



FOR RELEASE: November 3, 2008

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Decision: Medical Civilian Personnel Transition in the National Capital Region

On October 20, 2008, the Deputy Secretary of Defense made a decision regarding the future of medical civilian personnel in the National Capital Region as BRAC is implemented and the largest capital infrastructure investment ever made in the Military Health System results in two new inpatient hospitals, the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the greatly enlarged Fort Belvoir Community Hospital.

BETHESDA, MD. The Deputy Secretary of Defense has reviewed the options for civilian staffing of military medical facilities in the National Capital Region (NCR) related to the changes mandated by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and has decided that civil service employees of military medical facilities under JTF CAPMED will be best served by becoming Department of Defense (DoD) civilians, rather than continuing to work under Service Personnel Systems. This means that as BRAC is implemented and the integration of military health care continues in this region, civilian personnel at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the new Community Hospital at Fort Belvoir will be DoD employees, not Army, Navy, or Air Force civilian employees. Phased implementation will include civilians at other clinics in the NCR if evaluation shows that the change will enhance the effectiveness of integrated regional healthcare delivery, and add opportunities for career development.

This change will allow for new and greatly expanded opportunities for career development of civilian personnel and will provide for equity and consistency during the BRAC-mandated transition period in the integrated regional health care system. The civilian workforce transition will take place in a phased approach over the course of the next three years and will be guided by the careful deliberations of a newly-chartered Joint Task Force CAPMED Civilian Human Resource Council (CHRC). This Council is made up of senior leaders from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, DeWitt Army Community Hospital, the Air Force District of Washington and the Joint Task Force with support from Army, Navy and Air Force civilian subject matter experts.

While many details remain to be worked out regarding the timing and scope of the change, the Deputy Secretary of Defense's decision is an important first step in designing the architecture of the future medical civilian workforce in the National Capital Region.

According to RADM John Mateczun, Commander, JTF CAPMED, "This decision supports our commitment to implement a Regional approach to military health care while caring for the people who provide that system of care. It is an example of the ways in which our workforce will be positively impacted by the changes occurring in the National Capital Region. Taking care of our people is critical to our mission of caring for warriors and their families. We need the personnel we have in the region today to staff the world class facilities of the future and we want to provide them the best opportunities available for career development in a premier regional healthcare system."

Additional information about the transition and the future medical civilian workforce in the NCR will be posted on www.JTFCAPMED.mil

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The mission of JTF CAPMED is to implement clinical Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions in the National Capital Region and establish an efficient, integrated military health care delivery system that brings the “Best of the Best” together to work in concert on behalf of warriors, retirees, family members and caregivers. The Commander of Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical (CJTF) reports directly to the Secretary of Defense through the Deputy Secretary of Defense.