

PROTECTING *the families* THAT PROTECT OUR COUNTRY



Healthy Base Initiative

★ OPERATION LIVE WELL ★

Your Health Is Our Best Defense

A fit and healthy fighting force is the foundation of a strong national defense. In the United States, poor nutrition, obesity, lack of physical fitness, and tobacco use pose a growing threat to the military's four "Rs": recruitment, retention, readiness, and resilience. To address these threats, the Department of Defense launched the Healthy Base Initiative to make healthy living the easy choice for service members and their families. We need to support programs that protect the well-being of our military families.

FISCAL IMPACT

over
\$3 BILLION
annually

The Challenge: **DEFENDING THE FOUR Rs**

> **Recruitment**

64

% of potential recruits **will not qualify** due to their weight by 2030.

> **Retention**

1,200



first-term enlistees are **discharged**, before their contracts are up, due to weight problems **every year**.

> **Readiness & Resilience**



More service members were evacuated from war for serious sprains than combat injuries.

The overweight or less-fit are at higher risk.

What it costs the U.S. Department of Defense to treat the effects of obesity and tobacco-related illnesses

The Approach:

THE HEALTHY BASE INITIATIVE

Piloting **sustainable & systematic solutions** to prevent obesity and tobacco use.



Assess

the current health/wellness status of the military environments.



Test

evidence-based initiatives that help individuals change their behavior.



Measure

results.



Provide

lessons & recommendations moving forward.

Lessons Learned

Expand and continue demonstrations to promote healthy living. Overwhelming majority of individuals surveyed who participated in HBI programs would like to see these programs made permanent and expanded if possible.

Up-Front Assessment is Essential HBI used innovative measurement tools to determine whether existing conditions at pilot installations were conducive to healthy eating and active living.

Measurement is needed, critical and challenging HBI measured the impact of its programs. Though this step is crucial to improve future efforts and better allocate resources, it is not always done.

Dose Matters Testing interventions at a few sites or at just a few venues on a given site limits their impact. DoD needs to increase the reach and coverage of future health and wellness interventions.

Future health and wellness initiatives need to recognize and be responsive to the unique needs and diverse composition of the military community.

Everyone has a role to play in changing the culture, the systems, and the environment within the military in ways that support healthy living.

Additional Lessons from the Community Resource Assessment

Healthy Eating: The DoD food system is complex and should be revamped to focus on healthy eating. Commissaries and dining halls serve the healthiest options but vending machines and fast food outlets need improvement. There is no single strategy that is optimal for every type of food operation, but change is needed across the system, from food procurement to preparation and presentation.

Active Living: Installations are designed for the automobile and not for pedestrians and bikers. Changing the physical environment will take time, but HBI programs that sought to increase access to physical fitness facilities and support individuals in establishing an active lifestyle were successful.

Children, Families and Schools: Families desire more family-oriented active living and healthy eating programs. Many schools that serve the military community, including DoD schools and public schools, are interested in working with community partners to support the health and wellness of staff and students.

Tobacco Use: Tobacco-free workplace policies offer the single most important opportunity for promoting tobacco-free living within the military community.

Call to Action: Share knowledge, lessons and recommendations from HBI Report, seek new opportunities, partner (internally and externally), and develop solutions to enhance the health, well-being and readiness of our service members and their families.

Share lessons and recommendations from the HBI report to enhance the health, well-being and readiness of our service members and their families.

GO TO: www.militaryonesource.mil/health-and-wellness/healthy-base-initiative