READY RELIABLE CARE
LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK
As an MHS leader, you play an important role in promoting Ready Reliable Care, the MHS commitment to advancing high reliability, by driving your staff’s understanding and adoption of highly reliable practices and behavior. This *Ready Reliable Care Leadership Communications Playbook* will provide you with the necessary knowledge and equipment to enhance communications with staff, embody high reliability principles, and make positive changes within your team. Through a commitment to Ready Reliable Care, you and your staff can help the MHS become a highly reliable health care system which benefits patients, personnel, and the readiness mission.

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GETTING STARTED

BRUSH UP ON READY RELIABLE CARE
Past Wins

Following a review of all military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) in 2014, the Services and DHA took action to improve care and advance the MHS towards becoming a highly reliable health care system. The following milestones are notable steps from the MHS’ journey toward Ready Reliable Care.

- **Standing up infrastructure and governance**: The DHA established one central Clinical Quality Management program for all military hospitals and clinics providing for stronger accountability, transparency, and standardization in patient safety and clinical quality across the system.

- **Developing and improving processes**: Building on the work of the Army, the MHS Behavioral Health Clinical Community implemented a data portal and collection process to support behavioral health care and improved outcomes for patients with post-traumatic stress disorder. Based on the work of the Navy, MHS piloted the Navy Postpartum Hemorrhage Bundle at Naval Medical Center San Diego which was adopted by the MHS Clinical Communities for future spread across all facilities. Air Force computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) teams at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland created a new visual management tool to facilitate a structured response to reactions from contrast used in many radiology procedures. Since implementation, reactions have been identified sooner and treated more effectively.

- **Increasing standardization and transparency**: The MHS began publicly sharing data in 2014 on the quality and safety of care delivered at MTFs.

- **Preventing patient harm and improving patient outcomes**: The MHS and DHA increased urgent care options and utilization since the MHS Review, such as through establishment of the Nurse Advice Line.

See the Ready Reliable Care Overview for more notable milestones along the MHS HRO journey.

Setting Up for Success

Ready Reliable Care drives achievement against every component of the MHS Quadruple Aim:

- **Better Health**: Excellent care delivery, supported by systemwide teamwork and accountability, provides beneficiaries with better care experiences, better outcomes, and better overall health.

- **Better Care**: Commitment to a safety culture and to continuous process improvement enables the systemwide spread of leading clinical practices and improved administrative and business processes. Together, these improvements drive great outcomes, satisfied patients, and fulfilled staff.

- **Lower Cost**: High reliability addresses unwarranted variability across the system, resulting in improved efficiency. A commitment to zero harm contains avoidable costs due to medical error.

- **Improved Readiness**: High reliability equips a Ready Medical Force with the innovation and teamwork capabilities necessary to respond effectively in an unpredictable deployed environment.
Foundations of Ready Reliable Care

The tools for turning the concept of Ready Reliable Care into daily actions, are the Ready Reliable Care domains of change and principles. As a leader, it is important for you to understand the improvement areas (domains of change), and the ways you and your staff can reach those goals (principles).

Four Ready Reliable Care Domains of Change

Efforts to advance a ready, reliable MHS are supported by seven principles and described against four domains of change.

- **Leadership Commitment**: Prioritize Ready Reliable Care at all levels of leadership.
- **Culture of Safety**: Commit to safety and harm prevention.
- **Continuous Process Improvement**: Advance innovative solutions and spread leading practices.
- **Patient Centeredness**: Focus on patients’ safety and quality of care experience.

Seven Ready Reliable Care Principles

Applying these principles in your daily work will help to improve the MHS.

- **Preoccupation with Failure**: Drive zero harm by anticipating and addressing risks.
- **Sensitivity to Operations**: Be mindful of how people, processes, and systems impact outcomes.
- **Deference to Expertise**: Seek guidance from those with the most relevant knowledge and experience.
- **Respect for People**: Foster mutual trust and respect.
- **Commitment to Resilience**: Leverage past mistakes to learn, grow, and improve processes.
- **Constancy of Purpose**: Persist through adversity towards the common goal of zero harm.
- **Reluctance to Simplify**: Strive to understand complexities and address root causes.
PUTTING READY RELIABLE CARE INTO PRACTICE

MAKE READY RELIABLE CARE A DAILY PART OF YOUR LEADERSHIP
WHERE WE STARTED

Educate staff about historical HRO milestones to help them understand the origins of Ready Reliable Care. Demonstrate the scope and impact of Ready Reliable Care efforts.

- Following a review of all MTFs in 2014, the MHS has been transforming into an HRO. HROs tackle complex processes in high-risk environments to prevent error and reduce harm. They got their start in the airline and nuclear industries, where the risk of error and resulting impacts have grave consequences. Individual Services and Tri-Service groups have worked to improve health care access, quality, safety, transparency, and patient engagement.
- Due to high reliability efforts, the MHS has seen positive changes since 2014. These efforts include improved outcomes in maternal health and surgical complications, enhanced infection prevention and control policies, increased transparency of performance data, and better access to mental health and substance abuse disorder services.
- By MAY 2019, the MHS had stood up 11 MHS Clinical Communities. These communities are part of the mechanism by which leading solutions and clinical practices are scaled and spread across the enterprise. One of the ways they accomplish this is through the development of care pathways, which health care professionals use as step-by-step treatment guides to ensure all patients receive consistent, high-quality care.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Share success stories that show how highly reliable behaviors help staff navigate challenging environments, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspire staff to connect with these values and find unique ways to advance Ready Reliable Care in their own role.

- In combating the COVID-19 pandemic, MHS personnel have shown highly reliable behaviors, capabilities, and processes. These include efforts to limit virus exposure by quickly adapting MTF operations, avoid gaps in patient care by offering virtual care appointments, protect patients and staff by frequently updating clinical guidance, and support critical care teams by providing life-saving medical supplies.
- Despite ongoing challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic, MHS personnel demonstrate a commitment to high reliability through continued rollout of MHS GENESIS. When fully deployed, MHS GENESIS will provide a centralized health record for Service members, veterans, and their families, reducing the risk of harm and improving efficiency.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHA is working with MHS entities to coordinate patient and staff needs across facilities. MTF leaders monitor data to understand local resource needs and inpatient occupancy levels. These highly reliable practices support the best possible outcomes in every facility.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

Explain to staff why Ready Reliable Care efforts should remain a priority. Remind staff there is progress to be made, and there is always room for improvement in an HRO.

- Becoming an integrated system of readiness and health takes years of constant dedication, unwavering focus, and relentless effort from everyone within the organization. There is still much improvement to be made.
- The success of MHS Ready Reliable Care relies on you. We need your support in our efforts to become more reliable – both to improve patient care and the processes that support you in your job.
- Ready Reliable Care isn’t another project to work on in addition to everything else – it is a critical part of how to get everything else right.

Check out the Ready Reliable Care in Action Flyer for Health Care Providers and Clinical Staff, and Flyer for Administrative, Management, and Business Operations Staff to teach all staff how to continue driving high reliability. For more success stories, see the Ready Reliable Care During the COVID-19 Success Stories Brochure. Find these and more at info.health.mil/sites/hro.
LEAD BY EXAMPLE

If you embody the Ready Reliable Care principles in your own management approaches and personal interactions, staff will recognize and mirror these behaviors. Below are some ways that you can practice the principles on an ongoing basis. Review and check off the practices that you are currently working on, or have already implemented.

- **Preoccupation with Failure**
  - Drive zero harm by anticipating and addressing risks
  - Reassure staff that they will not be retaliated against for raising or reporting risks and concerns.

- **Sensitivity to Operations**
  - Be mindful of how people, processes, and systems impact outcomes
  - Do not wait for staff to report concerns. Communicate with them regularly to identify issues before they lead to harm.

- **Deference to Expertise**
  - Seek guidance from those with the most relevant knowledge and experience
  - Collaborate with knowledgeable peers to deliver the most robust and effective solutions. Grow expertise by helping staff hone their skills and develop new talents.

- **Respect for People**
  - Foster mutual trust and respect
  - Create a supportive environment where staff voice concerns, and are rewarded for their diligence. Make staff feel valued by acting upon their ideas.

- **Commitment to Resilience**
  - Leverage past mistakes to learn, grow, and improve processes
  - Use mistakes as an opportunity to improve processes. Train staff to be flexible in unexpected events.

- **Constancy of Purpose**
  - Persist through adversity towards the common goal of zero harm
  - Ensure your strategies, values, and management practices advance zero harm. This goal should influence all interactions and decisions.

- **Reluctance to Simplify**
  - Strive to understand complexities and address root causes
  - Regularly review performance data to get to the heart of a given problem. Remain open to alternate beliefs and seek new information that challenges the status quo.

For additional information, review the Ready Reliable Care in Action Flyer for Health Care Providers and Clinical Staff, and Flyer for Administrative, Management, and Business Operations Staff available at info.health.mil/sites/hro.
COMMUNICATING HRO

Your staff may not realize that high reliability is already at the heart of many of your daily interactions. By talking about Ready Reliable Care and its principles when these connections occur, you can help staff understand how their work advances high reliability. Below is a sample all-staff email that includes high reliability key messages, to promote staff understanding. Take some time to practice using this language in your daily correspondence so that it becomes second nature.

Subject: Your feedback is valuable

Teammates,

Are there processes within your department that can be improved? **I want to hear from you, as the experts on the frontline.**

As good as our processes may be, **there is always room for improvement.** To provide the best possible care, we must **never settle for the status quo.** As you go about your work, **actively look for ways to make our daily operations safer and more efficient.** Streamlined processes make your job easier and help us **deliver the level of service our patients deserve.**

Therefore, I would like each of you to be on the **lookout for risks or weaknesses in our current care processes** and find better ways to support high reliability. **I will help you see these efforts to completion,** because it is through this type of vigilance and innovation that our system moves closer to the **goal of zero harm.**

**Everyone, regardless of position, rank, or department, can identify ways to enhance our operations and better serve our patients.** For our facility to operate as efficiently as possible, we must work together as a united team. As an integral member of that team, it is your duty to **speak up if you identify a problem or a safer way to perform a task.**

Together, we are one team, with one mission.

Let me know your ideas next time you see me in the halls, or stop by my office.

Regards,

Your Commander

For additional high reliability key messages, please review the **Ready Reliable Care Talking Points Brochure**, available on the Ready Reliable Care website: [info.health.mil/sites/hro](http://info.health.mil/sites/hro).
Use the Ready Reliable Care Safety Communication Bundle to improve communication across your team, and drive safer, more effective care.

**Leader Daily Safety Briefs**
- Leaders at all levels identify and discuss issues that have occurred or are likely to occur.

**Safety Leadership Rounds**
- Leaders conduct informal conversations with staff about safety issues, including factors related to patient safety and staff well-being.

**Unit-Based Huddles**
- Multi-disciplinary teams huddle at the beginning of the day, shift, or event of care to review the plan and resources, address questions, elevate issues to leadership, and reduce burnout factors.

**I-PASS**
- During each handoff, systematically share the I-PASS information.

**Surgical Brief/Debrief**
- Before surgery, work as a team to review the plan.
- After the surgery, review the case and team actions, then discuss opportunities for improvement.

**DHA Universal Protocol**
- Check that you have the right person, procedure, and site.
- Mark the surgical site.
- Conduct a time-out before the surgery starts.
IMPLEMENTING READY RELIABLE CARE

ACCESS RESOURCES
HOW TO WALK THE HRO WALK

Align Your Priorities with Ready Reliable Care

Your leadership is critical in advancing Ready Reliable Care throughout the MHS. To start, make sure that your own goals and priorities support high reliability. Look through the examples from the Ready Reliable Care domains of change below and check off ones that reflect your own goals. Which of your priorities reflect high reliability principles? How can you adjust your goals to better support high reliability?

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<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT</th>
<th>CULTURE OF SAFETY</th>
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<th>PATIENT CENTEREDNESS</th>
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<tr>
<td>I buy in to the cause</td>
<td>I uphold a just culture</td>
<td>I look for ways to improve daily operations</td>
<td>I make decisions based on maximizing the patient experience</td>
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<td>I live true to high reliability principles</td>
<td>I create an environment where staff feel safe to speak up</td>
<td>I improve processes to better serve patients</td>
<td>I ask for patient feedback to improve the care experience and overall satisfaction</td>
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<td>I leverage all staff for their expertise, regardless of rank</td>
<td>I communicate with my team to ensure safe practices become second nature</td>
<td>I encourage staff to share ideas about ways to improve</td>
<td>I strive to ensure highest quality patient care</td>
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<tr>
<td>I encourage all staff to live according to high reliability principles</td>
<td>I learn from good catches and errors</td>
<td>I report and learn from best practices</td>
<td>I consider the patient experience at each step in a process</td>
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Recognize Your Staff

As staff begin to model HRO behavior, create opportunities to reinforce this behavior and reward their work. Recognizing staff commitment to Ready Reliable Care reinvigorates the team, refocuses priorities, and encourages staff to take ownership and be proponents of culture change. Below are some ways to acknowledge high-performing staff and the improvements they make for patients and colleagues.

| Award Nomination | Formally recognize staff for their work with an award. Visit the awards page on the Ready Reliable Care website at info.health.mil/sites/hro. Here you can learn about award programs and nominate staff. |
| Thank You Email  | Reach out to a staff member to thank them for their hard work and celebrate their efforts that support Ready Reliable Care. |
| In Person        | Express appreciation and award champions in front of their peers. Possible venues include huddles, all hands meetings, rounds, award ceremonies, Town Halls, and special luncheons. |
| Regular Communications | Integrate recognition tactics into existing communications, which could include social media posts, newsletters, or articles. |
**USING READY RELIABLE CARE IN COMMUNICATIONS**

Whether it’s in team meetings, speeches, or emails, including high reliability messages can help your team put the principles into action. Below are some examples of how you can use the Ready Reliable Care principles in daily venues and scenarios.

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<th>LOOK FOR WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF</th>
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<td><strong>Town Halls</strong></td>
<td>Celebrating work that supports patient-centeredness on the personal, facility, or enterprise level and requesting constructive feedback from all staff</td>
<td><strong>Our patients are the heart and soul of our mission.</strong> We come to work every day to ensure our nation’s military members and their families are healthy, safe, and ready to take on the next challenge. To elevate the level of safety, quality, and care in our organization, we must <strong>learn from each other and regularly seek feedback</strong>. I want to hear from you as the experts on the front line. When it comes down to making decisions that impact our patients, <strong>we must rely on the experts, found across all ranks and job titles</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Huddles</strong></td>
<td>Sharing process improvement efforts and success stories to encourage and enable their spread</td>
<td><strong>To succeed in our readiness and health mission, we must demonstrate Deference to Expertise</strong> and call upon those with the right knowledge and experience to address the problem or need at hand.</td>
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<td><strong>Annual Performance Plan Development</strong></td>
<td>Determining how your annual plan will advance your facility’s and team’s HRO maturity through specific actions and resourcing</td>
<td><strong>We need to include these process improvements in our performance plan this year, and ensure our team implementing that workflow has the resources they need to get it done.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Director Meetings</strong></td>
<td>Articulating how you want your department heads to improve Ready Reliable Care education among staff</td>
<td><strong>We need to engage our staff around high reliability, so I want you to make sure your teams are completing the Ready Reliable Care education activities and that you’re reinforcing those lessons when you recognize achievement across your team.</strong></td>
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Review the [Ready Reliable Care Talking Points Brochure](info.health.mil/sites/hro) at info.health.mil/sites/hro for more examples of how to apply high reliability talking points in different scenarios.
CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF
YOUR COMMUNICATIONS
CHECK YOUR PERFORMANCE

Even after successful communications, you can continue to learn and improve. Check in with yourself and your staff to ensure they feel informed, supported, and empowered to advance Ready Reliable Care.

Evaluation helps you gauge if staff have the resources to drive your mission forward.

Find out if your team:
- Understands and supports the Ready Reliable Care mission and values
- Is comfortable sharing information and feedback with you
- Feels the workplace environment is conducive to providing top-notch care
- Collaborates well with each other
- Feels supported by leadership and fulfilled in their job

Check In With Staff Through:
- Pulse Checks
- Interviews
- Self-Assessments
- Observations
- Records
- Panels
- Focus Groups
- Champions

EXAMPLE MTF CHECK SURVEY:
Ask staff to rank the following statements on the scale below.

• The information I receive from my MTF applies to my day-to-day job.
• The MTF’s goals, objectives, and strategies are clearly communicated.
• Leadership gives me a clear picture of the direction in which the organization is headed.
• I feel comfortable speaking up to my leadership when I see risk or have an idea for improvement.
• It is easy to share information between departments.
• My leaders are committed to working together.
As an MHS leader, it is your responsibility to drive continuous process improvements and advance a ready, reliable culture in your facility and beyond. Below is a summary of resources to help you in your Ready Reliable Care journey. Access these and other resources by visiting: info.health.mil/sites/hro.

### Ready Reliable Care Resources

- **Ready Reliable Care Overview Flyer**
- **MHS Clinical Communities Overview Flyer**
- **Ready Reliable Care Badge Card**
- **Ready Reliable Care Timeline Placemat**
- **Ready Reliable Care Talking Points Brochure**
- **How Do You Demonstrate Ready Reliable Care? Flyer**
- **Ready Reliable Care in Action: Administrative, Management, and Business Operations Flyer and Health Care Providers and Clinical Staff Flyer**
- **Ready Reliable Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic Brochure**
- **Ready Reliable Care Placemat**