

# NMCPHC UPDAT

# **From the Front Office**

By Captain Robert J. Hawkins, Commander, NMCPHC

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### **Greetings Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center** (NMCPHC)

I'd like to begin my final set of Commander's comments with a sincere "thank you" to the multitude of public health professionals and support staff Navy and Marine Corpswide who've unwaveringly "answered the call" (and continue to do so) throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic.

There simply isn't enough space in this newsletter to highlight the number and variety of COVID-related requests for support that our (your) Navy Medicine and Public Health teams have accomplished over the last 16 months. Additionally, the day-to-day services provided in all of



the public health specialties and support services were continued in an outstanding manner in the midst of COVID. The support and the science worked together to conduct the mission. Unprecedented doesn't begin to describe it!

Suffice it to say, since arriving onboard NMCPHC, I've had the good fortune to be surrounded by the best-and-brightest that Navy public health has to offer. The job is markedly easier when you're surrounded by talented and capable professionals.

As we near the Change of Command, I wish to encourage you in your future endeavors as individuals and collectively as a command. Each of you has a tremendous amount to offer and the expertise and services you provide are essential in both the present and the future. While there is uncertainty in the future, your collective efforts always navigate uncertainty so well.

I'll close by saying "Thank You" to everyone throughout the NMPCHC enterprise (past and present) and others within Navy Medicine who've clearly made this tour manageable and hopefully successful. I couldn't have done it without you. I'll be heading to BUMED in July and will be leaving the Command in the very capable hands of Capt. Brian Feldman.

### **Command Master Chief's Corner**

By Master Chief HMCM Joseph V. Dennis, NMCPHC



### **Greetings Shipmates!**

The year 2020 has been a year that at some points has felt like several. As we move into summer 2021, I notice more and more signs of our daily lives returning to normal. While we acknowledge the large and lasting impact of the pandemic on so many lives, there is reason to be optimistic. An effective vaccine is available and working. We've seen the bottom half of each other's faces for the first time in over a year, many of our children have returned to school, many coworkers are returning to the office, and health guidelines are becoming less restrictive.

The past 18 months have truly been the "Super Bowl" for public health professionals. NMCPHC was among the highest percentage of deployed Sailors per capita across NMFL commands. Over 70 Active duty personnel have deployed for a combined total of over 6000 deployment days. Our GS

and Civilian shipmates have authored countless work products, models, and analyses in support of the Fleet and Fleet Marine Force. Leaders across the Navy, Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, and Department of Defense have been able to make informed, sound decisions because of the work of so many dedicated professionals at Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center and its Field Activities.

PCS waiver policies, advancement exams, HPCON levels, and installation gating criteria are just a few examples of things that remain in a constant state of change. It is important to remain flexible and informed. Stay connected to Navy Personnel Command on social media [MyNavy HR (Facebook), @USNPeople (Instagram) @MyNAVYHR (Twitter)] message traffic, or the web for the latest on PCS travel waivers and Restriction of Movement (ROM) requirements. Local installation social media streams explain the availability of on-base services, gate closures, and the like. Continue to utilize local resources in Commander's update emails, all hands calls, and local news and health department recommendations for individual areas.

The list of individual and team accomplishments continues to grow. We are anxiously awaiting the results from the March 2021 Navy-wide advancement exam as well as the upcoming season of selection boards this summer and fall. NMCPHC Sailors and Civilians continue to do outstanding work, resulting in selection as Sailor or Civilian of the Quarter or Year, Meritorious Advancement, and numerous other recognitions. Leadership at every level has noticed and recognized the hard work completed by the NMCPHC team.

Moving forward, we're excited to resume many of the activities that were modified or placed on hold by the pandemic, such as Commander's PT, in-person STEM volunteer opportunities, diversity committee celebrations, pot-luck meals, and Qualify of Life (QOL) committee sponsored events. Stay tuned for those to come back online in the coming weeks.

Congratulations to our former Deputy Commander, CAPT Delong, as he assumed command of Navy Medical Research Unit San Antonio. We wish him the traditional Fair Winds and Following Seas. In addition, welcome aboard to our incoming Deputy Commander, CAPT McLean, arriving later this year.

As always, we must continue to look out for each other and recognize the warning signs for suicide and other destructive behaviors. If you or someone you know needs help, speak up and get help! Resources are readily available to help with mental health, suicidal behaviors, addictions, or any other struggles that can lead down a bad path.

# NEPMU-5 Collaborates with Camp Pendleton to Inspect Game Animals for Ectoparasites

By Lt. Dawn Whiting, Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit Five

SAN DIEGO - The Vector Control Department at Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU) 5 has recently begun a collaboration with the Game Warden Office at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton to inspect and pluck ectoparasites off of game animals acquired by hunters. As the name implies, these are parasites that live and feed on the surface of (rather than inside) the animal.

On their first outing of the year, Lt.'s Hanayo Arimoto and Riley Tedrow, Entomologists assigned to NEPMU-5, worked with Game Warden Melissa Vogt on the last duck hunt of the season.

"Identifying ectoparasites on the waterfowl that migrate through Camp Pendleton gives us an opportunity to raise awareness on the health and safety risks involved with handling wild game," says Vogt. "This collaboration is impactful to our hunting program because our hunters handle and consume multiple waterfowl species each year. Through studies such as this, we are able to provide more informed health risk mitigation guidance and assist in improving the overall mission readiness of our active duty hunters."

"This type of collaboration between the base wildlife officials and Navy Preventive Medicine provides not only great training for our personnel, but sharpens the skills necessary for disease diagnostics in a deployed setting," said Capt. Peter Obenauer, officer in charge of NEPMU-5. "Navy Entomologists and Preventive Medicine Technicians (PMT) are often the "go-to" people when U.S. forces encounter problematic organisms or unexplained disease outbreaks requiring specialized research skills," Obenauer added.

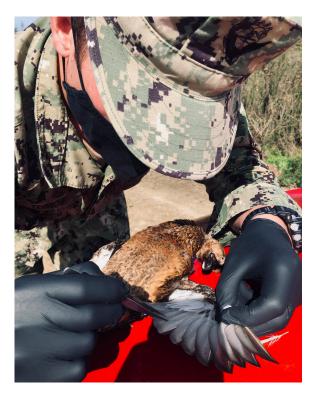
"I think it's important for Navy Entomologists and our PMT's to obtain hands-on experience in areas outside of our normal routine activities, as familiarity with various organisms and techniques are essential to our optimal functioning in austere conditions," said Lt. Tedrow.

In coordination with the Game Warden, NEPMU-5 personnel will continue collecting and identifying parasites found on game animals throughout the year to include deer, coyotes, squirrels, and waterfowl.

"Working with the Game Warden to collect parasites from different kinds of game animals allows us to learn more about the ecology of the installation and assess risks to force health from that perspective," expressed Lt. Arimoto. This collaboration will continue to improve NEPMU-5's skillset, accumulate data on ectoparasite prevalence on Camp Pendleton, and help to mitigate health risks to animals and service members who hunt.

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) develops and shapes public health for the U.S. Navy and Marines Corps through health surveillance, epidemiology and analysis, disease and injury prevention, and public health consultation. Learn more by going to www.nmcphc.med.navy.mil. Follow NMCPHC on social media at https://www.facebook.com/NavyAndMarineCorpsPublicHealthCenter http://twitter.com/nmcphc and https://www.instagram.com/nmcphc/For more news from Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Five, visit

http://www.navy.mil/local/nepmu5 or follow NEPMU 5 on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nepmu5.



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### **Building Bridges to Better Health**

Courtesy story, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Public Affairs

The first full week of each April is recognized as National Public Health Week, and the American Public Health Association has proclaimed this year's theme as 'Building Bridges to Better Health'. The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC)'s operations strive to educate and improve public health for service members and their families.

"While we're, in some sense, a microcosm of society, we are also a unique component as well. We are unique on our application of our subject matter expertise to improving the public health and force health protection of our Sailors and Marines," says Capt. Robert Hawkins, Commander, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. "Many times the policies we develop, especially in times of crisis like COVID-19, rapidly impact and improve the overall public health of our deployed service members."

The importance of providing and maintaining a positive environment including a culture of public health awareness is critical.. For Sailors and Marines who are stationed all over the world and are forward deployed, the work takes on an even higher level of importance.

"Public Health practices and policies impact almost every aspect of life in the military, from the substances that are allowed to be on ships, the way we clean spaces like barbershops and galleys, and the way we respond to disease," says Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Joseph Dennis, who serves as Command Master Chief of NMCPHC. Dennis also added, "If Navy leadership reaches out to determine the impact of an infection at an operational command,' public health experts possess the expertise do the modeling for that specific scenario. Almost every aspect of life in the Navy is affected by a public health professional, which improves current and future readiness."

"We are unique on our application of our subject matter expertise to improving the public health and force health protection of our Sailors and Marines," Said Capt. Hawkins.



Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Deja Blandino, assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD), screens a blood product for type identification and foreign antibodies in the hospital's blood bank Feb. 06. Proper identification and screening of blood products such as plasma, platelets and red blood cells prevent reactions occuring during transfusions. NMCSD's mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training, and research. NMCSD employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Erwin Jacob Miciano)

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center consists of a diverse mix of scientists, medical professionals and support staff from a wide array of public health disciplines. Their reach includes locations across the United States and spans the globe. With so many areas and moving parts there is a constant flow of information and data driving public health decision-making.

"Public health is not a destination, but a journey. Constant review and revision is necessary to ensure we offer the best and most current advice to Navy leadership." Dennis said. "It's been amazing to observe staff such as Epidemiology, "Public health is not a destination, but a journey. Constant review and revision is necessary to ensure we offer the best and most current advice to Navy leadership," said Command Master Chief Dennis.

health educators, preventive medicine, occupational medicine, and many others develop content and direction so our Navy can do what it needs to safely and effectively."

As the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center develops policies and guidance, Capt. Hawkins understands

that one of the most important role for building better health is the one played by the service member.

"I think individuals are the key to building a better public health environment," Hawkins says. "Individual actions affect others such as getting vaccinated, exercising precautionary measures and these things are best utilized when it's freely practiced and not mandated."

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Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Tyson Riccio, Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Two (NEPMU-2), demonstrates how to use field equipment inside of the mobile Forward Deployable Preventive Medicine Unit at the Annual Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Conference, "Naval Readiness through Public Health," hosted by NMCPHC in Norfolk, Virginia, March 20-22, 2018. NMCPHC is the Navy's go-to resource for providing instrumental guidance on public health related issues with programs that directly impact the mission readiness of U.S. Navy and military personnel at home and around the globe. (U.S. Navy photo by Genevieve Baziw/released)

### **NMCPHC Meritoriously Advances "Hard Charger"**

Courtesy story, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Public Affairs

On April 2nd of this year, Petty Officer Shawn Fahey was performing a Virtual Ship Sanitation Certificate Inspection when his officer-in-charge directed him to report to his office. Fahey remembers thinking, "is this a late April Fool's prank?" He quickly became elated as he learned that his hard work and can do attitude earned him the next paygrade of Petty Officer 2nd Class. Fahey's promotion is a result of the Navy's Meritorious Advancement Program (MAP), and is quite an accomplishment as the list of candidates at Navy Medicine (BUMED), was large and competitive. For Fahey, it's also a humbling moment.



Photo by Abraham Essenmacher Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center

"I feel very honored and relieved," says Fahey, "I never believed that I would be that person to be selected and makes me feel as if the command was really looking at what I was contributing."

Fahey is assigned to Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU) Two, a subordinate activity of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center headquartered in Portsmouth, Va. Since being stationed with NEPMU 2, he understood that taking on extra jobs and responsibilities would help him stand out.

"Petty Officer Fahey is an absolute hard charger," says Lt. Jacob Lockwood, an Industrial Hygienist assigned to NEPMU-2, and is also Fahey's division officer. "Every time we've had short-fused missions at this unit he's one of the first Sailors to volunteer and he takes on lots of collaterals and always looks for leadership opportunities." Lockwood also added that as long as they can support Fahey that he'll have a bright future and continue to rise.

Accounting for nearly 20 percent of all enlisted advancements each calendar year. MAP authorizes commanding officers (COs) to advance eligible personnel in paygrades E5 and below to the next higher paygrade. The program is intended to give COs the opportunity to recognize their best Sailors by advancing them when they are ready for the next level of responsibility. The program gives greater authority to commands to better shape their workforce and the Navy by developing and rewarding our most talented Sailors.

Leading into the 2020 fall advancement cycle there were 4,192 eligible candidates taking the exam for Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class. Of those, the Navy advancement

### Continued from page 7

quota was 165, just under four percent. Now that he's been MAP'ed, Fahey sees the initiative as a life line.

"This helps me to remain in the Navy to finish my degree and pursue my goal to become an industrial hygienist as well as help those around me," Fahey says, "and I hope that those I work

with see this and use it as motivation for themselves to step forward and take on extra tasks as well."

Lt. Lockwood believes that Petty Officer Fahey is not going to slow down anytime soon.

"He's going to keep charging, asking for extra duties and

I'm confident that the further he gets the more he'll take on," says Lockwood, "It's just in his attitude to charge forward and get things done while making things better."

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TO STAY ON TOP OF THE LATEST TRENDS IN NAVY PUBLIC HEALTH AND COVID-19



### Did you know NMCPHC Logo just got a new look?



Make sure that all of your current and future documents, templates and other materials contain the new logo and branding.

There is also a new look for the command business card.

To find the latest versions of all NMCPHC templates, click the link below:

https://esportal.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Pages/NMCPHC-Intranet-Dashboard.aspx

For more information Contact Hugh Cox at (757) 953-0969

# Department of the Navy Celebrates May as National Physical Fitness & Sports Month

Courtesy story, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Public Affairs

# Navy Physical Fitness Month is here! National Physical Fitness and Sports Month was designated in May of 1983 by the President's Council on Fitness to promote healthy lifestyles and improve quality of life for all Americans.

Our military must maintain its ability to be physically mission ready. The Department of the Navy (DoN) celebrates and places much importance on Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Human Performance Program Manager Diana Settles stated, "As our warfighters seek human performance excellence to protect the security of our country, the importance of physical resiliency, durability, toughness and lethality capabilities of warfighter athletes intensifies. Physical fitness is a critical component for our military's mission readiness." Settles oversees the Warfighter Wellness Physical Optimization and Musculoskeletal Performance programs at NMCPHC.

"Sailors comment that an active lifestyle assists them in reducing their stress levels and improves their energy levels. Look good = feel good = do good is another primary benefit of physical activity recognized by Sailors,"

There are many benefits to living a physically active lifestyle. "Sailors comment that an active lifestyle assists them in reducing their stress levels and improves their energy levels. Look good = feel good = do good is another primary benefit of physical activity recognized by Sailors," Settles explained. Improving health is important. Regular physical activity assists in managing weight and strengthening muscles, bones and joints. An active lifestyle aids in lowering cholesterol and blood pressure. More regular physical activity, over months and years, is key to maintaining health and well-being. Being more active can improve fitness and reduce depression, stress, reduce risk for heart disease, stroke, some cancers, diabetes, obesity and ease symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Everyone benefits from physical activity, no matter what age or physical ability. Physical activity, whether moderate daily activity (e.g., vacuuming, gardening) or doing something more organized (e.g., weight training, sports), is a key method to improve overall health. Physical activity strengthens quality of life while lengthening lifespan.

#### **Navy Fitness Month Resources:**

The Navy Operational Fitness & Fueling System (NOFFS) provides Sailors with the performance industry's leading fitness and nutrition information, allowing for the Navy to maintain peak physical readiness. The NOFFS app was developed to provide great workouts from anywhere – inside or outside of our homes, with or without others, at any time.

Just getting started or coming back from being less active during COVID-19 quarantine? No problem — start out slow and gradually increase training. All sorts of activities count, such as organized exercise or sports, playing ball, jump roping, walking a dog, gardening, cycling or raking leaves. Simply getting out for a 5–10-minute walk has health benefits and helps improve focus and mindfulness. More resources and an interactive activity planner can be found on this Health. gov website: <a href="https://health.gov/news/202105/move-may-and-celebrate-national-physical-fitness-sports-month">https://health.gov/news/202105/move-may-and-celebrate-national-physical-fitness-sports-month</a>

What can your command do to help promote May Physical Fitness and Sports Month? Check out the <a href="MMCPHC Active Living">MMCPHC Active Living</a> webpage for resources, posters, social media messages and activities.

May Navy Physical Fitness and Sports Month encourages everyone to do a little more activity each day to reach peak physical readiness, which is a top priority for the 21st Century Sailor and Marine.



Fire Controlman (Aeigis) 2nd Class Gilberto Ramirez, from Dallas, participates in a weight-lifting competition aboard the Ticonderogaclass guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), April 25, 2021. Vella Gulf is operating in the Atlantic Ocean in support of naval operations to maintain maritime stability and security in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied and partner interests. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dean M. Cates)



U.S. Navy HM1 Adrianyon Riley, from Marine Corps Base Quantico participates in the 2020 High Intensity Tactical Training Installation Challenge at Butler Stadium, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Sep. 25, 2020. Each Marine participant was given tasks that challenge their strength, power, endurance, and cognitive ability. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ann M Bowcut)

### **Fueling the Warfighter**

Courtesy story, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Public Affairs

In Case You Missed It

The United States depends on its warfighters to be operationally ready at any and all times. Each branch of service administers physical assessments of their personnel throughout the year and millions of tax payer money is poured into gyms and equipment for service members to maintain physical standards. But what goes before the gym? Nutrition!

What we put into our bodies is the foundation and fuel for what we want to achieve physically and mentally. Through the years a myriad of myths and facts have flooded society, ranging from eliminating carbohydrates, concentration of certain food groups, even to how and when we should eat what.

"I think the most important thing to keep in mind is that we shouldn't allow our health and lifestyle choices to be dictated by trends and we should strive to make the most informed decisions based on proven, science-backed information," says Jennifer Meeks, Public Health Nutritionist and Registered Dietitian at the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. "The DoD community has so many credible resources to help them navigate through the mis-information and get to the root of what makes a healthful diet, that can be tailored to their own personal tastes, preferences and lifestyle," added Meeks.

About one in four young adults are too heavy to serve in our military according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which poses a challenge to the military's recruiting and retention efforts. One key may simply be implementing healthy diets earlier rather than later.

"We might not notice these negative effects when we're young, but as we age our bodies will adapt to the environment we've created for ourselves," said Meeks. "The earlier in our lifetime that we take care of our body appropriately—choosing high quality fuel/food sources, engaging in regular physical activity and allowing our body adequate time to rest and recover — the longer we will enjoy a better return on our health investment."

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), recommends filling half your plate at each meal with vegeta-

bles and fruits resulting in the recommended eight servings daily. Grains, dairy, and protein provide the rest. Military members don't always have total control over their food choices or access to cook their own meals, but could still make a positive impact.

"We can almost always try to make a healthful addition into our day such as adding half a cup of some kind of leafy green to one meal a day," said Meeks. "It's a small goal that can be easy to do, and this one small thing can help us feel like we've done something good for ourselves which can have a cascading impact for the rest of our day."

There are direct correlations in mental health as well via serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical that nerve cells produce which help us regulate our daily routines such as sleep, appetite, mediate our emotions and inhibit pain. Nearly 95% of serotonin is produced within the gastrointestinal tract and they activate neural pathways that travel directly between the gut and the brain, reducing depression and regulating anxiety.

"When we feel like we are taking care of ourselves, we are better able to make sound decisions, better able to perform our jobs and better able to interact with other people positively," Meeks added.

In adverse times like we are experiencing now with COVID-19, it's also important to note that a well-balanced diet also plays a role in our ability to fend off or recover from infections and boost our immunity.

"The pandemic has changed how we live and breathe in the world and how we interact with each other," Meeks says, "underscoring the importance of being as healthy as possible BEFORE being exposed to something that can harm us. Service members are routinely asked to go into harm's way, and having a strong immune system can help increase chances of survival and speed up recovery times."

Operational readiness is a critical part of the daily life in the military and their ability to be physically, mentally, and agility in recovery all build upon what they put into their bodies. More information and statistics can be found at: https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan, and https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/.

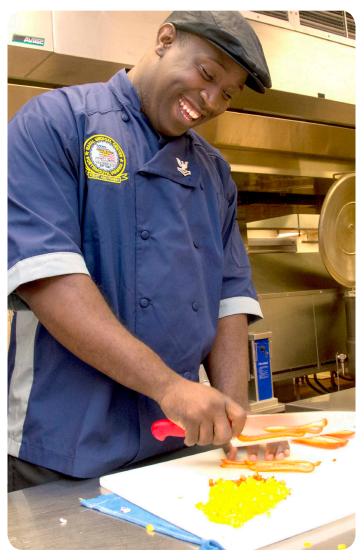
The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) develops and shapes public health for the U.S. Navy and Marines Corps through health surveillance, epidemiology and analysis, disease and injury prevention, and public health consultation. Learn more by going to www.nmcphc. med.navy.mil. Follow NMCPHC on social media at https://www.facebook.com/NavyAndMarineCorpsPublicHealthCenter http://twitter.com/nmcphc and https://www.instagram.com/nmcphc/



Advanced individual training students at the U.S. Army Quartermaster School's Joint Culinary Center of Excellence prepare meat loaf as part of their course instruction here Dec. 15.



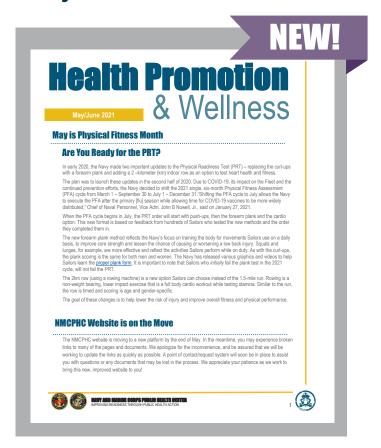
U.S. Air Force civilian and active duty personnel shop for groceries in the commissary on Hurlburt Field, Florida, Sept. 3, 2020. The commissary is one of the many facilities on the installation annually evaluated by the Health and Wellness Center for healthy food options to sustain combat-ready Air Commandos and their families. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Robyn Hunsinger)



Culinary Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Lee Foreman dices peppers as part of meal preparation in the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP) Galley. Foreman has worked in the galley for two years and is known around NMCP as "Chef Lee," is a certified chef by the Culinary Institute of Virginia. U.S. Navy photo by Sonar Technician 3rd Class Paul Wu.

### **NMCPHC Product Spotlight**

### **May/June HPW Newsletter**



### **NMCPHC Trainings and Conferences**

#### **DOEHRS-IH Training**

**Upcoming 2021 Course Dates TBD.** 

## Disease Reporting System internet (DRSi) Webinars

June 29, 2021:

Times: 0900ET, 1500ET, 1700ET

Course MHS GENESIS – Best Practices in Preventive Medicine. If they need 2021 CME/CNE credits they

can register here: <a href="http://go.usa.gov/xx2XV">http://go.usa.gov/xx2XV</a>

Note: It is still co-hosted by the same groups noted in your previous posting (the Army and Air Force groups you noted below). It is held via DCS: <a href="https://conference.apps.mil/webconf/monthlysurveillancetraining2021">https://conference.apps.mil/webconf/monthlysurveillancetraining2021</a>

# Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Fundamentals Course

Upcoming 2021 Course Dates TBD.

#### **Spirometry Training Course**

Upcoming 2021 Course Dates TBD.

### **ShipShape Facilitator Training**

#### **Upcoming 2021 Course Dates TBD.**

HP Advanced Online Training, Microsoft Teams Online. For more information email usn.hamptonroads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcphc-hpwtraining@mail.mil