



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

Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio

Mission

The Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary occupational and environmental health services to conserve and enhance fighting strength through prevention and mitigation of injury and disease threats encountered in operational and institutional settings.

Background

Elements of the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio have been around for nearly 70 years, since the establishment of the U.S. Army Industrial Hygiene Laboratory at the beginning of World War II.

Clients

The portfolio's clients include commanders and organizations from the Army, Navy and Air Force; medical leaders; military medical treatment facilities and deployed units. The portfolio focuses on population-based prevention and does not diagnose or treat individual patients.

Structure and Organization

The Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio is one of nine portfolios that make up the Army Institute of Public Health, a subordinate unit of the U.S. Army Public Health Command. The portfolio consists of five programs, which are listed below.

- **Army Hearing Program**—This program maximizes mission effectiveness through optimized hearing and communication, providing program oversight, education, surveillance and consultation to leaders, Soldiers and civilians. It focuses on preventing noise-induced hearing injury and disability in Army Soldiers and civilians. The program also works to improve battlefield communication capabilities. The program impacts Army force projection and Soldier hearing health by delivering on-demand and anticipated support to Army hearing program managers worldwide. This program directly supports DOD hearing health surveillance through the management of the audiometric monitoring database and noise-induced hearing injury reports.
- **Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program**—This program coordinates policy and effort across the military services to optimize visual performance, promote eye health, and prevent eye injuries and vision disability to ensure a visually ready force. Staff from the Army, Navy and Air Force provide education and training, develop policy, and offer evidence-based subject-matter expertise to advocate eye-safe workplaces and activities. The program tracks vision readiness data and collaborates with the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center to produce quarterly eye injury surveillance reports based on data from DOD medical records. The program also provides a 20-hour vision conservation and readiness course to preventive medicine, occupational health, physician assistant, bioenvironmental engineers, industrial hygiene, safety and eye care professionals. Course topics include DOD and service-specific regulatory requirements, vision screening and surveillance, eye hazard identification and mitigation strategies, military combat eye protection and readiness.
- **Environmental Medicine Program**—This program provides direct consultation to medical providers regarding exposure concerns of their patients by conducting exposure histories telephonically and using deployment history in conjunction with exposure data archives and preparing a consultation report. Experts in this program evaluate health effects of potential exposure of service members to toxic agents that may be present in air, water and soil in garrison or while deployed. Program experts conduct epidemiologic evaluations of Soldier and service member health and environmental exposures. They assess current evidence of associations for potential exposures of interest. Sample program activities include an epidemiological study of individuals potentially exposed to a sulfur mine fire in Iraq; evaluating associations between military deployment and lung health, cancer or other health outcomes; outreach and coordination of long-term medical surveillance for select populations; assessment of disease clusters; and support-



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

ing active-duty service member participation in the Department of Veterans Affairs Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

- **Occupational Medicine Program**—This program provides professional consultative services to medical professionals and medical administrators in military occupational medicine and occupational health nursing. Experts in this program advise Army medical professionals and commanders on the monitoring, prevention and mitigation of injuries, diseases and environmental exposures in the workplace. Program activities include site assistance visits for occupational medicine clinics, medical surveillance technical guidance for workplace exposures, and DOD resident occupational medicine physician training. In addition, this program works with multidisciplinary teams to develop guidelines for existing and newly evolving workplace hazards.
- **Surety Medicine Program**—This program focuses on preventing and mitigating illness or injury to Army Soldiers and/or Army civilians who handle chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive, or CBRNE, materials. Experts in this program provide unique training that qualifies healthcare providers to deliver required services and care to these worker populations. The program also administers four specialized training courses to clinical providers at sites supporting these special populations. The program serves as the Army's repository of subject-matter expertise in correctly supporting and documenting the health of workers who work with nuclear, biological and chemical materials.

Occupational and Environmental Medicine's People

Approximately 45 people work in the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio. They include military and civilian personnel in a broad range of medical and scientific disciplines. Board-certified physicians, optometrists, audiologists, occupational health nurses and acoustic engineers are just some of the occupations within the portfolio. In addition to their professional experience, most staff members hold doctoral or master's degrees.

The program supplements its expertise from multidisciplinary public health experts within USAPHC and establishes working partnerships with other federal organizations, including the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Veterans Health Administration.

Portfolio Contributions

The Occupational and Environmental Medicine Portfolio contains a blend of professional disciplines and specialties that best aligns with clinicians who are engaged in the broad and complex practices of clinical occupational health, including its closely related practice of environmental medicine, that are present in the globally-based and forward-deployed armed services. These experts are vitally important in preventing acute health effects and injuries attributable to chemical, physical and biological stressors in the battlefield environment and the workplace that could affect critical performance tasks and lead to chronic diseases and disability. Their collective skills, properly resourced and applied, ensure safe, healthful work environments and medically ready military service members and civilians.