



Army Family Action Plan 2013 Focus Forum Top Issues

Ungrounded Outlets in Military Housing

Scope: Several Housing units on Fort Hood have outdated wiring and ungrounded electrical outlets. This poses significant hazards. Family members are currently not informed of the hazards associated with the ungrounded outlets. As a result of improper use, fires have occurred.

Recommendation: Require Housing office to provide verbal and written disclosure of the potential hazards and risks associated with the use of ungrounded outlets.

Status: Complete, 13 Jan 14. Fort Hood Family Housing (FHFH) has implemented an education awareness campaign to inform residents, as they move in, of the presence of ungrounded outlets in Chaffee Village. The FHFH has submitted a request to renovate Chaffee Village; and it is pending approval with Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (DASA). The ungrounded outlets do not specifically pose a safety concern.

Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) Clinical Treatment Plans

Scope: WTU treatment plans are not always being shared with spouses or authorized caregivers. Soldiers and spouses are not adequately informed of the Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Therefore, spouses cannot be prepared to assist or maintain the required treatment plan. This may result in Soldiers missing appointments, extended treatment time, and possible increased medical care costs for the Army.

Recommendations:

1. Provide information about HIPAA and release of information to every Soldier and Spouse assigned to a nurse care manager.
2. Require nurse care managers to notify spouse or designee of treatment plan.

Status: Complete, 10 Feb 14. A Soldier in transition ultimately decides who is involved in his/her care. Spouse and authorized caregiver involvement are encouraged in the development of all Soldier's treatment plans. Early family involvement can be a positive factor in a Soldier's treatment and transition. However, HIPAA first requires the Soldier's authorization to share their medical information with a spouse or any others not directly involved with their healthcare. In support of AFAP concerns, WTU will increase efforts to emphasize HIPAA awareness and the value of integrating spouses and family members into treatment plans at multiple venues to include welcome briefs, town halls, and continue with already implemented personal counseling. In addition, Nurse Case Managers (NCMs) will continue to specifically ask each Soldier for HIPAA authorization during the Intake Process.

Department of Defense (DoD) Employee and Soldier Centralized On-Line Training Site

Scope: Currently, DoD employees and Soldiers must visit multiple on-line sites to complete required training. The current process makes accessibility more difficult due to navigational challenges. This delays completion of all required training.

Recommendations:

1. Create an employee training webpage with all on-line training.
2. Require continuous updates and maintenance of webpage.

Status: To be forwarded to FORSCOM

GI Bill for Student Loan Repayment

Scope: The GI Bill law (USC, title 38, Sec 3020) does not offer options for repayment of previously accrued service member's student loans. The law allows for service members to transfer benefits for new, higher level education or technical certification programs to Family members. Student loan debt causes additional financial hardships and stress that may be alleviated by allowing use of the GI Bill for retroactive payment of loans.

Recommendations:

1. Amend GI Bill law to allow retroactive payment of any student loan for service members or their designated beneficiary.
2. Establish a program to educate service members about the revised GI Bill benefits.

Status: Forwarded to FORSCOM

Standardized Number of Pets in Department of Defense (DoD) Pet Policy

Scope: DoD policy does not standardize the number of pets allowed to live in military housing. Military Families PCS from various military installations and must comply with each installation's specific pet policy. Fort Hood allows three pets, while other military installations allow two. Military Families may suffer emotional distress and incur additional expenses as a result of having to re-home a pet or choosing to live off the installation, due to current DoD policy.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a DoD-wide policy for the number of pets allowed in military housing.
2. Provide the newly established pet policy to DoD Families.

Status: To be forwarded to FORSCOM

Hospital Sign on the Corner of Clear Creek Road and Tank Destroyer Boulevard

Scope: There is no sign showing the route to Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center (CRDAMC) on Fort Hood at the intersection of Clear Creek Road and Tank Destroyer Boulevard. Patients en route to the hospital potentially face an issue with locating the facility due to inadequate signage. Authorized patrons who are ill or injured may face delayed necessary medical treatment or miss essential appointments.

Recommendation:

Install a hospital directional sign at the intersection of Clear Creek Road and Tank Destroyer Boulevard.

Status: Complete, 13 Jan 14. A directional sign has been placed at the corner of Santa Fe and Clear Creek indicating the direction of CRDAMC, as per the recommendation.