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Mobile app, interactive web-based tool launched to educate service members on unsafe dietary supplements

Bethesda, MD – A new mobile application and interactive web-based tool have been launched to help military troops identify unsafe dietary supplements that may jeopardize their health or career.

The mobile app, “Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) High-Risk Supplement List,” which is available for free on the Apple App and Google Play stores, helps users identify supplements that might be unsafe, illegal or banned, and pose a risk to their health, performance or career.

The educational module, “Get the Scoop on Supplements: Realize, Recognize, and Reduce Your Risk” is an interactive tool designed to provide science-based information on how Service members can minimize the potential adverse effects of taking some dietary supplements. It has three main segments: “Realize,” “Recognize,” and “Reduce the Risks,” and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. A module designed for health professionals will be released by the end of 2015.

Both tools were developed by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences’ (USU) Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP), a Department of Defense Center of Excellence, in partnership with the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, and are part of the “Operation Supplement Safety” (OPSS) campaign. The Army Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness program also provided support for the new products.

“More than 70% of active duty Service members take some type of supplement, and 20% of those take supplements deemed concerning by Federal regulators,” said Patricia Deuster, Ph.D., director of CHAMP. “Together, this suite of educational products available on the OPSS portal within CHAMP’s Human Performance Resource Center (www.hprc-online.org) website will help preserve the health, well-being, and readiness of Service members stationed in the U.S. or abroad.”

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The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), founded by an act of Congress in 1972, is 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. A large percentage of the university’s more than 5,300 physician and 700 advanced practice nursing alumni are supporting operations around the world, offering their leadership and expertise. USU also has graduate programs in biomedical sciences and public health committed to excellence in research, and in oral biology. The University’s research program covers a wide range of clinical and basic science important to both the military and public health. For more information, visit www.usuhs.edu.