse or neglect within one year following the completion of the program (see Table 10). Since the assessment began in 2005, DoD continues to meet its goal that 85 percent of participating Active Duty families will not be reported in incidents that met FAP criteria in the year following NPSP case closure. In FY 2011, the percentage of NPSP participants who were not reported for child abuse or neglect for 12 months after the program completion was 96 percent, showing an increase by 6 percentage points from FY 2010.

Treatment to Reduce Spouse Abuse Recidivism: At military installations, FAPs provide treatment and/or coordinate treatment with local agencies to help alleged domestic abusers end their abusive behavior. Progress in prevention of repeat domestic abuse is difficult to measure because civilian treatment programs vary by the local agencies that provide them. Research has suggested that alleged abusers who have completed a treatment program are less likely to recidivate than those who did not finish.²³ Since FY 2009, FAP has collected data on the effectiveness of treatment programs for alleged spouse abusers to reduce spouse abuse recidivism. A metric adopted here is the percentage of alleged spouse abusers who completed a FAP treatment program and are not reported in incidents that met FAP criteria for spouse abuse within one year after completion of treatment. In FY 2011, the prevention of recidivism marked 97 percent among domestic abusers who completed treatment. This figure is one percentage point higher than that of FY 2010. Despite these very positive figures, the goals for both programs remain constant for the next five years as DoD further refines the metrics to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Five-Year Plans

The individuals substantiated for domestic abuse do not represent a homogenous group. Abuse differs in degree, intensity, etiology and function. Such differences serve to reaffirm FAP’s goal to prevent and reduce abuse through innovative and evidence supported services. In incidents that meet the FAP criteria for domestic abuse, the abuser may be an Active Duty Service member or a civilian. The FY 2010 FAP report indicates that 64 percent of alleged

²³ See pp. 429-432 in Sartin, Robert M., David J. Hansen, and Matthew T. Huss. 2006. “Domestic Violence Treatment Response and Recidivism: A Review and Implications for the Study of Family Violence.” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11(5): 425-440.

spouse abusers were Active Duty Service members and 36 percent were civilian spouses. Of the total number of alleged abusers, 67 percent were male and 32 percent were female. FAP makes treatment available to both Active Duty and civilian alleged abusers. Command support of treatment recommendations for the Active Duty alleged offender is a key component to the success of treatment. Lack of military jurisdiction over civilian alleged abusers may impact the civilian abuser's willingness to participate in recommended services.

Acts of domestic abuse also vary, to include emotional abuse without violence, physical violence, and sexual violence. The DoD FAP office has changed the criteria for these types of acts to ensure a high level of consistency across installations and across all four Services. As a result of the heterogeneous nature of domestic abuse, treatment varies. Men who have committed repeated acts of physical or sexual violence against their spouses are more likely to be treated as "batterers" within group psycho-educational approaches mandated by state standards, even if such approaches have significant recidivism. Women who commit only a few acts of emotional abuse are more likely to be treated with cognitive behavioral therapy, and may have lower rates of recidivism.

FAP is placing increased focus on providing effective interventions at all levels of service. As a result, pending FAP standards require the Services to adopt approaches for prevention and intervention that are evidence based, culture and gender sensitive, and applicable to a military population. The Office of Secretary of Defense is working closely with the Military Family Readiness Clearinghouse to identify potentially promising approaches for the military family population.

The Military Services have made changes in their data collection systems to provide more accurate information on recidivism of spouse abuse. To improve identification of variables that contribute to poor outcomes and recidivism, FAP launched a 2-year joint service project with university researchers in FY 2010 to standardize the severity rating scales used in categorizing substantiated incidents of family maltreatment. Maltreatment severity has traditionally been rated as "mild," "moderate," or "severe." To be useful, ratings must be reliable, which means consistent across clinicians in the field. Conversely, *an unreliable measure likely does more harm than good* by leading policy makers to interpret and act on error-laden data. The project will be completed in the second quarter of FY 2012. Through process improvement efforts, the Service FAPs continue to explore what programming changes would be required to match data on the type(s) of spouse abuse allegedly committed by a Service member with the type of treatment provided and the reason for case closure.

3-4-5. Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programs

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs directly contribute to the readiness, retention, and fitness of Service members and their families. MWR provides a wide range of recreational programs both on and off installations such as fitness centers and sports, libraries, recreation centers, skills development programs, outdoor recreation, leisure travel, recreation lodging, and single Service member programs. For Guard and Reserve members and their families, MWR programs are provided through MWR Outreach. MWR Outreach is also available to Active Duty members who are not stationed at or near a military installation so they

may maintain necessary fitness levels. MWR Outreach includes opportunities such as YMCA memberships for eligible personnel, online library services 24/7 worldwide and military recreation one-stop shopping on the Military OneSource webpage.

In FY 2011, an additional 14,000 eligible military members and 14,700 family members took advantage of free YMCA memberships. Respite child care is also offered at participating YMCAs and provides up to 16 hours of free child care per month per child for families of deployed Guard and Reserve personnel, along with children whose Active Duty parent(s) are assigned to an approved command which is remote from a military installation. Over 9,000 children participated in the respite care program this fiscal year. Feedback from participants indicates access to YMCA programs and services provides not only great stress relief, but also a sense of community and belonging; this significantly helps ease the loneliness and isolation felt by spouses during their Service member's deployment.

The Internet has been a useful means of delivering MWR programs to Reserve Component families who are more likely to be geographically isolated than Active Duty families. DoD has purchased over 30 online library databases and services and made them available to Service members and their families 24/7. One of the best success stories of the year is the explosion in the use of these databases and services from 44 million user activities in FY 2010 to 69 million user activities in FY 2011. Customers of all ages took advantage of the resources, learning how to repair cars, write college papers, explore new hobbies, take practice tests, find out about other cultures, download eBooks/audio books, prepare for deployment, and further their professional goals. Additionally, over 235,000 students used the DoD MWR Library Tutor.com, providing 24/7 online access to live tutors for grades K-12. The DoD MWR 2011 Summer Reading program had over 60,000 participants who read 11.8 million minutes at 181 sites. The Summer Reading initiative enriched the lives of the youth in military families, boosting reading achievement and improving literacy skills. The military recreation link on the Military OneSource website provides instant access to a myriad of information on each Service's MWR programs along with videos of the Armed Forces Recreation Centers, affordable vacation opportunities, and recreation facilities. Tickets and Tours offerings, lodging links, and other MWR program highlights are also featured on the website.

Additionally, MWR provides assistance at deployment-related meetings for Guard and Reserves in an innovative way. To encourage family participation at the meetings, MWR funded "Theater in a Box," "Electronic Games in a Box," "Recreation in a Box" and age appropriate "Crafts and Games in a Box" for National Guard State Family Readiness Offices, Family Assistance Centers, and the Air Force and Army Reserve Centers.

Goals and Metrics

MWR began conducting the comprehensive DoD MWR Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Survey in 2009. The MWR CSI Survey is modeled after the established customer satisfaction survey widely used by civilian industries for benchmarking. The survey is an exemplar of a program assessment tool that was developed collaboratively by representatives from the Office of Secretary of Defense and the Services. The second DoD MWR CSI Survey was conducted in summer 2011. The sample was drawn from Active Duty Service members worldwide; approximately 17,500 Active Duty Service members from all four Services

completed the survey online. Table 11 summarizes the CSI scores at DoD and each Service. In the 2011 survey, the overall CSI score of 69 remained the same as that of the 2009 survey.

The DoD MWR CSI Survey provides scores for the MWR program overall and for each of eight program areas. The survey also measures the impact of the overall MWR satisfaction on three key organizational outcomes: readiness, retention, and unit cohesion. Impacts on these organizational outcomes were measured within the MWR programs, independent of other military family readiness programs. Consistent with the results from the 2009 survey, the 2011 results suggest that outdoor recreation and fitness programs continue to be top priority areas and would have the highest impact on the overall satisfaction with MWR and consequently, on mission readiness.

Table 11. Goals and Metrics for MWR Programs

Outcome	Metric	FY09 data	FY10 goal	FY11 data	FY12 goal	Remarks
Identify high impact program areas and level of customer satisfaction	MWR Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) ¹ - Overall for DoD	69	N/A	69	N/A	MWR established a self-benchmark for CSI score in FY09. The survey is biennial. The FY11 score for DoD Overall did not change.
	Army CSI Score	68	N/A	70	N/A	Increased 2 points
	Navy CSI Score	72	N/A	71	N/A	Decreased 1 point; highest satisfaction for military Services
	Air Force CSI Score	70	N/A	67	N/A	Decreased 3 points
	Marine Corps CSI Score	65	N/A	67	N/A	Increased 2 points

Note: ¹Within the context of this study, scores in the 60s are interpreted as "fine but could use work," the 70s as "good job but keep working on it," and the 80s as "excellent - keep it up." It is unlikely that any program will or should achieve a score higher than 85.

Five-Year Plans

Results of the MWR CSI Surveys have been used for developing MWR strategic plans and as future funding justification for improvements to the MWR programs at the Services and DoD levels. Although CSI surveys can provide comparable customer satisfaction data found in civilian industries, there is no single civilian industry offering the same level and scope of services as MWR programs do. As an alternative measure, DoD is developing its own benchmark using the data from this first survey and subsequent surveys. Short- and long-term goals will be set after evaluating subsequent surveys against this benchmark. DoD is planning to conduct another MWR CSI Survey in 2013.

3-4-6. Exceptional Family Member Program

It is essential to military readiness that the Military Services identify and provide support to family members who have special medical or educational needs. These family members

include spouses, children, or dependent parents who require special medical or educational services for a diagnosed physical, intellectual, or emotional condition. Each Service has an established Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) to work with these families and address their unique needs. Although over 120,000 military families have been enrolled in EFMP, the DoD estimates a much higher number of family members with special needs.

Until 2010, the EFMP was limited to identification/enrollment of family members with special needs as related to the personnel assignment coordination process. While there were no prior DoD requirements for the Services to provide community and family support for military families with special needs, the Army and Marine Corps had already launched their own programs. NDAA FY 2010, section 563, added section 1781c to Title 10, United States Code, which established the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs (OSN) to enhance and improve DoD support around the world for military families with special needs. The law also required the Military Services to expand coordination of assignments to and within the United States for Service members who have family members with special needs, and to expand community support to military families with special needs. The community and family support will provide information about programs and services, assistance in obtaining referrals for services, and in acquiring services. NDAA FY 2010 also required the Department to provide an annual report on the gaps in services available to military families with special needs, ways to address the gaps, and recommendations on future legislation.

Goals and Metrics

OSN has been working and will continue working to achieve the following six key targets over the next three to four years:

- Publish a DoD policy on the EFMP, to include assignment coordination to all locations as well as the provision of family support services.
- Establish joint Service curriculum and training.
- Establish an oversight process including standards.
 - Oversee Service implementation of the EFMP, including community support and assignment coordination.
 - Oversee the provision of early intervention services by the military medical departments and special education services by the DoD schools.
- Establish a web-based database that will interface with Service community support, personnel systems, and the military healthcare system.
- Develop and maintain a system for identifying the availability and accessibility of services for military families with special needs.
- Measure the effectiveness of community support and assignment coordination programs.

Five-Year Plans

To achieve these targets, OSN is currently conducting several major studies in collaboration with Land-Grant University faculty members whose expertise lay in the subject, leveraging the DoD-USDA partnership. The studies include the following:

- *Benchmark Study*: In collaboration with Cornell University and the University of Kansas, this study analyzes existing military and civilian programs and policies to inform on best practices, determines expansion of existing programs through a family needs assessment, and develops evaluation metrics to determine family satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to support the DoD's efforts to establish a policy requiring the Services to provide community support to military families with special needs. This study will provide the foundation for an effective family support policy across the four Services.
- *Autism Study Phase II*: DoD has been working with Ohio State University to conduct this study. The Autism Study Phase I reviewed the access and availability of evidence-based educational practices for military children with autism spectrum disorders in five states with large military population. In the Phase II, researchers will identify the educational services available for children with autism spectrum disorder in an additional ten states not included in the initial study. The ten states include Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, and South Carolina.
- *Medicaid Study*: In collaboration with West Virginia University, this study undertakes a comprehensive assessment of Medicaid accessibility to military families with special needs. Due to the mobile nature of military life, military families with special needs have a history of experiencing difficulty in obtaining Medicaid coverage for exceptional family members. As they relocate, families often find themselves at the end of the queue for Medicaid services.
- *Functional Analysis*: This is a long-term project to analyze the current data and case management systems of each Military Service to determine whether a joint service system can be developed to network the Military Service systems and the military health system IT solutions.. An analysis of the policies, procedures and processes adopted by each Military Service will be used to recommend a DoD-wide system for supporting military families with special needs.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The plans and assessment results presented in this report will guide the Departmental efforts in the next five fiscal years to ensure that DoD provides high-quality family programs to help military families cope with unique life challenges in the military service and ultimately improve family readiness. Despite difficult economic circumstances causing budget reductions across all levels of government, DoD is committed to continue providing military families with support programs and resources to help them cope with life challenges in innovative, efficient, and fiscally responsible manners. As the U.S. forces continue reducing the number of Service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, DoD is reassessing the program offerings to meet families' sustaining and emerging needs through family needs assessment, promote the adaptation of research-based programs, and develop measures for the effectiveness of family readiness programs. In recent years, innovative program delivery, such as confidential non-medical counseling programs have helped reduce stigma issues among Service members and their families to seek help. However, the very nature of family readiness programs poses a

unique challenge in program assessment. Unlike other Defense programs, the majority of family readiness programs are community-based, prevention-oriented, and voluntarily participated programs, for which outcomes are often difficult to be quantified with short-term measures. DoD has been aggressively trying to resolve this challenge through its own initiatives, working groups and inter-agency efforts, and will continue its efforts in the coming years.