



HEALTH AFFAIRS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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MEMORANDUM FOR SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL, U.S. AIR FORCE
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY

SUBJECT: MHS Culture of Safety Survey

In the next few weeks you and your staffs will have the opportunity to provide your insights and opinions on the culture of safety within the Military Health System when we issue our 2016 DoD Patient Safety Culture Survey. I need your help.

I am asking every leader throughout the MHS to encourage all of your staffs – both clinical and administrative—to complete this survey. Staff includes all military, civilian, and contractor staff working within your area of responsibility. The survey will be web-based, and notification will come from local patient safety leaders.

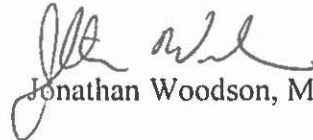
Over the past year, the MHS has invested personnel and financial resources in our journey to becoming a high reliability organization (HRO). One of the foundational principles of HROs is that we create and sustain a culture of safety. The timing of this survey provides us with an early indication of our educational efforts, and allows us to determine where we should invest additional resources to improve. We want to achieve the highest level of feedback possible, and have set a goal of a 65% response rate.

There are a few important points that I want to stress:

- Participation is both **voluntary and anonymous**. We encourage everyone to freely express their perspectives. We **respect the opinions of our staff**. Their input is essential for our efforts toward **continuous improvement**. What every member of our staff has to say is important – from the most senior officer to the most junior contract worker.
- The **survey is short** – and only takes 10-15 minutes to complete. All employees should be provided the **opportunity to complete this survey during duty hours**.
- This survey is not unique to military medical facilities. The instrument was developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and is used by health facilities throughout the United States, providing us with **the opportunity to both assess our own culture over time, as well as compare our culture to other healthcare organizations in this country**.

In order to support our leadership throughout the MHS in encouraging feedback, we have prepared a small toolkit of draft messages that leaders are encouraged to personalize and modify as well as suggestions for ways that they can encourage participation. We will provide you and individual MTF commanders with status updates throughout the period that the survey is open.

We are in this journey together – and the perspectives of our workforce will guide our continued efforts. Thank you for your support and encouragement of completing this survey throughout the MHS!



Jonathan Woodson, M.D.