

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20593-7902  
MAIL STOP 7902  
Staff Symbol: CG-11  
Phone: (202) 475-5130  
Fax: (202) 475-5906

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## MEMORANDUM

NOV 15 2010

From: M. J. TEDESCO, RADM  
CG-11

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Tedesco", written over the printed name.

Reply to: CG-1121  
Attn of: CDR Schwartz  
(202) 475-5172

To: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

Subj: MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES  
DEPLOYED IN CONNECTION WITH A CONTINGENCY OPERATION

1. Section 708 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2010 (FY10) requires the military services to institute four person-to-person mental health assessments for each member of the Armed Forces who deploys in connection with a contingency operation, as defined in DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6490.3, *Deployment Health*, August 11, 2006.
2. The Coast Guard's implementation plan outlines procedures to provide four mental health assessments to service members who deploy in connection with a contingency operation. Each assessment will consist of two phases: (1) Service member completion of the Mental Health Assessment Questionnaire and (2) a person-to-person dialogue with a designated healthcare provider. Implementation will begin on November 15, 2010.
3. The attached implementation plan details the Coast Guard's proposed mental health assessment management process. The point of contact in Operational Medicine is CDR Erica Schwartz at (202) 475-5172 or [erica.g.schwartz@uscg.mil](mailto:erica.g.schwartz@uscg.mil)

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Enclosure

**US COAST GUARD IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**  
**NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA)**  
**FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010, SECTION 708**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Section 708 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2010 requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to institute four person-to-person mental health assessments for each member of the Armed Forces who deploys in connection with a contingency operation, as defined in DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6490.3, *Deployment Health*, August 11, 2006. The Coast Guard implementation plan and procedures will take effect 15 November 2010 and will provide four mental health assessments to service members who deploy in connection with a contingency operation. Each assessment will consist of two phases in both the pre and post mental health assessment procedure: (1) service member completion of the Mental Health Assessment Questionnaire and (2) a person-to-person dialogue with a designated healthcare provider (Medical Officer or Independent Duty Health Service Technician (IDHS)).

**2. TIMELINE**

Consistent with OASD(HA) guidance and other Military departments, the Coast Guard will administer mental health assessments to deployers at the following intervals:

1. Within 2 months before the estimated date of deployment
2. Between 3 and 6 months after return from deployment
3. Between 7 and 12 months after return from deployment
4. Between 16 and 24 months after return from deployment

To ensure adherence to HA policy, the Coast Guard will synchronize mental health assessments in conjunction with existing readiness and deployment-related health assessments whenever possible. The first mental health assessment will be completed at the same time as the DD Form 2795, *Pre-Deployment Health Assessment*. The second mental health assessment will be completed at the same time as the DD Form 2900, *Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessment*. The subsequent mental health assessments will be completed during the member's Periodic Health Assessment (PHA).

Coast Guard reserve members will currently have two options for completing the person-to-person screenings: through a Military Treatment Facility (MTF) or through a designated Coast Guard healthcare provider. Once the screening form is electronic, the Coast Guard will work with the Reserve Health Readiness Program to use the Logistics Health Incorporated (LHI) call center with a privileged provider for Coast Guard reserve personnel.

### **3. AUTOMATION AND DOCUMENTATION**

Currently, all Coast Guard healthcare providers will be required to ask all Coast Guard members seeking health care, if he or she has returned from an expeditionary deployment. If the member states yes, the Coast Guard healthcare provider will perform a paper-based (SF-600 overprint) mental health assessment. Paper copies will be printed and placed in the member's outpatient medical record. After completing the mental health assessment, completion will be documented and tracked in PGUI.

Once the Coast Guard's Electronic Health Record (EHR) is fully implemented, deployers who require a mental health assessment will be tracked electronically. All mental health assessments will be documented in the member's EHR to facilitate health surveillance and data sharing.

### **4. QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)**

To ensure the mental health assessments are accomplished and the appropriate standard of care is met, the Coast Guard will establish explicit Quality Assurance (QA) measures in accordance with DoDI 6200.05, *Force Health Protection Quality Assurance Program*, February 16, 2007. To enforce these measures, the Health, Safety, Work-Life Service Center (HSWL SC) will ensure the quality and sustainment of all deployment-health assessment processes. HSWL-SC (Operational Medicine) will closely monitor compliance and report metrics to Commandant (CG-11) at least quarterly.

#### **4.1. Training and Certification**

To meet the appropriate standard of care, all healthcare providers conducting mental health assessments must be trained in the assessment and treatment of deployment-related health conditions and concerns. Coast Guard healthcare providers authorized to administer Coast Guard assessments include mental health providers, physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners. In addition, IDHS who are trained and certified to conduct mental health assessments will be authorized to administer them if their Designated Medical Officer Advisor (DMOA) so deems. In accordance with DoD guidelines, all non-mental health providers will be required to complete the OASD(HA) deployment-health training to be posted on the Deployment Health Clinical Center website. Additionally, Coast Guard-specific training is currently in development. Certifications from training modules will be added to credentialing requirements for all privileged, non-mental health providers. Compliance will be tracked by Commandant (CG-1122), Quality & Performance Improvement.

#### **4.2. Completion of Mental Health Assessments on Schedule**

The Coast Guard requires a 95 percent rate of compliance for completion of mental health assessments within the specified time frames. In addition to internal tracking, compliance metrics will be included in the Coast Guard's Force Health Protection/QA report to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Health Protection and Readiness)/OASD(HA).