



New home-based rehab program for military, veterans helps treat common muscle injuries

Bethesda, Md. – Musculoskeletal injuries – like low back and knee pain – account for the most lost duty days in the military and are one the main reasons service members and veterans seek medical care. To help reduce this burden, the Uniformed Services University (USU) in collaboration with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), has launched a home-based rehabilitation program, Rehab, Refit, Return to Duty (Rx3).

The program, developed by USU's Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) with support from the VHA's Office of Women's Health Services, is now available online and as a mobile app. It offers a user-friendly guide for both service members and veterans to rehabilitate common musculoskeletal injuries, such as knee and back pain, osteoarthritis, and osteoporosis, as well as postpartum recovery. Rx3 also allows users to navigate through a home-based exercise program to improve strength and mobility, and automatically track their progress, completed workouts, and pain improvement over time. Users can generate reports after their workouts that they can bring to their medical provider and include in their medical records.

"Over the past two years, our team of musculoskeletal experts has worked to make several updates to the immensely popular program," said Sarah de la Motte, scientific director of CHAMP's Injury Prevention Research Laboratory. "Having Rx3 available as an app is a game changer when it comes to expediting service members' and veterans' access to musculoskeletal rehabilitation tools and supplementing supervised physical therapy."

Rx3 was previously available as a download and print program that users could print and follow. To continue keeping up with the needs of active duty members and veterans, the program was expanded to include newer content, including additional components that now cover even more musculoskeletal conditions. The free app continues to offer medical providers resources as well, such as easy-to-follow decision guides, helping to rule out serious injuries that may require diagnostic imaging, specialist referral, or expert-guided rehabilitation. The app is available exclusively through the Human Performance Resources by CHAMP website, and works on all desktop and mobile devices. Once downloaded, it also functions without an internet connection, making it available in even the most austere environments.

VHA's Office of Women's Health women's musculoskeletal team collaborated with CHAMP to provide subject matter expertise and to ensure all content represents the diverse population of veterans.

"We are thrilled to have collaborated with the Consortium for Health and Military Performance to develop the Rehab, Refit, Return to Duty application," said Dr. Sally Haskell, who was part of the design and is now the acting chief officer of Women's Health at the Veterans Health Administration. "Our goal in sponsoring this effort was to update the previous version of Rx3 to better represent the diverse population that makes up our Veteran and military communities. The Rx3 program now also includes

musculoskeletal conditions that are common among women Veterans, such as osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, and new images and videos with a range of ages and ethnicities so that all of our users can see themselves.”

To learn more, and to access and download the program, visit HPRC-online.org/Rx3. to fill in gaps of proper healthcare between marginalized populations and those with adequate community resources.

###

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.