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# **Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS)**

## **DoD Women's Mental Health Efforts**

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**Dr. Kate McGraw  
Deputy Division Chief  
Psychological Health Center of Excellence  
J9/Defense Health Agency**



# DoD Women's Mental Health Efforts



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- **Background**
  - **Current efforts**
  - **Future directions**



# Background

- **DoD/VA Integrated Mental Health Strategy, #28**
  - Started 2011; completed in 2016
  - Task Group included DoD, Service, and VA experts
  - Provided recommendations to VA and DoD MHS leadership to address gaps after comprehensive research, policy, programs, and services reviews related to women's mental health (WMH), both Departments
  - Work sustained in DoD through Psychological Health Center of Excellence (PHCoE), J9/Defense Health Agency
- **Women in Combat Symposium, 2014**
  - Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP), USU
  - Experts from both operational and medical components participated
  - Recommendations passed to policy leads in DoD
  - Women at War, 2015 (Ritchie, Naclerio, editors)
  - Military Medicine Special Supplement: Women in Combat, 2016



# Background

- **Health Executive Committee (HEC) VA/DoD Women's Health Work Group (WHWG), 2015**
  - Charter revised and signed 2017
  - Purpose: actively collaborate to address growing and unique demands of transitioning Active Duty Servicewomen (ADSW) and women Veterans
  - Address delivery of treatment, services, programs, policy, and research related to mental health needs of transitioning ADSWs and women Veterans
- **WHWG Women's Health Policy Summit, 2016**
  - Over 50 attendees, subject matter experts, senior leaders in VA/DoD
  - Two initiatives were selected for execution in 2017/2018
- **DoD Women's Mental Health Work Group (WMHWG), 2016**
  - HEC WHWHG and DoD Women's Health Issues Work Group
  - Resourced through PHCoE, meets quarterly
  - 2017: DACOWITS liaison request: research gaps for potentially funding



# Current efforts

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- **PHCoE web page, 2016**
    - DoD WMHWG identified absence of accurate or easily accessible information related to mental health of military women, to include research
    - Dedicated two webpages on PHCoE's official website: [www.pdhealth.mil](http://www.pdhealth.mil)
  - **VA/DoD Women's Mental Health Mini Residency**
  - **PHCoE-sponsored RAND study on mental health needs of military minorities, to include women, results pending**



# Future Directions

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- **DoD Women's Mental Health WG**

- Potential study on gender differences in deployment-related returns from theater due to mental health conditions
- Continue work of IMHS SA #28
  - Summary literature review (refresh)
  - Review of DoD research portfolios (refresh)
  - Review of DoD policy (refresh)

- **Points of Contact**

- Kate McGraw, PhD, Deputy Division Chief, Psychological Health Center of Excellence, J9/Defense Health Agency, Department of Defense
- CDR Angela Williams, Clinical Care, Psychological Health Center of Excellence, J9/Defense Health Agency, Department of Defense