

Be Wild. Be Wonderful.



Military

Within the West Virginia Military community, including our esteemed National Guard and Reserve Forces, it is imperative that physical activity is embraced as an integral part of life. It is also paramount that physical activity is also promoted with our veterans, military families and civilians working for the military. This can be accomplished by advocating for organizational change that embeds physical activity into policies, systems, and environments. Military leaders can lead the charge in making physical activity an actionable and integral part of our military's operations, can spearhead the creation of physical activity opportunities within military settings, VA medical centers, and their surrounding communities, and can engage in multi-sector collaborations to implement policies and practices that enhance physical activity opportunities for all. The military sector can lead the charge toward a healthier and more resilient military community that extends beyond today far into the future.

Strategies and Tactics

Priority Area 1: Structural Capacity

Priority Area 1 Strategy

Promote the development and incorporation of evidence-based physical activity programs into health resources for service members, veterans, their families, and civilians working for the military.

Priority Area 1 Tactics

1

Invest in personnel with appropriate credentials to develop and implement physical activity programs aimed at improving holistic health and quality of life.

2

Conduct periodic worksite health screenings or visits that assess the physical activity and fitness levels of civilians working for the military.

3

Develop physical training and education programs to ensure optimal physical readiness through the lifespan of service members to improve individual- and population-level health and fitness outcomes.

4	Promote existing resources and programs within the military setting as well as the surrounding community that support physical activity engagement among service members, veterans, their families, and military employees (i.e., Hiking Clubs, Couch to 5K programs, reading and activity groups).
5	Advocate for support from military leaders and potential funding sources to develop environments that facilitate physical activity opportunities.

Priority Area 2: Public Awareness and Social Marketing

Priority Area 2 Strategy	
Foster the development and implementation of large-scale, multi-media campaigns to promote physical activity aligned with the military’s mission, culture, and identity.	

Priority Area 2 Tactics	
1	Develop strategic campaigns that target motivations to establish physically active lifestyles within service members, veterans, their families, and military employees.
2	Incorporate physical activity marketing campaigns into procedures and practices of military-affiliated entities.
3	Develop campaigns that address and promote service members’ physical readiness by framing physical inactivity as a threat to national security.
4	Invest in developing, implementing, and evaluating physical activity campaigns that are effective in increasing physical activity.
5	Incorporate messaging into campaigns that emphasizes the role of physical activity in preventing injuries and disabilities.

Priority Area 3: Community Engagement and Environment

Priority Area 3 Strategy	
Develop and promote physical activity opportunities in military settings, VA medical centers, and their surrounding communities.	

Priority Area 3 Tactics	
1	Identify and promote existing assets in military environments to drive individual- and community-level programs to improve physical activity and health measures (e.g., chronic disease risk factors, joint pain).

2	Support the incorporation of physical activity opportunities within the built environment of military settings and VA medical centers (e.g., walking trails, recreation spaces/facilities, etc).
3	Provide opportunities for members of the military community and their families to attend intergenerational events and programs that involve physical activity to promote lifespan physical activity.
4	Promote partnerships with surrounding communities to implement physical activity programs.
5	Leverage existing technologies and partnerships to connect service members and their families with each other and community resources to promote an extensive physical activity network.

Priority Area 4: Policy

Priority Area 4 Strategy	
Support organizational change and incorporate physical activity into actionable policies, systems, and/or environmental changes.	

Priority Area 4 Tactics	
1	Implement policies and programs for enhancing physical activity on and around military installations and VA medical centers (e.g., Healthy Base Initiative, Building Healthy Military Communities Toolkit).
2	Strategically develop policies and practices within organizations that serve local military communities that address health disparities (i.e., chronic disease, disabilities).
3	Establish a policy to provide formal recognition of and rewards to leaders of implementing policy, systems, or environmental changes to establish a strong leadership role in enhancing physical activity literacy and promotion.
4	Encourage VA healthcare providers to incentivize the use of community recreational centers/facilities where practical.
5	Establish a policy for VA healthcare providers to conduct routine physical activity assessments, physical activity counseling, and referral to physical activity opportunities.

Priority Area 5: Multi-Sector Collaboration

Priority Area 5 Strategy	
Engage in multi-sectoral collaborative efforts to implement policies and programs for enhancing physical activity on and around military installations and VA medical centers.	

Priority Area 5 Tactics

1

Partner across multiple sectors to develop and implement evidence-based physical activity programs with measurable outcomes for military personnel, veterans, and their families.

2

Collaborate with higher education faculty and administrators to validate and promote physical training education and resources for service members, veterans, their families, and military employees.

3

Partner with school- and community-based programs to identify new opportunities to increase physical activity and fitness in schools and among military-connected students (e.g., JROTC, ROTC).

4

Work with Healthcare administrators to integrate levels of physical activity as vital signs into electronic health records for recruits and on through the lifespan of service members and veterans.

5

Establish an advisory committee on physical activity with representatives from multiple sectors to promote a strong leadership in physical activity.

6

Partner with community recreation facilities and parks as well as sports organizations to provide a variety of physical activity opportunities and build stronger community relationships.