The Importance of Health Education to the Soldier and to the Army Hearing Program

Joint Defense/Veterans Audiology Conference
Orlando, FL
22 February 2010

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“The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.”
Maryland’s Winter Weather 2010
Purpose and Goal:

- In order to promote hearing readiness and to prevent needless hearing loss among all Soldiers, the Army Hearing Program community would benefit by providing a united and focused health education campaign.

Possible Challenges:

- Limited personnel resources to support health education initiatives
- Limited variety of products and/or services to reach a wide audience
- Difficulty in convincing Soldiers to protect their residual hearing
Health Education Requirement

- Each Soldier must receive Health Education annually (DODI 6055.12 and DA PAM 40-501);* documented in the DOEHS-RC software

- The current list of required topics to cover include the following:
  - The effects of noise on hearing
  - The purpose, advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protectors
  - The selection, fit, care, and use of hearing protectors
  - The purpose and procedures of audiometric evaluations
  - The structure and elements of the Hearing Conservation Program
  - The mandatory requirement to wear assigned protective equipment and the administrative actions which may follow for failure to do so
  - The use of hearing protection during noise-hazardous, off-duty activities

* Both under revision
Venues for Health Education

- **Briefings**
  - Individual (one-on-one) - in a work or office setting
  - Unit (Company/Battalion) - in a classroom, auditorium, etc.
  - Company or Battalion Commanders/Command Sergeant Majors
  - Unit Hearing Conservation Officers on orders

- **Hearing Test Site (SRC, Audiology Clinic)**
  - DVD playing in waiting area
  - Combined with explanation of test results

- **Printed Materials**
  - Brochures
  - Fact Sheets
  - Miscellaneous Handouts

- **Special Venues**
  - Installation newspaper articles
  - Radio/TV spots
  - Banners
  - Promotions/Displays (PX/Commissary)
  - Internet (e.g., AKO)
# Health Education Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Education Measures</th>
<th>Fort Hood</th>
<th>Fort Carson</th>
<th>Fort Benning</th>
<th>Fort Drum (TBD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Briefings</td>
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<td>(a) Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Unit level</td>
<td>X (CO size/on site)</td>
<td>X (Brigade/up to 300)</td>
<td>X (CO size/on site)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Unit Commanders</td>
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<td>(d) Assigned HCP Officers</td>
<td>X (2 hr instruction)</td>
<td>X (monthly)</td>
<td>X (1SG &amp; CO Cdrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) Other</td>
<td>X (on-the-spot findings)</td>
<td>X (safety standdowns)</td>
<td>X (BN Cdrs &amp; above)</td>
<td>X (special topics training)</td>
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<td>(2) Hearing Testing SRP Site</td>
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<td>(a) DVD in Waiting Area</td>
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<td>(b) Combo: Test Results/HE</td>
<td>X (otoscope/earplugs)</td>
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<td>(3) Materials</td>
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<td>X (commercial products)</td>
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<td>(a) Fact Sheets</td>
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<td>(b) Brochures</td>
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<td>(c) Other Handouts</td>
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<td>X (printed materials)</td>
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<td>(4) Other Venues</td>
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<td>X (Cdr Interview)</td>
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<td>(a) Newspaper Articles</td>
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<td>(b) Radio/TV Spots</td>
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<td>(c) Banners</td>
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<td>(d) Promotions/Displays (PX)</td>
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What is Health Promotion?

- The science and art of helping people change their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health
- Optimal health includes physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual well-being
Stages of Change

- **PRE-CONTEMPLATION**: Not yet ready to make a change (inactive)
- **CONTEMPLATION**: Thinking about making a change (inactive)
- **PREPARATION**: Getting ready to change (inactive)
- **ACTION**: Committed and doing what is necessary (active/new habit)
- **MAINTENANCE**: Sustain a healthy lifestyle (active)

1. As you prepare a health education presentation or awareness campaign, key into what stage/stages your target audience may be in.
2. Design your efforts to help move them to the next stage/state, or from inactive to active.
Interventions

- One type of health promotion layer is an Intervention.
- Interventions work best as multi-disciplinary activities.
- An intervention is not so much an event as it is a change in the ways things are done.
- Positive interventions take away the excuses for not improving health.
- Baselines help determine where to target your efforts.
- Baselines provide the opportunity to evaluate outcomes of your interventions.
Tips on Developing a Program

- Take action sooner, rather than later
- Use the experiences and programs of others for ideas
- Start with an 80 percent solution
- Make it fit your target audience
Potential Partnerships

- Health Promotion Directorate, US Army Public Health Command (PROV)
- Decade of Health Initiative, National Guard Bureau, Surgeon’s Office
- Professional Marketing Group
Patrolling your own health...

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You've heard that one before, right? Patrolling your own health is an investment in your future and that of your family. As a civilian soldier, you are the best protected species in the world. Medical readiness is the most important tool a commander has and force health protection has emerged as one of the most important issues in the Army today. Data from the civilian sector describe investment in preventive health measures as returning between $1.49 to $4.91 (median of $3.14) for every dollar invested in health promotion and wellness. Wellness, prevention, and managed care initiatives have created great benefits for individuals and their families through military and civilian health partnerships.

Prevention is the Best Way to Health

Health is an essential element of military readiness, and prevention is and always will be the best way to health. Preventing diseases and conditions that threaten the health of the warfighter is more operationally sound since it maximizes available manpower. Read More >>
“My Hooah 4 Health” Website

- Home Page
  - Prevention
    - Injury & Trauma
    - Safety and Injury Control
    - Occupational Health
  - Hearing and Vision
    - Combat Arms Earplugs
    - Earplugs
    - Hearing Testing
    - How The Ear Works
    - Hearing Health Education
“My Hooah 4 Health” Website

Under Occupational Health of this website:

“Even though we spend much of the time working, most of us do not think about occupational health....Not surprisingly, many accidents (and injuries) occur on the job and many health issues related to our workplace environments exist.”

“Ultimately, each individual must make efforts to be fully informed, to obtain help when necessary and to assume responsibility for wearing their hearing protectors. Everyone must consciously develop personal habits and strategies for wearing their hearing protection. Otherwise, it becomes too easy to succumb to the constant barrage of opportunities to misuse personal hearing protectors, ...thereby risking exposure to harmful levels of noise.”
National Guard Bureau
Decade of Health Initiative

- 2006 Oral Health Awareness (Dental Bytes Campaign)
- 2007 Blood Pressure Awareness (Get Cuffed)
- 2008 Weight Management (Lighten Up)
- 2009 Ready and Resilient!
- 2010 Ready and Resilient II (Strength From Within)
- 2011 Hearing and Vision Readiness??
- 2012 - 2015
Challenges of Health Education

- How to define it
- How to measure the successful outcomes
- Asking the Who, What, How, Why, When type of questions
- How can we, as audiologists and health professionals, get the best information to our Soldiers and noise-exposed civilian personnel that will motivate them to protect themselves and others from this occupational hazard?
Marketing Hearing Readiness

- Soldiers and their leaders need relevant INFORMATION, in order to make informed decisions.

- The information often needs to be presented in various ways, perhaps many times, before a change in behavior is initiated.

- All Soldiers need to be convinced that this information is important and:
  - Essential for communication and mission accomplishment
  - Applicable to their concerns for personal health & safety and that of their cohorts
HCPM Checklist for Action

- How To Start Making Things Happen
  - Analyze your own situation and sphere of influence
  - Gather all available information to raise awareness
  - Collect and use local data to solicit leadership involvement and buy-in to possible solutions
  - Use whatever process is available to mobilize action and lobby for change
  - Consider setting up long-term intervention strategies
    - Individual / family
    - Unit-level activities
    - Influence decisions at the highest policy levels
Know as much about your audience & their noise exposures as possible beforehand!

- Visit the training / work site(s) ahead of time
- Observe what is being done properly and improperly
- Coordinate your visits with the assigned HC Officer/NCO for the units involved
- Work with Unit Commanders and NCOs to effect change
Devise a presentation strategy that will encourage Soldiers to want to wear their HPDs

- Generate excitement for the tasks to be performed
- The process of teaching/mentoring involves salesmanship
- Soldiers need to have confidence that wearing HPDs will not hinder their ability to do their jobs (when training or fighting)
- Encourage audience participation, where possible
- Encourage a process whereby Soldiers can be refitted with HPDs, when necessary
Return to the training / work site(s) to reinforce what was taught

- Continue to observe (along with leadership) and, where necessary, to reinforce right behaviors
Challenges for the HCPM

- The magnitude of planning an *effective*, installation-wide, Health Education process can be formidable!
  - Any personal concerns for tackling such a challenge?
  - Are there adequate resources (people, time & dollars) ?
  - Will the chains of command (AMEDD/Line) support such an endeavor ?

- We need to be strong, vocal advocates for hearing readiness and hearing loss prevention among our Soldiers!
  - Use your Subject Matter Expertise readily and wisely!
  - Build strong, workable relationships throughout the command!
Challenges for the 72C (Cont)

- Provide periodic (e.g., quarterly/semi-annually) feedback through command channels
  - State the facts, as you understand them
  - Summarize what has been accomplished (improved) and what problems remain

- Where there is resistance, partner first with units that want your assistance
  - Work on strengthening your professional relationships
  - Keep your promises of support, first and foremost
  - Offer help to other units, even when it is refused or ignored
  - Document your encounters
Golden Skills

- Listening
  - Communication is a two-way street. Are you a good listener?
  - When listening, do you get the message of others clearly?

- Speaking
  - Soldiers/Commanders need to hear and understand your message
  - When necessary, get objective feedback about your communication skills and look to improve them
Golden Skills (Cont)

- Taking Initiative
  - Look at your day-to-day tasks and determine what you can do to perform them better
  - Demonstrate that you know how to take actions that result in meaningful outcomes

- Teamwork
  - Assess your ability to work together, as well as independently, toward achieving shared goals
  - Help others whenever you can; train others to be more efficient, based on your own experiences of trial and error
Golden Skills (Cont)

- Problem Solving
  - Are you a creative thinker?
  - Can you identify an issue or problem and find a new way to tackle it?
  - Actual experiences are one of the best ways to learn problem-solving.
  - Reminder: One of our biggest challenges will be to successfully get Soldiers to protect their hearing (and that of their cohorts), under all noise-hazardous conditions (training, wartime or recreation).
Questions?

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO TO ENABLE OUR SOLDIERS TO BE HEARING-READY!