

DACOWITS' 2003 Recommendations:

1	DACOWITS recommends that benefit eligibility for Guard and Reserve members and families during activation be consistent with the benefit eligibility of active component members and their families, both CONUS and OCONUS.
2	DACOWITS recommends that the Department and Services continue to explore additional options that affect personal/family time, which may include those contained in the forthcoming RAND Return on Investment Study on military leave programs.
3	DACOWITS recommends that the personal and family leave programs instituted by the Coast Guard (i.e., Care for Newborn Children and Temporary Separation programs) and contemplated by the Navy be evaluated as soon as possible for their impact on retention and that this information be disseminated to the other Services and to military personnel and families.
4	DACOWITS recommends that commanders continue efforts to ensure that the work environment is neither hostile nor discriminatory and is conducive to optimal utilization and retention of highly qualified female officers.
5	DACOWITS recommends that DoD increase its efforts to reach its goal of providing the currently estimated need of child care spaces, as identified by the Office of Children and Youth, OSD.
6	DACOWITS recommends that the Services address the need for greater child care availability during times of increased OPTEMPO/PERSTEMPO.
7	DACOWITS recommends that the official chain of command be emphasized as the primary source of information on deployment timetables and support services, and that this information be repeatedly disseminated on a timely basis by all available means to military and family members to reduce the opportunity for misinformation.
8	DACOWITS recommends that the Department evaluate the effect of enhanced family communication opportunities and short-term rest and recuperation (R&R) programs during extended deployment on Service member morale and family stress levels.
9	DACOWITS recommends that the Services investigate more effective ways to communicate information about, and encourage the use of, support services, particularly to junior enlisted personnel and families who live off base.
10	DACOWITS recommends that activated Guard and Reserve Service members and their families be given immediate access to all services for which they are eligible (e.g., DEERS registration, exchanges, and commissaries).
11	DACOWITS recommends that, when possible, greater predictability be integrated into the deployment process.
12	DACOWITS recommends that Service personnel and family members be provided with continuity of care in MTFs, particularly for OB/GYN patients.
13	DACOWITS recommends that additional safeguards ensuring patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality, such as those that currently exist in the private sector (i.e., HIPAA), be included in DoD policy to the extent feasible, widely disseminated, enforced, and included in on-going education for all health care professionals and commanders.
14	DACOWITS recommends that all MTF health care providers be trained in a customer service-oriented model of patient service and care which includes sufficient time and opportunity for patient-provider dialogue that conveys the importance of patient needs, especially those of junior enlisted members.
15	DACOWITS recommends that DoD/Service/installation/MTF policies and practices regarding the importance and availability of care for female military personnel and female family members during the first trimester of pregnancy be consistent with the recommendations of the American Colleges of Obstetrics and Gynecology guidelines.

16	DACOWITS recommends that information on the above policies and practices, and the benefits of early access to OB/GYN care, be given to all military personnel, especially those in leadership positions, through regular mandatory briefings on family planning, pregnancy, physiological changes, advisable health care regimens, and job performance expectations of pregnant personnel.
17	DACOWITS recommends that DoD direct the Service Surgeons General to develop and implement a highly visible informational outreach campaign concerning the importance of early pregnancy identification and prenatal care, in addition to the information provided by TRICARE contractors.
18	DACOWITS recommends the wide dissemination of and education on the policies related to job assignment, duties, and responsibilities of pregnant Service members.
19	DACOWITS recommends that the system of appointment availability and scheduling be improved to increase access to care on a routine and emergency basis for OB/GYN patients.
20	DACOWITS recommends the printing and distribution of "Pregnancy and Childbirth – A Goal Oriented Guide to Prenatal Care" (published by DoD & VA, December 2002) to all DoD MTFs for all prenatal care patients.
21	DACOWITS recommends that, in the event of undue delay in access to MTF OB/GYN health care providers, the Services outsource OB/GYN care for female military personnel.
22	DACOWITS recommends that the Department provide guidance to the Services to maintain relevant standardized data for effective personnel policy.