



**USAPHC**  
**U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND**

Public Affairs Office  
5158 Blackhawk Rd. Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403  
410-417-2937  
usarmy.apg.medcom-phc.mbx.pao@mail.mil

## Veterinary Services Portfolio

### Mission

Veterinary Services has oversight of both the animal medicine and food protection missions within the U.S. Army Public Health Command's area of responsibility. The Animal Medicine Program's mission is to deliver high-quality, comprehensive veterinary medical care to Department of Defense and other government-owned animals. The Food Protection Program's mission is to ensure that only safe, wholesome, high-quality food and bottled water is procured, thereby protecting military personnel and their families from food-borne disease. By executing these missions, the portfolio safeguards military communities against public health threats. The Veterinary Services Portfolio helps develop Army veterinary personnel so they are ready to support animal medicine and food protection operations worldwide.

### Background

The Veterinary Services Portfolio was created in September 2010 as a result of the merger of the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine and the U.S. Army Veterinary Command to form the USAPHC.

### Clients

The portfolio's clients are DOD leaders, Army commanders and organizations, including Army medical leaders, veterinary treatment facilities and deployed units.

### Structure and Organization

The Veterinary Services Portfolio is one of nine portfolios that make up the Army Institute of Public Health, a subordinate unit of the USAPHC. The portfolio consists of two programs, which are listed below.

- **Animal Medicine Program**—The program staff promulgates policies, directives and guidance pertaining to animal medicine throughout the USAPHC. Staff members communicate and collaborate with all organizations that use USAPHC veterinary assets for their working dog programs. They also provide reach-back assistance to command veterinary personnel to ensure the highest level of care and compassion is provided to
- **Food Protection Program**—The Food Protection Program comprises food defense, food safety and operational rations components. For all DOD installations, food defense mission staff members execute food defense activities to prevent the intentional contamination of food, bottled water and ice from chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or physical agents. The food defense program performs special events assess-

patients and their caretakers. Program staff members analyze metrics to determine how well regions perform the animal care mission.

Regional veterinary personnel provide comprehensive veterinary medical care of the 2,200 DOD-owned military working dogs and 300 other government-owned animals, including ceremonial horses and official mascots. This care is provided from the time animals become affiliated with the government to their retirement from service. Military working dog veterinary care contributes to the overall security and safety of DOD personnel during both peacetime and wartime operations; veterinarians ensure that the dogs are healthy and fit for deployment. Military working dogs, trained in explosive and drug detection, are force multipliers and are an integral part of military security operations.

Veterinary service personnel give advice to installation commanders on veterinary care and animal disease prevention and control to prevent injury or disease to DOD personnel, pet animals and wildlife.

Veterinary treatment facility staff members provide more than 30,000 outpatient visits a month for privately-owned animal care for all military services, in 140 facilities in both U.S. and overseas locations. This includes non-emergency sick-call, routine preventive medicine examinations, treatments and vaccinations, health certificates required for safe animal transport, and animal bite reporting.



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ments to reduce the vulnerability of food and beverage service from intentional contamination or disruption by terrorists or criminals. In addition, food defense specialists participate in assessments from organizations such as the Installation Management Command and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which evaluate an installation's ability to protect its personnel from terrorist attacks.

The portfolio's food safety mission is to protect DOD food and bottled water supplies from unintentional contamination by biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents. Contamination can occur as a result of food spoilage or through improper production, handling and storage. Program experts work with other agencies to conduct food protection audits of all DOD commercial food suppliers within the United States. Food and water risk assessments protect DOD food and water supplies from intentional and unintentional contamination with biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents by anticipating, recognizing, and controlling or mitigating health threats encountered during deployments or exercises occurring outside the continental U.S.

On average, the program conducts more than 3,000 commercial food audits, including assessing food defense risks at commercial food establishments that desire to sell food or bottled water to the DOD. In addition, the program performs installation food vulnerability assessments at more than 4,000 food facilities spread across 376 different installations.

The Food Protection Program also bears the overall responsibility for the operational rations food protection mission. Experts in this program ensure that the rations the Army consumes are safe to eat. This mission includes USAPHC veterinary food inspection specialists who maintain and inspect operational rations throughout the U.S. armed forces areas of operation. Veterinary food inspection specialists are uniquely trained to perform this mission, which protects the welfare of the warfighter by ensuring the rations meet quality standards.

### **Veterinary Services' People**

Approximately 12 people work in the Veterinary Services Portfolio at the Army Institute of Public Health; they have oversight of more than 1,500 veterinary service personnel around the world. They include military and civilian personnel in a broad range of medical and scientific disciplines. Veterinarians, food safety and defense technicians, animal health technicians and administrative personnel are just some of the occupations within the portfolio. In addition to their professional experience, many staff members hold advanced academic degrees and certifications in their respective areas of study.

The program supplements its expertise from multidisciplinary public health experts within USAPHC and also works with other federal organizations, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, military working dog program offices and other animal medicine programs.

### **Portfolio Contributions**

The Veterinary Services Portfolio emphasizes and completes the "One Health" concept in which animal, human and environmental health are inextricably bound. Causes of disease, injury and disability in people originate in animals and the environment: rabies, unsafe drinking water and food that has not been safely processed or prepared—these are just a few examples of the health threats stemming from animals or the environment that portfolio public health professionals address. Through its animal medicine and food safety and defense programs, the Veterinary Services Portfolio strengthens the USAPHC's ability to monitor, assess and mitigate disease threats in animal and human populations.