



INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH SERVICES

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The Air Force medical forces provide seamless health service support to the Air Force and the joint force. They also assist in sustaining the performance, health, and fitness of every Airman at home station and while deployed within the continental United States (CONUS) or outside the CONUS (OCONUS) in support of global operations. This capability is summarized by the phrase “global medical readiness,” which includes the full spectrum of medical operations, including expeditionary deployment operations, humanitarian assistance, all-hazards response, and global health engagement to support building partnerships and stability operations. Components of this global system are fully integrated, with forward-deployed health services, and en route care to facilities providing comprehensive, definitive medical specialty care. As we continuously improve our medical capabilities and capacities, our ability to revolutionize health services and incorporate new concepts and technologies will identify the new best practices that shape future health service support. The range of military operations, from peacetime through large-scale combat operations, is always a consideration when determining the best practices for our Air Force; consideration of peer and near-peer competition is a continuing necessity for doctrine as the Air Force supports the joint fight. Every Airman is an innovator and is integral to this continuous development process – we must all connect, share, and learn together to succeed.

Air Force Health Services

The [Air Force Medical Service](#) (AFMS) ensures medically fit forces, provides expeditionary medics and improves the health of all we serve to meet our Nation’s needs. First, Air Force health services are focused on life-saving expeditionary medical support. They ensure rapid casualty stabilization, treatment, staging, and evacuation to definitive care, while maintaining the standard of care and providing en route patient safety. Air Force medical forces leverage speed, range, and flexibility by using hub and spoke operations to quickly form and maneuver customized medical capabilities to forward operating sites. Intertheater air mobility forces move cargo and personnel to arrive at an enduring location (hub) within a theater. Intratheater air mobility forces then move the cargo and personnel to contingency locations (spokes) in the theater. Before placing medical teams at airlift hubs, medical planners should consider the feasibility of the airlift web supporting the established hub and spoke operations. See [Fundamentals](#)

[of Air Force Health Service Support](#) for a detailed discussion of [Air Force medical forces support in joint operations](#), [patient movement](#), and [medical logistics](#).

Air Force medical forces consist of personnel from active duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard, as well as Air Force civilians, and contractors. Though regular, Reserve, and Guard medical forces are interoperable, each has distinctive mission areas. Command and organization of medical forces consist of both the internal command and operational relationships within the AFMS and the external command relationships for home station and expeditionary operations. See [Roles and Responsibilities](#) for detailed discussion of command and organization.

Health services provide force health protection, which is designed to support the combat force. These focal points promote and sustain a healthy and fit warfighter, prevent illness and injury, and provide casualty care and management. See [Force Health Protection](#) for in-depth discussion.

The global security environment is constantly evolving. No single nation can address every challenge and priority alone. With this in mind, the Air Force, as part of the joint force, actively partners with allies to further US and partner nation mutual interests. Air Force medical forces may be required to support stability operations, build partnerships, and improve partner capacity. They leverage military health engagement and training opportunities to enhance military capabilities necessary to achieve objectives for all operations. See [Health Support Operations](#) for in-depth discussion.

Responsive medical assistance within our borders is also vital to effective support of the Service as a whole. Air Force medical personnel support homeland operations as effectively as they do in an expeditionary environment. See [Home Station Planning and Execution](#) for in-depth discussion.
