

# HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER

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## Initiative Spotlight



### A Creative Strategy to Meet Demand for Pain Management Resources

**The issue:** Chronic pain is a problem that has reached near epidemic proportions. One large Army medical center reported that over one-third of the patient population seeks care for control of pain. This issue is expected to grow in scope since JCAHO now requires that all patients be screened for pain.

**Lesson learned:** When demand for specific services increases, look at current business processes (operating procedures) for opportunities to meet those needs in creative ways. This project showed that asking for volunteers is a creative way to make up for a shortfall in personnel resources.

**The proposed strategy:** The purpose of this initiative was to find a way to modify current clinic business processes so that patients would have access to more pain management options. Since chronic pain patients routinely seek care more often than non-pain patients, a change in business process was necessary to meet this increased demand for services. The ultimate goal of the six-week program was to reduce the demand for healthcare services for non-urgent, self-treatable pain while reducing lost duty/work time.

**Innovative approach for this initiative:** This initiative offered an opportunity to provide a holistic approach to pain by integrating traditional forms of pain management with complimentary and alternative therapies to optimize patient outcomes and maintain continuity of care. The focus of this approach was to increase patient awareness and understanding of alternative and complementary health promotion topics such as massage, yoga, and nutrition. Emphasis was on teaching patients to make simple changes to help enhance the management of chronic pain.

**Impact:** Response to the program was much better than anticipated, with numerous referrals from physicians and requests from patients to enroll in the program. This increase prompted the hospital to send several physicians to certificate programs in alternative treatment methods in order to expand available treatment options. The overall attendance rate for the program was good and the participation of support persons (spouses, children, friends) was also very high (average of 60-70% per class). A total of 61 patients (86%) completed the program. Of those patients with high healthcare service utilization rates (3 months) prior to entering the program, utilization rates (3 months after program completion) for healthcare services decreased by 57%.

## Ideas from the Field

### Collecting Follow-Up Data

Follow-up data is essential to improve existing programs and to demonstrate the value of new programs. Unfortunately, follow-up data is hard to get for many reasons including:

- Lack of time/resources
- Participants get "lost" (PCS, TDY, deployment, etc.)
- No plan for follow-up data collection prior to program implementation

Here are some suggestions to improve follow-up data collection success:

- Plan for follow-up data collection *before* a program is implemented.
- Tell participants you will be following up with them.
- Collect permanent email address, street address, and phone number for participants.
- Make follow-up surveys **short** and **simple**.
- Go to the Unit if many Soldier participants are from the same location.
- Ask for volunteers or former participants to help with data collection
- Contact a nearby university or college for students who need research projects

## Prevention Resources

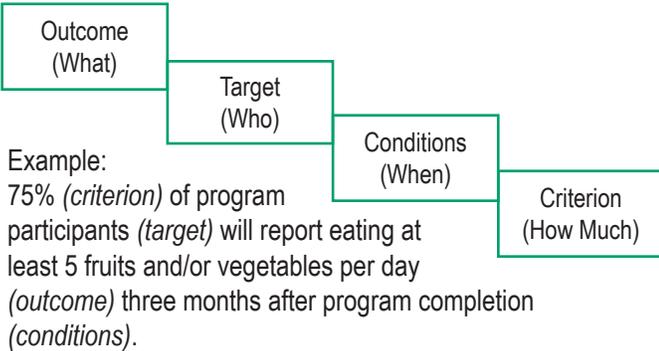
### Ergonomics

Ergonomic workplace design can reduce the risk of employees developing work-related musculoskeletal disorders; reduce the potential for fatigue, error, and unsafe acts; and improve productivity, quality of work, safety, and worker satisfaction. USACHPPM's Ergonomics Program provides training, site surveys, and products such as *Creating the Ideal Computer Workstation* and *Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders Prevention Guide*. For more ergonomics information, visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/ergogpm/ergohome.htm>.

## Program Pointers

### Using SMART Criteria to Write Effective Program Objectives

A well-written objective contains these essential building blocks:



Along with these elements, the following SMART criteria will help you write effective program objectives.

**Specific** – Make your objectives clear and precise. For example, instead of “...after program completion...” use: “...3 months after program completion...”

**Measurable** – Specify the amount of change, and be sure that you have access to the data that will allow you to measure the change. This will help you evaluate your program and provide concrete evidence regarding the impact of the program.

**Achievable** – Be realistic about what your program can achieve. Consider the factors that will affect your ability to meet the objective, such as available personnel, funding, optempo, etc.

**Relevant** – Ensure that the objective connects to the overall goal of the program. Ask, “Will meeting this objective help reach the program goal?”

**Time-bound** – Include the specific timeframe for accomplishing the objective. This may be stated as a date (e.g., by June 2006) or as time elapsed since the intervention (e.g., six months after program completion).

Developing SMART objectives may take time and effort, but this time and effort will definitely increase the likelihood of program success. For more information on writing effective objectives, visit: [http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub\\_section\\_main\\_1087.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_main_1087.htm).

## Don't Reinvent the Wheel!

### Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Resources

Operational combat stress tip cards including leader's hip pocket training guides, buddy aids, and tips for those staying home can be found at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/combat.aspx>.



## HPPI News & FAQs



### Turning lemons into lemonade

What can be gained from a project that doesn't work out as planned? As we have learned from past HPPI initiatives, projects can yield valuable lessons learned even when intended objectives are not accomplished. For example, the goal of one HPPI project was to collect sick call data. The project was not implemented as intended, but the data collection system created was used to gather and analyze other information that improved overall delivery of care to Soldiers. So, when you encounter barriers to project implementation and outcomes, don't be discouraged. Use the unintended outcomes (lemons) to make some lemonade!



For more information about HPPI, or to see past issues of the HPPI newsletter, visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/HPPI.aspx>.

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