

Commentary

Troop Talk

The following questions were left over from previous Troop Talks.

Why can't we get appointments at the dental clinic? When are they going to get more Dental Facilities?

The DENTAC maintains responsibility for a variety of Global War On Terrorism mobilization missions. Mobilization missions take priority over permanent party for dental care access. This mandate may create challenges for the permanent party when attempting to secure a dental appointment. The Oral Health Initiative Program, implemented strictly for active duty Soldiers, is designed to improve access to dental care. The OHI Program allows the DENTAC to refer permanent party Soldiers to local civilian practitioners for certain types of dental care. The DENTAC has referred dental care to the El Paso dental community valued at nearly \$1 million during fiscal year 2006.

The OHI Program begins with an examination at the Soldier's assigned Fort Bliss dental clinic. A Soldier can request DENTAC to perform an annual examination as early as three months before the yearly renewal date. Once the Soldier completes the examination process, he/she may be eligible for civilian care. The DENTAC provider will decide whether civilian or in-house care provides the most expedient care.

The DENTAC is expanding its capacity to meet the growing Fort Bliss military population. There is a modular clinic nearing completion on Biggs Army Air Field. Also, Dental Clinic 3, on Carrington Road, is undergoing expansion. These construction initiatives will produce a 35 percent increase in DENTAC capacity by Jan. 1. The DENTAC will see even greater expansion by 2010. Through these actions, the DENTAC hopes to remain responsive to Soldiers' needs.

Why do some Soldiers with multiple children have one child with appointments at the Soldier



Family Medical Clinic and the other child with appointments at William Beaumont Army Medical Clinic? Why can't they have appointments at the same location?

There are a few reasons why this may occur. One may be that children with special needs may be assigned to providers at WBAMC, thus creating appointments for one family member at the hospital and appointments for the other family members at the SFMC. In June, July and August, there was some appointment confusion because of the high demand for school, sports and overseas physicals for hundreds of young family members. Due to the high demand, all appointments at both the SFMC and WBAMC were used to meet the needs of our Fort Bliss patients. This may have added to the misconception children were seen at multiple locations for primary care.

Why is it so hard to schedule appointments at WBAMC? Soldiers are calling and the appointment people tell them that they can't schedule appointments because the calendar is full and they can't schedule anything until the next schedule is released.

It is important for WBAMC to exhaust all options available for appointment scheduling for our active duty servicemembers. Our administrative staff has been tasked to develop an efficient and expeditious method to assist our Soldiers with this problem. The telephone system at Central Appointments is being upgraded to improve patient access. As a medical facility, steps are being taken to ensure our clinics have their appointment template in our hospital computer system 30 days in advance to alleviate the problem of not being able to schedule appointments. We are committed to make quick and long term solutions for our Soldiers and their families.

Is there a way the leaders can check on the

status of care for their Soldiers at the hospital and clinics? Soldiers are coming back to units with extended profiles, and leaders do not have the means to check on their status or care that they are receiving.

Yes, leaders can check on the status of care for their Soldiers at the hospital and clinics. For accountability and command and control purposes, a Soldier's location and condition can be provided. We can inform the command if the patient is "stable," "seriously ill," "critically ill," or "imminent death." However, specific medical care will not be provided unless the commander states in writing that he/she is conducting an investigation and request specific information. Release of this medical information on Soldiers will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the chief, Patient Administration Division, and, if needed with the hospital's privacy officer. In general, no specific health information will be provided if there is not a need to know.

The procedure for the commander/first sergeant to know what's happening medically with a Soldier is for the Soldier to inform the command if they want to, or if the Soldier is provided a medical profile. The Soldier is required to give a copy of the profile to his/her first sergeant/commander, so they are aware of any physical/mental limitations.

However, specific medical information about a Soldier's medical condition may not be provided unless it's a condition the Soldier's commander needs to know i.e., suicidal/homicidal ideations, HIV positive, TB or anything else that may cause harm to the unit's mission or other Soldiers of that unit.

Maj. Gen. Robert P. Lennox
Fort Bliss Commanding General

Commentary: Interpreting the word Soldier

The following is a commentary by Command Sgt. Maj. retired Kevin J. Wood. It was his retirement speech and thoughts about Soldiers, after 29 years of service in the U.S. Army.

My interpretation and philosophy of the special word - Soldier

S = Sacrifice, Sacred Trust, and Special – Americans enjoy their freedoms and liberty because American Soldiers have, and always will pay the price for freedom and liberty. Americans trust Soldiers to do the right things morally and ethically. Let your Soldiers know, you can be counted on, that you appreciate them, their families and their sacrifices. It is a most sacred trust to lead and take care of Soldiers, failure to do so cost soldier's lives. Never abuse this privilege. Soldiers are special. Reward and praise them often in public, counsel in private, you'll be happy you did.

O = Optimism, Obedience, and Organized – Soldiers are eternal optimists, they envision the best possible outcome and strive to achieve their missions, but only when they are provided

the best possible leadership, motivation, and training. At the same time, they are obedient. Soldiers will subject themselves to a higher authority for the greater good of themselves, their units and the Nation. Be a positive role model, proactive, visionary and obedient to God, Country and the U. S. Army. Remember the glass is never half-empty, it's always half-full. Develop coherent plans, organize your activities and teach your Soldiers the value of organizational skills. They will demonstrate organized and systematic planning, unity of effort and pride in their organization.

L = Loyalty, Level Headed, and Learned – Soldiers remain loyal to each other, leaders and legitimate causes. But only when we stick to the solid principals of leadership, like having clear-cut goals, remaining loyal to them, yourself, your leaders and sound beliefs. Soldiers will remain level headed and calm in the face of adversity. They will respond positively, using sound judgement, in adverse situations, if we teach them to make the best decisions, in stressful situations. Soldiers are taught, they acquire

skills, behaviors, and knowledge through mentoring, teaching of skills and our personal behavior. Spend the time to teach your soldier's the right way everyday, learn from mistakes. Remember, that no one is perfect. When you leave your unit, someone, should be able to take your place. The greatest legacy you can leave your Soldier's is your knowledge, skills and demonstrated personal morals, in short - lead by example.

D = Determined, Disciplined, and Decisive – Soldiers are firmly resolved in their efforts to achieve the best, while maintaining orderly self-control through our example of leadership, self-discipline, ethics and training. Challenge, train, reward them often, and hold them to tough, but achievable standards. The rewards are worth your time and patience. In battle, Soldiers are resolute and unshakeable in achieving their missions and goals. Help them achieve their personal and unit goals, in turn, they will learn and demonstrate decisiveness.

I = Integrity, Ingenuity, and

Involvement - Soldiers will, in the absence of guidance, demonstrate incorruptibility, if their leaders are incorruptible and ethics are strong. Soldiers are creative, clever and inventive. Encourage them, let them grow, be supportive, be open to new ideas, you and they will grow and achieve amazing results. Be involved with all your

See **SOLDIER**, Page 8

Web sites of interest

- The Monitor** www.lavenpublishing.com/fortblissmonitor.html
- Fort Bliss** www.bliss.army.mil
- William Beaumont Army Medical Center** www.wbamc.amedd.army.mil
- Department of the Army** www.army.mil
- Department of Defense** www.defenselink.mil
- DoD news about the war on terrorism** www.defendamerica.mil
- Defense Finance Accounting Service** www.dod.mil/dfas
- Army Knowledge Online** www.us.army.mil
- Civilian Personnel Online** www.cpol.army.mil
- Thrift Savings Plan** www.tsp.gov
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)** www.defenselink.mil/brac
- Fort Bliss MWR** www.blissmwr.com
- Armed Forces Vacation Club** www.afvclub.com
- www.amigoairsho.org

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