

Deployment Health Assessments

U.S. Armed Forces

March 2020

(Data through February 2020)

Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch

Update: Deployment Health Assessments, U.S. Armed Forces, March 2020

Since January 2003, pronounced fluctuations in the monthly numbers of pre- and post-deployment health assessment (PDHA) forms transmitted to the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB) generally have corresponded to times of departure and return of large numbers of service members who deployed. For the purposes of this report about service members' responses to the assessment questions, it is important to note that the denominator is the total number of service members who completed deployment-related assessments, not the total number of service members eligible for the assessments.

From January 2015 through February 2020, monthly counts of pre-deployment health assessment forms showed the greatest variation compared to the other deployment health assessment forms (Figure 1). The most pronounced fluctuations in monthly counts of pre-deployment health assessment forms during this period occurred from June 2017 through February 2020. (Figure 1). For the past 8 years, counts of post-deployment health reassessment (PDHRA) forms showed a pronounced downward trend; since June 2017, the monthly counts of these questionnaires were consistently lower than the monthly counts of PDHA forms. Moreover, the average monthly number of PDHRA forms (7,447) during the most recent 12 months (March 2019–February 2020) was the single lowest 1-year average since July 2006 (Table 1, data not shown).

During the past 12 months, the percentages of total returned deployers who rated their health as either “fair” or “poor” ranged from 7.2% to 10.1% on PDHA questionnaires and from 7.2% to 8.2% on PDHRA questionnaires (Figure 2). The percentages of total service members who rated their health as either “fair” or “poor” on pre-deployment questionnaires during this period varied between 3.4% and 5.6%.

In general, the percentages of “exposure concerns” self-reported on PDHA and PDHRA forms were higher among reserve component members than among active component members; a similar pattern is apparent for the percentages of “health concerns” self-reported on PDHA forms (Table 2, Figure 3). Active component Marine Corps members were 1.8 times as likely to report 2 or more PTSD symptoms at the time of the PDHRA compared to the time of the PDHA (Table 2).

At the time of return from deployment, 17.6% of active component and 17.8% of reserve component service members reported any depression symptoms. Service members in the active and reserve components were 4.1 and 7.0 times as likely, respectively, to receive a mental health referral 3-6 months after deployment, compared to the time of their return from deployment. Moreover, at the time of the PDHRA, reservists were 1.9 times as likely to receive a mental health referral as members of the active component (Table 2).

Figure 1. Numbers of deployment health assessment and reassessment forms, by month, U.S. Armed Forces, January 2003–February 2020

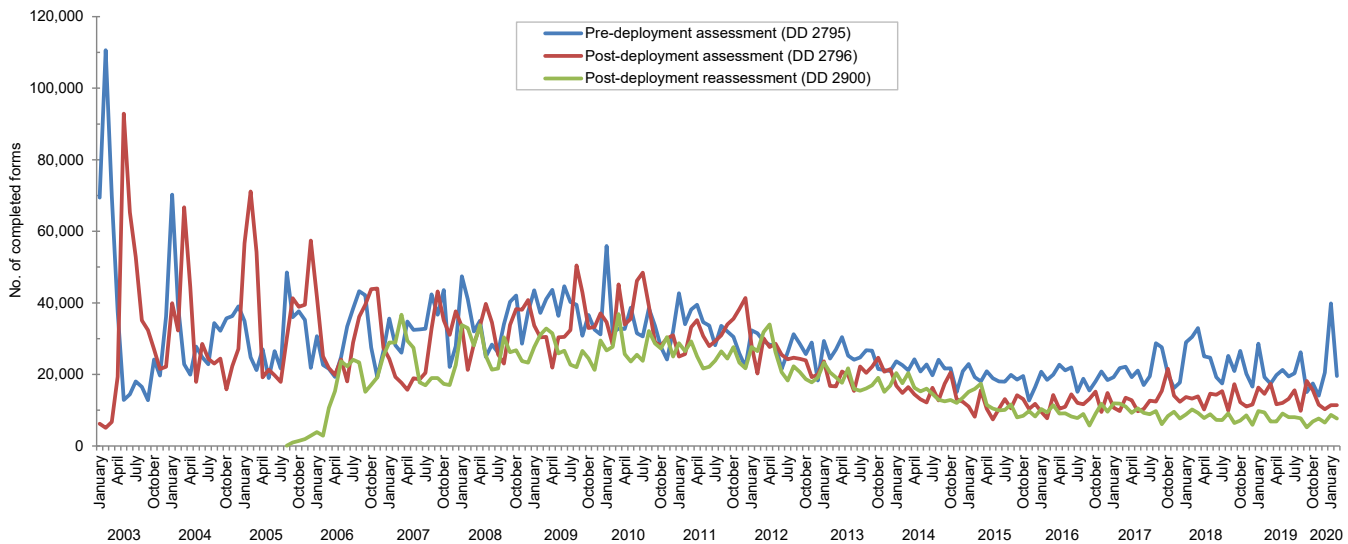


Table 1. Number of deployment-related health assessment forms, by month, U.S. Armed Forces, February 2019–February 2020

	Pre-deployment assessment DD 2795		Post-deployment assessment DD 2796		Post-deployment reassessment DD 2900	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	251,105	100.0	158,184.0	100.0	89,368	100.0
Average	20,925	.	13,182.0	.	7,447	.
2019						
March	17,420	6.9	17,434.0	11.0	6,836	7.6
April	19,845	7.9	11,654.0	7.4	6,873	7.7
May	21,255	8.5	12,038.0	7.6	9,058	10.1
June	19,456	7.7	13,199.0	8.3	8,075	9.0
July	20,327	8.1	15,557.0	9.8	8,079	9.0
August	26,209	10.4	9,828.0	6.2	7,727	8.6
September	15,104	6.0	18,194.0	11.5	5,215	5.8
October	17,504	7.0	15,598.0	9.9	6,879	7.7
November	14,096	5.6	11,564.0	7.3	7,697	8.6
December	20,499	8.2	10,271.0	6.5	6,565	7.3
2020						
January	39,833	15.9	11,411.0	7.2	8,690	9.7
February	19,557	7.8	11,436.0	7.2	7,674	8.6

Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System (DMSS) as of 09-MAR-2020
Prepared by Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB)

Data Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System

Figure 2. Percentages of deployment health assessment forms with self-assessed health status rated as either “fair” or “poor,” by month, U.S. Armed Forces, March 2019–February 2020

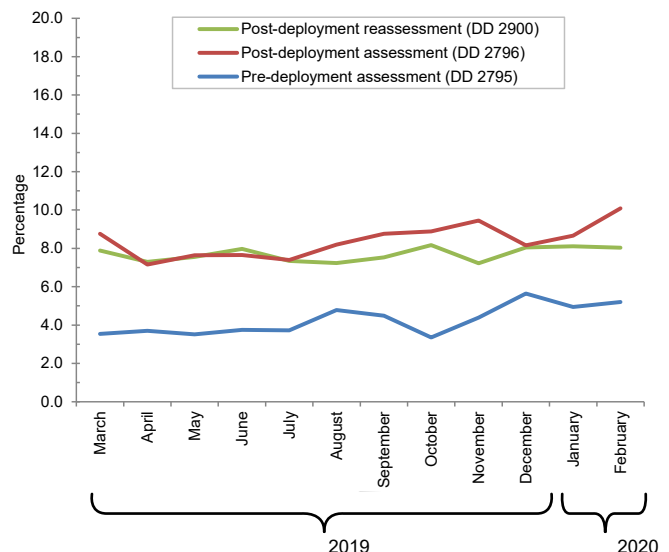


Table 2. Percentage of service members who endorsed selected questions or received referrals on health assessment forms, U.S. Armed Forces, March 2019–February 2020

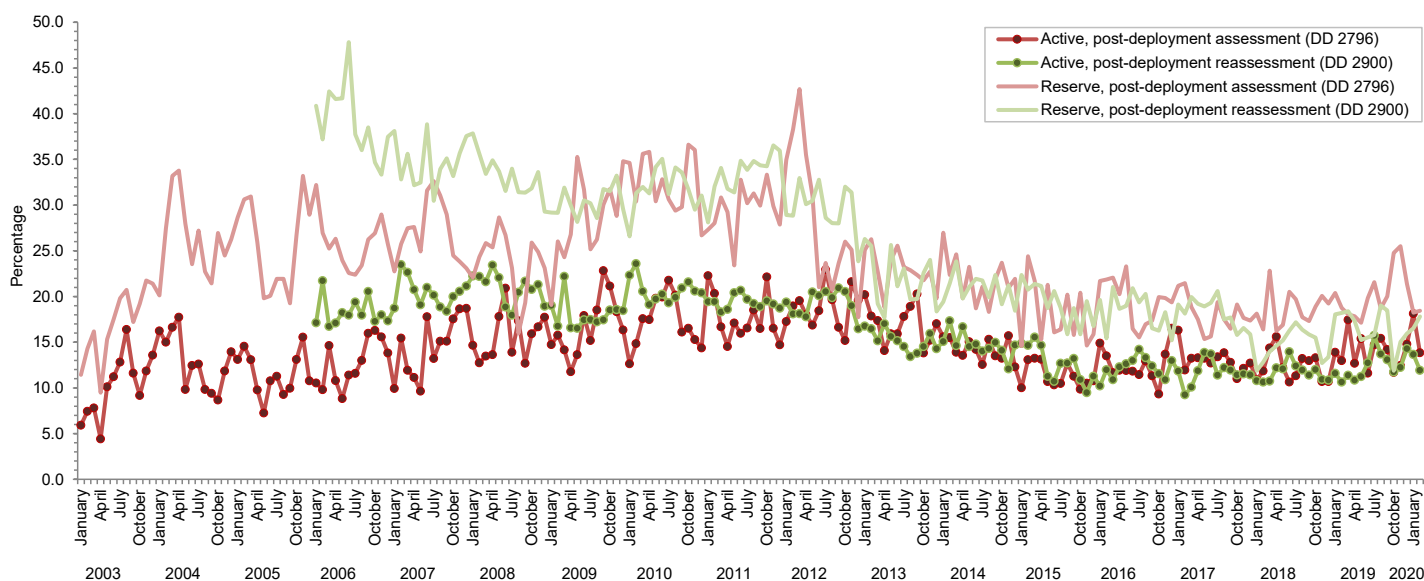
	Army			Navy			Air Force			Marine Corps			All active component service members		
	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900
Active component	n= 108,139 %	n= 50,883 %	n= 24,609 %	n= 5,846 %	n= 5,391 %	n= 4,924 %	n= 39,177 %	n= 32,405 %	n= 27,932 %	n= 19,658 %	n= 17,006 %	n= 11,451 %	n= 172,820 %	n= 105,685 %	n= 68,916 %
General health "fair" or "poor"	6.5	10.4	10.8	2.7	6.5	6.2	1.6	4.4	4.3	3.6	7.6	9.7	5.0	7.9	7.7
Health concerns, not wound or injury	6.4	17.9	11.2	5.0	14.4	11.4	3.2	11.1	8.4	4.8	11.3	10.6	5.5	14.6	10.0
Health worse now than before deployed	na	71.9	73.5	na	69.4	76.0	na	64.0	70.9	na	70.6	77.4	na	69.1	73.3
Exposure concerns	na	13.7	12.8	na	20.6	23.9	na	14.8	10.1	na	11.6	14.5	na	14.1	12.8
PTSD symptoms (two or more)	na	6.3	8.5	na	4.9	6.9	na	3.1	3.3	na	3.4	5.9	na	4.8	5.8
Depression symptoms (any)	na	21.5	21.5	na	20.1	20.6	na	11.0	10.5	na	17.7	20.2	na	17.6	16.8
Referral indicated by provider (any)	5.8	14.2	12.4	6.2	25.8	20.0	7.7	15.9	9.9	5.7	23.4	16.9	6.2	16.8	12.7
Mental health referral indicated ^a	1.5	2.5	9.8	1.2	5.7	17.5	1.3	2.4	8.7	0.9	2.6	15.1	1.4	2.7	10.8
Medical visit following referral ^b	91.3	92.0	98.4	83.8	87.5	83.0	97.8	98.9	98.1	89.0	93.5	94.2	92.5	93.9	95.6
	Army			Navy			Air Force			Marine Corps			All reserve component service members		
	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900	Pre-deploy DD2795	Post-deploy DD2796	Reassessmt DD2900
Reserve component	n= 34,845 %	n= 31,332 %	n= 5,050 %	n= 2,662 %	n= 2,284 %	n= 2,396 %	n= 12,303 %	n= 12,835 %	n= 11,557 %	n= 1,609 %	n= 2,101 %	n= 775 %	n= 51,419 %	n= 48,552 %	n= 19,778 %
General health "fair" or "poor"	1.8	10.3	11.1	0.8	10.7	10.1	1.0	6.0	5.0	1.4	10.9	7.6	1.5	9.2	7.3
Health concerns, not wound or injury	2.8	19.4	11.8	3.1	37.4	11.8	1.8	12.7	6.6	2.5	19.2	7.4	2.6	18.5	8.6
Health worse now than before deployed	na	69.7	72.9	na	73.1	75.8	na	67.4	72.2	na	74.2	76.0	na	69.4	72.9
Exposure concerns	na	18.3	14.7	na	41.8	37.0	na	20.6	12.5	na	14.8	13.7	na	19.9	16.0
PTSD symptoms (two or more)	na	7.6	9.8	na	8.1	9.9	na	3.0	3.0	na	5.8	7.7	na	6.3	5.8
Depression symptoms (any)	na	20.4	19.5	na	20.5	23.7	na	10.8	8.8	na	18.7	16.5	na	17.8	13.7
Referral indicated by provider (any)	3.3	20.3	14.9	5.4	34.3	36.6	4.0	18.1	21.0	6.6	27.6	28.1	3.7	20.7	21.6
Mental health referral indicated ^a	0.7	2.9	10.7	0.9	4.0	35.8	0.6	2.1	20.4	1.9	5.3	27.4	0.7	2.9	20.1
Medical visit following referral ^b	92.3	99.4	53.8	91.5	98.6	61.9	85.4	81.5	81.5	71.6	85.5	60.0	89.0	95.3	71.2

PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder

^aIncludes behavioral health, combat stress and substance abuse referrals.

^bRecord of inpatient or outpatient visit within 6 months after referral.

Figure 3. Percentages of service members with completed assessments who endorsed exposure concerns on post-deployment health assessments or reassessments, by component, by month, U.S. Armed Forces, January 2003–February 2020



Data Source: Defense Medical Surveillance System