

# Military Health System Strategy



Fiscal Years 2024-2029



### MESSAGE FROM DR. MARTINEZ-LÓPEZ

No organization, especially one as complex as ours, with a mission as important as ours, can succeed without a clear, well-understood strategy. Creating a good strategy starts with a shared vision, and requires transparency, collaboration, and occasionally even robust deliberation.

We have learned a lot in the last few years. We are coming out of one of the largest reorganizations in the history of the Department – one that in the long run will accelerate improvement in the effectiveness of our Military Health System. I believe that our people are some of the most resilient in the country, if not the world. You made it not only through the transition, but through the implementation of a new electronic health record and defended our military and our nation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

After months of careful deliberation and hard work by Health Affairs, the Defense Health Agency, Joint Staff, Services, and Uniformed Services University, I am very pleased to have signed out this document, the first Military Health System strategy to be completed and published in several years. It lays out our vision and describes our mission, our fundamentals, our guiding principles, and our goals.

This plan is a guide to the hard work ahead as we work together to implement this strategy. Success will require all of us moving in the same direction with a shared commitment to those we serve. We remain focused on readiness and health care for all our beneficiaries. The two are inseparable: when our people take care of people, we increase the readiness of the Total Force. I look forward to this work, knowing that it will lead to a stronger MHS capable of meeting the challenges we will inevitably face.

*Dr. Lester Martinez-López,  
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs*





The *National Defense Strategy* requires a Total Force that is medically ready for combat and resilient to obstacles and attack in a multi-domain environment to protect the security of the American people, our economic prosperity and opportunity, and defend the values at the heart of the American way of life.

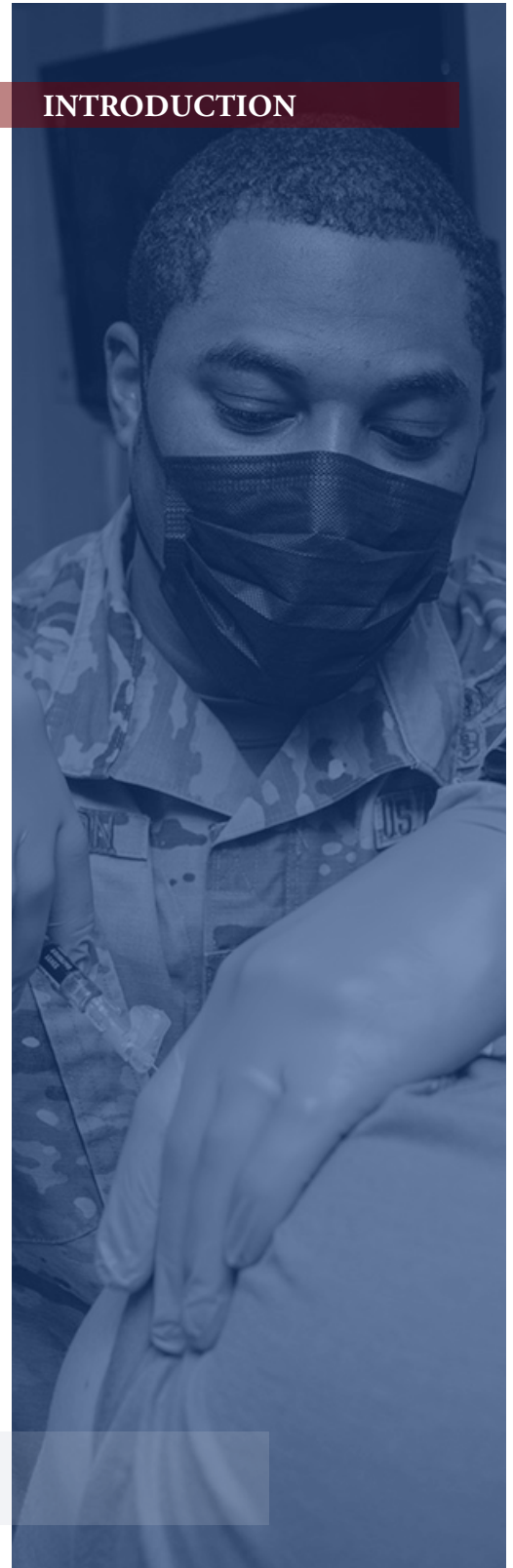
The Military Health System (MHS) fosters, protects, sustains, and restores health of Active Duty and Reserve Component Forces to support the mission. The MHS provides the direction, resources, health care personnel, and other means necessary for promoting and improving the health of our country’s fighting forces, their families, and those who served and retired. These include actions to develop and promote health awareness issues to educate beneficiaries, discover and resolve environmentally based health threats, provide comprehensive health care services (including preventive care and intervention services), perform comprehensive health surveillance, and improve the means and methods for maintaining the health of the beneficiary population by constantly evaluating the performance of health support. The MHS supports all eligible beneficiaries.

The MHS’s **mission** is to enable the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide medically ready and ready medical forces by improving the health of all those entrusted to our care. Our **vision** is to become the world’s role model of an integrated military system of health and readiness delivering technology-enabled, innovative, and Service-focused care in support of our nation’s military mission – anytime, anywhere.

The MHS strategy aligns to and supports the *National Defense Strategy*, the *National Military Strategy*, and the *National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan*. This strategy orients the MHS and its resourcing and planning processes to the rest of DOD, serving as a roadmap to becoming a requirements-driven organization and guiding the system into the next Future Years Defense Program. To do so effectively and accomplish our mission, the MHS strategy builds on three fundamental and interrelated pillars:

- **Medically Ready Force.** A force composed of individuals with the mental, physical, and cognitive strength and resilience to engage in sustained combat operations; meets DOD and Service medical requirements for deployment; and partners with health care delivery to create health and well-being.

INTRODUCTION





- **Ready Medical Force.** Deployable operational and tactical medical forces (Role 1-3) that provide a joint network of integrated health support delivering prevention, protection, and treatment. Operational and tactical medical forces provide three of five core joint health service capabilities: forward resuscitative care; enroute care; and theater hospitalization. Strategic medical forces (Role 4) sustain, prepare, generate, and regenerate medically ready and ready medical forces and provide the joint health service core capability of definitive care, up to and including in support of large-scale combat operations.
- **Health Care Delivery.** A health delivery system is the combination of people, systems, policies, and resources which provide services to promote, improve, conserve, or restore behavioral and physical health and well-being. Military health care delivery produces medically ready and ready medical forces.

During recent conflicts with persistently high operational tempo, military medicine achieved unprecedented outcomes on the battlefield. At home, the MHS played pivotal roles in public health emergencies and disaster management, including the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MHS also managed to control the growing cost of health care for the DOD, often by doing more with less.

In the last decade, the MHS went through transformative organizational change. The DOD implemented reforms and Congressional directives to transition authority, direction, and control of military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) and dental treatment facilities (DTFs) to the Defense Health Agency (DHA); deployed a new electronic health record globally; and awarded TRICARE's next generation contracts.

The stress of high operational tempo, organizational transformation, and a new electronic health record brought the MHS to a critical inflection point. The evolving national security and global health environment requires accurate assessment of the threats we face, acknowledging the changing nature of warfare and transforming how the DOD estimates, validates, and resources MHS requirements.

To achieve success, the MHS must remain true to our guiding principles while pursuing a change agenda that supports and strengthens the workforce, stabilizes our integrated system of readiness and health, and strengthens a culture of innovation ready to meet Service and Combatant Commander requirements anywhere, anytime.





The MHS derives its strength from the core values of the individual Services and the DHA and recognizes the foundational importance of those values. The MHS guiding principles build on this foundation, reflect who we are, drive our everyday behavior, and give us the resilience to press on in the face of great challenges.

- **Helping People Achieve Greatness.** We work in teams with passion, respect, and loyalty. A broad diversity of principles, backgrounds, and Service culture brings out the best in our people and creates tomorrow's leaders.
- **Selfless and Courageous Service.** We honor those who serve and commit to meeting the health needs of our nation's Warfighters, military families, and all of our beneficiaries. We possess the courage to do what is right and go into harm's way to save lives.
- **Caring, Healing, and Creating Health.** We are healers with an obligation to the life-long health of all those entrusted to our care. We build trusting relationships to let our patients take control of their health. We are compassionate and committed to doing right by our beneficiaries to eliminate disease, ease suffering, and achieve health and well-being.

Our strategic goals describe how the MHS will become the world's role model of an integrated military system of health and medical readiness. These four goals provide an actionable roadmap to effectively deliver required MHS capabilities. Each goal is defined and supported by strategic objectives that outline what resources the DOD needs to provide to achieve the goals and accomplish the medical mission.

1. **Take Care of Our People.** Healthy, educated, and trained people take better care of people. We must restore the well-being of our health care personnel so that they are ready to provide the best care and the best support for those who go into harm's way. To advance this goal, we will:
  - 1.1 **Invest In Our Workforce** by providing complete lifecycle support for health professionals, including education, training, and skills sustainment for the uniformed and civilian workforce. The MHS develops leaders in health and medicine; respects and reveres Service cultures; and supports a robust, strong civilian workforce.
  - 1.2 **Deploy Ready Reliable Care** to improve safety and standardize processes for less variability; reduce errors in clinical and non-clinical areas; encourage and celebrate transparency and accountability; and value everyone's input, regardless of rank.
  - 1.3 **Empower Our Workforce** by providing safe, supportive environments and encouraging healthy behaviors by leadership engagement at all levels to promote well-being and reduce burnout.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## STRATEGIC GOALS





2. **Stabilize the MHS.** The realignment of medical personnel, coupled with a volatile health care economy and a new electronic health record, created challenges to care for our beneficiaries and impacted our ability to efficiently generate and sustain medically ready and ready medical forces. To advance this goal, we will:
  - 2.1 **Increase Capacity and Capability to Care for Complex Patients** by realigning capability to better meet demand for care from our patients and mitigate risks. This requires the MHS to optimize military medical personnel availability in coordination with the Military Departments; improve civilian personnel hiring and retention; sustain clinical competencies; and strategically reinvest in MTFs and DTFs.
  - 2.2 **Improve Experience of Care** by first and foremost improving access to primary and specialty care, and delivering services that are patient centered, recognizing the unique needs of each person and their right to make informed choices to achieve health and well-being.
  - 2.3 **Attract and Reattract Beneficiaries to MTFs** to improve efficiency and enrich clinical experiences for the Ready Medical Force, and consciously fulfill the promise our nation makes to care for our beneficiaries.
  
3. **Modernize the MHS.** Health systems worldwide must transform to keep up with the pace of rapid innovation. A complex and challenging national security landscape requires us to streamline and reform health care delivery to make the best, most effective use of our nation's resources. To advance this goal, we will:
  - 3.1 **Implement Digital Health** to integrate advanced technology from home to the clinic to the battlefield and back. Timely, accurate, and useful information gives medical personnel a vast array of focused knowledge to enable state-of-the-art care and afford patients more choice in access and power over their health decisions.





- 3.2 **Prioritize Medical Research and Development** investments in blood and blood products, pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biomedical equipment, and new pathways of care to save future lives on the battlefield, restore the Warfighter, and aid military responses to national emergencies.
  - 3.3 **Expand Biodefense** surveillance and response capabilities to assess, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from biological threats; strengthen the national medical readiness posture; and improve global health security.
  - 3.4 **Deliver Value-Based Care** to ensure that we optimize resources to capitalize on our structure and capabilities to deliver high quality, safe, equitable, and resource responsible outcomes that matter to patients.
4. **Integrate MHS Capabilities.** Resources must be strategically applied to effectively and efficiently deliver the five integrated military health service capabilities: first responder care, forward resuscitative care, enroute care, theater hospitalization, and definitive care.
    - 4.1 **Define Health Care Requirements** across the MHS from unit-level medical care (Role 1); forward trauma management and emergency medical treatment (Role 2); theater hospitalization (Role 3); and definitive care (Role 4) to plan, program manpower and resources, sustain clinical competencies, and mitigate risk to other military requirements.
    - 4.2 **Facilitate Interoperability** in the MHS by strengthening links and relationships between system components to ensure safe, high-quality care across all installations and missions, responsibly manage resources, and limit unwarranted duplication.
    - 4.3 **Reinforce Partnerships** with other federal agencies, allies and partners, and civilian health systems to support military missions and efficiently generate, sustain, and rebuild health readiness worldwide.
    - 4.4 **Reinvest in MTFs** critical to medical force generation, sustainment, casualty reception, and centers of excellence.



## USING THE STRATEGY

The DOD will use this strategy to guide the MHS into and across the next Future Years Defense Program, including but not limited to the following actions:

- Guide policies and implementation plans created collaboratively with key stakeholders with accountability, timelines, milestones, and measurements.
- Generate and integrate requirements across the MHS, then translating those requirements into Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution.
- Support formal collaboration through MHS Governance among all components of the MHS, including the medical organizations of the Military Departments, DHA, Joint Staff Surgeon, and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Assess MHS strategic performance based on frameworks established by the Deputy's Workforce Council and MHS Executive Review Board to continuously improve, using our nation's resources to deliver health and support national and global health security most effectively.
- Focus resources and manage improvement initiatives that achieve our objectives, leveraging emerging innovation and technologies to better accomplish the mission.
- Build organizational capabilities that match resources to requirements, focusing first on our mission and our people and strategically invest in facilities, information management, information technology, and research and development.
- Communicate the role and value of the MHS to stakeholders in language common to the DOD, other federal agencies, Congress, allies and partners, and most importantly, our Warfighters, their families, and all beneficiaries.





The MHS faced numerous challenges and transformations in recent years. Despite these obstacles, we continued delivering critical health services for the DOD, most dramatically on the battlefield and during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we come out of two decades of war and manage the dramatic changes COVID-19 wrought on global health, we recognize a strategic imperative to rebuild our military and civilian medical workforce and resource the MHS. This strategic plan emphasizes mission first and people always— our staff and our beneficiaries – and pushes the MHS to become a requirements-driven organization to ensure our resources effectively support the military mission. We continue the journey to become a world role model of an integrated system of health and readiness to deliver technology-enabled, innovative, and Service-focused care in support of our nation’s military mission – anytime, anywhere.

- National Defense Strategy (2022)
- National Military Strategy (2022)
- National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan (2022)
- Joint Publication 4-02, “Joint Health Services” (2023)
- DOD Directive 5136.01 “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs” (2017)

## CONCLUSION

## REFERENCES



# MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM STRATEGY

The MHS fosters, protects, sustains, and restores health of active duty and Reserve Component forces to support the mission. The MHS provides the direction, resources, health care personnel, and other means necessary for promoting and improving the health of our country's fighting forces, their families, and those who served and retired.

## OUR MISSION

To enable the Department of Defense to provide medically ready and ready medical forces by improving the health of all those entrusted to our care.

## OUR VISION

To become the world's role model of an integrated military system of health and readiness delivering technology-enabled, innovative, and Service-focused care in support of our nation's military mission – anytime, anywhere.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Helping People Achieve Greatness

Selfless and Courageous Service

Caring, Healing, and Creating Health

Reflect who we are, drive our everyday behavior, and give us the resilience to press on.

### PILLARS

The MHS Strategy builds on three fundamental and interrelated pillars to accomplish our mission.

Medically Ready Force

A force composed of individuals with the mental, physical, and cognitive strength and resilience

Ready Medical Force

Deployable operational and tactical medical forces that provide a joint network of integrated health support

Health Care Delivery

The combination of people, systems, policies, and resources which provide services to promote, improve or restore mental and physical health and well-being

### OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

How the MHS will become the world's role model of an integrated military system of health and medical readiness.

Take Care of Our People

- Invest in Our Workforce
- Deploy Ready, Reliable Care
- Empower Our Workforce

Stabilize the Military Health System

- Increase Capacity and Capability to Care for Complex Patients
- Improve Experience of Care
- Attract and Reattract Beneficiaries to MTFs

Modernize the Military Health System

- Implement Digital Health
- Prioritize Medical Research and Development
- Expand Biodefense
- Deliver Value-Based Care

Integrate Military Health System Capabilities

- Define Health Care Requirements
- Facilitate Interoperability
- Reinforce Partnerships
- Reinvest in MTFs





 [WWW.HEALTH.MIL](http://WWW.HEALTH.MIL)

 [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MILITARYHEALTH](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MILITARYHEALTH)

 [WWW.TWITTER.COM/MILITARYHEALTH](http://WWW.TWITTER.COM/MILITARYHEALTH)

 [WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/MILITARYHEALTH](http://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/MILITARYHEALTH)



