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New Center for Health Services Research to Support Improved Healthcare Outcomes

Bethesda, Md. – The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) recently established a new Center for Health Services Research (CHSR), focused on producing outcomes-based research and policy recommendations that support the readiness of America's Warfighter, and ultimately improving health outcomes throughout the Military Health System (MHS).

In 2014, the Secretary of Defense directed a Military Health System Review that recommended the MHS develop an enterprise-wide quality and patient safety data analytics infrastructure, to include health information technology systems, data management tools, and appropriately trained personnel. It also recommended clear collaboration between the Defense Health Agency's analytic capabilities, which monitor the MHS overall, and the Service-level analytic assets. This led to the development of the Health Services Research Program at USU, which advanced to the establishment of the USU Center for Health Services Research.

The CHSR, under USU's Department of Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics, has the unique mission to conduct research while also focusing on delivering education and training to public and private sector partners and delivering world class customer service through providing methodological and analytical support. As part of its training mission, CHSR hosts several workshops per year focused on use of military-relevant databases. CHSR also plans to build health services research capacity within the MHS to support the DoD mission and national security strategy.

Since its inception, the Center has funded 11 intramural projects focused on MHS priorities, and established an interest group of more than 100 military and civilian research professionals nationwide, who meet bimonthly to discuss emerging topics in health services research, such as the relationship between military medicine and military effectiveness, and the influence of military contraceptive policy changes on contraceptive use and childbirth rate among new recruits, among others.

In-house research conducted by the CHSR also focuses on addressing high-priority and emerging issues such as creating better health at better cost for service members and their families, addressing and mitigating racial and gender healthcare disparities in the MHS, identifying best clinical practices and staffing models to improve the value of care in the MHS, and more recently, addressing how the MHS responded to COVID-19.

"The team is thrilled to bring both robust research skills and capacity-building in health services research and policy advising to the MHS. As a large health system, there are so many great possibilities for the

Department of Defense, and also lessons for the Nation,” said Dr. Tracey Pérez Koehlmoos, CHSR director and professor of Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics at USU.

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About the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences: The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is the nation’s federal health sciences university and the academic heart of the Military Health System. USU students are primarily active duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service who receive specialized education in tropical and infectious diseases, TBI and PTSD, disaster response and humanitarian assistance, global health, and acute trauma care. USU also has graduate programs in oral biology, biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research. The University's research program covers a wide range of areas important to both the military and public health. For more information about USU and its programs, visit www.usuhs.edu.