THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

APR 2

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Policy Memorandum -- Implementation of the Post-Deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline

Optimal force health protection and medical readiness depends upon having procedures in place to effectively evaluate and treat deployment related health concerns. The Post-deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline is designed to provide structure, resources, and consultative support for primary care providers evaluating patients with deployment related concerns. Training on this guideline was provided through a DoD-wide satellite broadcast on January 31, 2002.

All DoD military treatment facilities should now be using the Post-deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline. Incumbent to guideline use, the militarily unique vital sign question "Is the reason for your visit today related to a deployment?" should be asked of every patient at all appropriate primary care visits. For those patients referred for or seeking care for deployment related health concerns, health care providers will review and employ, as needed, this guideline during their evaluations. Providers will use applicable visit codes to record that the patient presented with a health concern related to a deployment. Concurrently, the DoD has begun assessing effectiveness through a series of quality indicators.

Support for the Post-deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline, including the January 31, 2002 DoD-wide satellite broadcast training program, is available through the DoD Deployment Health Clinical Center (DHCC) at (202) 782-6563 or www.pdhealth.mil. The DHCC serves as the DoD Center of Excellence for this guideline and provides consultative support to providers in their evaluation of deployment related cases.

Through use of the Post-deployment Health Clinical Practice Guideline, we send a clear message that we are ready and able to meet the medical needs of our deploying members and their families. Command emphasis on this important initiative is imperative. My point of contact for this subject is Lt Col Roger Gibson who may be reached at (703) 681-1703.

E. P. Wright

for William Winkenwerder, Jr., MD

cc: Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force

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