

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ALCOHOL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION

1.0. PURPOSE

The purpose of this demonstration is to test the efficacy of web-based training in the avoidance of abusive behaviors related to alcohol consumption. This section is for information only.

2.0. BACKGROUND

2.1. Web-based alcohol prevention education courses represent a new and innovative approach to education that active duty members can relate to and feel comfortable with. Such an approach combines proven science-based teaching with the latest web-based media technologies. Available courses offer potentially engaging and easy to follow audio-visual productions including streaming video, interactive assignments and case studies, self assessments, customized feedback about current drinking levels, as well as final examinations. These courses also offer the benefit of being available at any time for the user. Additionally, due to the very nature of the internet, such programs also have the potential to provide researchers with a wealth of data that can help determine the outcomes of the program.

2.2. This project will enhance Service-level Alcohol Prevention Education Program by providing another option for alcohol prevention education. The case of an expanded and innovative Department of Defense (DoD) approach to alcohol prevention education is compelling. According to the 2002 Department of Defense "Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel," trends in alcohol consumption between 1982 and 1998 were showing great promise. Over this period, heavy alcohol consumption had declined by 36 percent, members facing serious consequences from alcohol consumption declined by 54 percent, and productivity losses from alcohol consumption declined by 60 percent. However, between 1998 and 2002, alarming trends have begun to emerge erasing many of the gains made in the late 1980s and 1990s. Heavy alcohol consumption increased by 27 percent. Additionally, for the first time, binge drinking was measured in the 2002 survey, and DoD rates of 18-25 year old active duty binge drinkers (53%) exceed civilian binge drinkers in the same age group (44%).

2.3. Research of the literature and studies conducted within the Military Health System (MHS) indicate the impact of heavy alcohol use. Estimated excess medical costs to DoD for active duty heavy drinkers are \$364 M per year. According to the DoD Task Force Report on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault, alcohol use contributes to 50 percent of alleged sexual assaults by service members. Based on a review of active duty suicide data, alcohol was a factor in approximately 29 percent of all DoD suicides. In review of active duty private motor vehicle fatalities, alcohol contributed to 20-25 percent of those fatalities (civilian rate 40%). The DoD administratively separates more than 700 members per year for alcohol-related

reasons. Research indicates alcohol reduces productivity by at least 1,764 FTEs/year (treatments, illness, hospitalization, and duty losses). All these issues directly impact force readiness.

2.4. One of the priorities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA)) is to establish a uniform inexpensive web-based alcohol prevention education program for active duty in the MHS.

2.5. The Alcohol Prevention Education Program is planned for two years and is currently funded for one year. Evaluation for additional funding will be prepared as needed. The Demonstration will continue based on outcome measures related to utilization rates, alcohol abuse rates, and who will need a continuum of services.

3.0. ELIGIBILITY

Effective October 1, 2005, the Demonstration is authorized for all active duty members.

4.0. OPERATION

The Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Education Demonstration will be operated by a Demonstration Contractor. No Managed Care Support Contractor involvement is required.