



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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HEALTH AFFAIRS

17 Oct 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. AIR FORCE
COMMANDER, JOINT TASK FORCE NATIONAL CAPITAL
REGION MEDICAL

SUBJECT: Encourage Participation in the 2011 Tri-Service Survey on Patient Safety

As the military's health system, it is our privilege and, foremost, our responsibility to provide high quality care to those who keep our nation safe. A critical element of providing high quality care is to provide *safe* care—care that does not cause additional harm to the patient during the course of the health care process. Fortunately, there are many actions the health care delivery system can engage in to reduce harm and improve patient safety.

In Fiscal Year 2010, the Military Health System's (MHS's) Direct Care System staff reported 3,018 events that resulted in harm to patients. Opportunities exist to continue improving the safety of patients entrusted to our care. Given our shared commitment, I ask you to support an important MHS effort, the 2011 Tri-Service Survey on Patient Safety.

This survey, scheduled for fall 2011, will assess staff perceptions of the patient safety culture within MHS facilities worldwide. Your support is vital to establish the importance of the survey and to encourage staff participation. To this end, I request your assistance to:

- Encourage all staff working in your Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) to complete the survey so that results are representative of our staff population.
- Ensure that staff who routinely interact with patients may easily access the Web-based survey, especially those whose work is not typically computer-based.
- Endorse MTF efforts to promote the intent of the survey so staff understand the importance of their candid feedback to patient safety efforts at their MTF and within MHS.

Reports from the 2005–2006 and 2008 surveys highlighted areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in how staff members can incorporate actions that promote patient safety. The 2011 survey results will also provide valuable information to MTFs and will help to maintain momentum in evaluating progress and reaffirming our commitment to reducing preventable harm to our patient community. Survey goals and logistical details are included in the enclosed information paper. The survey's point of contact is Ms. Judy George. Ms. George

may be reached at (703) 681-7181, or Judy.George@tma.osd.mil. I look forward to gaining insight from our staff on how we, together, may continue building a culture of safety for our patients, and I thank you in advance for your support.

Jonathan Woodson, M.D.

Attachments:

1. Information Paper
2. 2008 Survey Results Briefing

cc:

Joint Staff Surgeon