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New DoD Instruction Addresses Dietary Supplement Education Needs for the Military Community

Bethesda, Md. – To address adverse events from dietary supplements experienced by service members, a new Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction was recently signed and released. DoDI 6130.06: Use of Dietary Supplements in the DoD calls for mandatory dietary supplement education and identifies Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) as the official DoD program for all information related to dietary supplements in the military.

OPSS is a DoD-wide educational program on dietary supplements that was established in 2012 at the request of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, by USU's Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP), the U.S. Army Public Health Command, and the DoD Dietary Supplement Subcommittee, with support provided by the Henry M. Jackson Foundation (HJF) for the Advancement of Military Medicine. Its purpose is to educate the entire military community on all aspects of dietary supplements and assist service members on how to make informed decisions about dietary supplement use.

According to the new DoD Instruction, 6130.06, implemented on March 4, dietary supplement education is now required for all service members and those who provide health-related services to the military. The instruction also states that a list of Prohibited Dietary Supplement Ingredients will be maintained and updated on the OPSS website. Also, it states that no retail facility on a military installation can sell "products containing ingredients on the DoD Prohibited Dietary Supplement Ingredients list."

The DoDI also requires DoD healthcare providers to document the use of all dietary supplements in the user's Electronic Health Record. In addition, they must report "suspected serious adverse events resulting from use of dietary supplements" both via the adverse events page of the OPSS website and in the user's Electronic Health Record.

"OPSS is here to help service members make informed decisions about dietary supplement use. OPSS is and has been the "go to" resource for all information related to dietary supplements and other self-care products," said Dr. Missy Givens, executive director of CHAMP.

Through the OPSS website, service members can find more information about the new instruction, as well as a list of prohibited dietary supplement ingredients, which is updated when an FDA action occurs or when new scientific information becomes available regarding dietary supplement ingredients.

Service members can also use the OPSS site to look up ingredients and ask questions via an "Ask an Expert" portal. They can also find a OPSS Risk-Assessment Scorecard, which can be used when considering dietary supplements.

“We answer many Ask the Expert questions each month, and we want service members and military healthcare providers and health professionals to have the ability to reach in and ask questions, and also be able to readily find information they are seeking on this topic,” said Andrea Lindsey, who directs HJF’s work in support of the Operation Supplement Safety program (HJF Contractor).

For more information about the new DoD Instruction, dietary supplements, and the OPSS initiative, visit opss.org.

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