



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
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NGB-ARS

MEMORANDUM FOR Chiefs of Staff of all States, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and the District of Columbia

SUBJECT: Decade of Health "Get Cuffed!" Campaign

1. Our Nation continues to call on the Army National Guard (ARNG) to serve on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan while also taking the lead in Homeland Security with activities such as Operation Jump Start. Healthy and deployable Soldiers are needed more than ever to sustain our national objectives and to protect our Nation's freedom. To this end, Soldier awareness and responsibility for health and personal wellness remain the cornerstone of the Decade of Health program, a 10-year strategic outreach campaign that emphasizes the primary message, "Always Ready, Always There... Always Healthy."
2. This is the beginning of Year 2 for the Decade of Health program. While we are continuing our Year 1 focus on dental readiness, our 2007 health promotion topic is high blood pressure. We have partnered with the American Heart Association to launch the 2007 "Get Cuffed!" campaign, with the goal of measuring the blood pressure of every National Guard member to detect unknown or undertreated high blood pressure. Early detection and lowering high blood pressure are key to preventing heart attacks, strokes, and other significant health conditions for our Soldiers and families.
3. A recent study of the ARNG Soldiers has shown that essential hypertension is a significant cause of hospitalization in theater. This is a readiness issue that leaders can influence by offering Soldiers the opportunity to have their blood pressure measured and to learn what their numbers mean so they can take action. The Office of the Chief Surgeon will provide your State or territory with educational tools such as the importance of having regular blood pressure checks; how to reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure; how uncontrolled blood pressure damages your health; and basic steps for getting high blood pressure under control. Finally, the ARNG is distributing automatic blood pressure kiosks to every State and territory to provide critical health promotion information for our Soldiers and civilians as well as ample opportunities to get their blood pressure measured.
4. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a common treatable health cause for force attrition. What makes uncontrolled high blood pressure dangerous is that a person may not have any symptoms until the high blood pressure has damaged vital organs, such as the heart, brain, and kidneys. This damage may take years to appear, but when it does, premature death may occur. As a result, high blood pressure is known as the "Silent Killer."
5. I fully endorse this proactive medical readiness program and strongly encourage every State and territory to support health promotion efforts to increase ARNG awareness about high blood pressure. "Get Cuffed!", know your numbers, and act early to combat this "Silent Killer"!
6. The point of contact is Lieutenant Colonel Joe Ortiz, Chief, Preventive Medicine, at DSN 327-1056, 703-607-1056, or jose.mari.ortiz@us.army.mil.

CLYDE A. VAUGHN
Lieutenant General, GS
Director, Army National Guard

Always Ready, Always There...
Always Healthy.

