Medical Home Port: A new approach to health care

By Richard McManus,
U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Public Affairs

The U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka Family Medicine Department held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the kick-off of their Medical Home Port model of care June 8.

Navy Medicine West Commander, Rear Adm. C. Forrest Faison III was on hand and took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony. In addition to USNH Yokosuka Family Medicine, and Pediatrics departments, Primary Care at the Branch Health Clinics in Atsugi and Iwakuni have implemented Medical Home Port, as well.. Internal Medicine and Branch Health Clinic Sasebo will soon follow suit.

Medical Home Port introduces a new model of patient and family-centered health care delivery for primary care.

This model of care improves access to quality care received by beneficiaries as well as patient satisfaction.

It emphasizes team based comprehensive care as well as the provider/patient relationship and is designed to fully meet the primary care health and wellness needs of the patient.

With Medical Home Port, patients will continue to be assigned a Primary Care Manager (PCM) but that provider will be part of a team.

The team consists of nurses, hospital corpsmen, support staff and ancillary services which manage clinic operations and basic patient care, allowing the provider to focus on diagnosing and treating patients.

One way Medical Home Port is improving the provider/patient relationships and patient satisfaction is through the implementation of an on-call Medical Home Port duty provider. The on-call provider is available to address after hours medical concerns.

"Every patient may not need to go to the Emergency Department (ED). In the past, that was the only option our patients had after hours." said Lt. Cmdr. Rebecca Navarrete, a Family Nurse Practitioner in the Family Medicine Department at USNH Yokosuka. "The on-call provider can assist patients in determining what the best course of action would be in a particular situation. If the patient needs medical advice or information, the on-call provider can save you a trip to the ED. If the situation calls for a visit to the ED, then the on-call provider will advise the patient of that option. In addition, the on-call provider can schedule the patient for a next-day, follow-up appointment with the appropriate Medical Home Port Team if necessary."

Another improvement is USNH Yokosuka On-line by RelayHealth. Patients accessing RelayHealth via USNH Yokosuka On-line now have the ability to email their provider, schedule appointments, request lab results, request medication renewal for expired prescriptions and access information to manage their health.

The system is designed to potentially save the patient an office visit by allowing them to manage non-urgent medical needs anytime, anywhere from any internet connection. To access USNH Yokosuka On-line, visit www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhyoko.

"Patient and family-centered care is at the core of our delivery of health care." said USNH Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Stephen Pachuta. "Medical Home Port enhances patient satisfaction by providing increased coordination and access to high quality care."

USNH Yokosuka is the largest U.S. military treatment facility on mainland Japan and serves approximately 55,000 beneficiaries.

A 47-bed core hospital in Yokosuka on the banks of Tokyo Bay is complimented by eight branch health clinics in Japan, Korea and Diego Garcia.

Commander, Navy Medicine West Rear Adm. C. Forrest Faison III and Family Medicine Nurse Practitioner Lt. Cmdr. Rebecca Navarrete, who is the Medical Home Port champion for U. S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka, cut a ribbon kicking off the Medical Home Port model of care in the USNH Yokosuka, Family Medicine Department June 8. Medical Home Port is a team based model of care which will improve access to care and improve overall patient satisfaction. USNH Yokosuka Family Medicine and Pediatrics departments, and Branch Health Clinics in Atsugi and Iwakuni have implemented Medical Home Port. Internal Medicine and Branch Health Clinic Sasebo will soon follow suit.

Photo by Tom Watanabe

Navy medicine seeks SARP counselor candidates

By Paul R. Dillard, Navy Medicine Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – Navy Medicine announced June 21 it is looking for E-5 through E-9 Sailors and Marines to become drug and alcohol counselors for the Navy and Marine Corps Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Program (SARP). SARP is a subordinate activity of the Navy Medicine Support Command.

Approved applicants attend an 11-week Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor School (NDACS) at the Surface Warfare Medical Institute in San Diego, and enter into a training pipeline that offers the potential for both Navy and international civilian certifications.

"We are looking for individuals who can really relate to other people," said Ted Judson, assistant department head for certification and contracts, NDACS. "We need candidates who have good active listening skills, can empathize well with others, who can be non-judgmental, and show warmth and positive regard for others."

NDACS students learn counseling skills and techniques, the integration of 12-step programs with bio-cycle, social and spiritual aspects of substance abuse and dependence.

Sailor and Marine applicants can be from any rating or Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), but must meet certain criteria, including having no record of non-judicial punishment for at least two years and must have stable personal affairs.

"Many students arrive with little or no exposure to work in mental health or substance abuse settings but have amazing treasures of life experiences, and end up leaving with profoundly altered views of the world around them – and of themselves," said Jerry Adams, a psychologist and clinical preceptor at NDACS. "They leave with skills that ready them for lifelong learning, which is so essential to success in this field."

NDACS is designed to provide training to military personnel who will eventually provide outreach, screening, assessment, and treatment of alcohol and other drug addictions for fellow Sailors and Marines. The school convenes a new class five times a year and is now accepting applications for its session that begins Oct. 4.

Students participate in a variety of classroom activities including didactic lectures and experiential activities. They go through a three-week practicum experience where they actually go into the field and work with drug and alcohol abusers in a treatment setting, before wrapping up their final week with information and readiness surrounding their internship. Practice council sessions are recorded so students can see themselves and evolve as counselors.

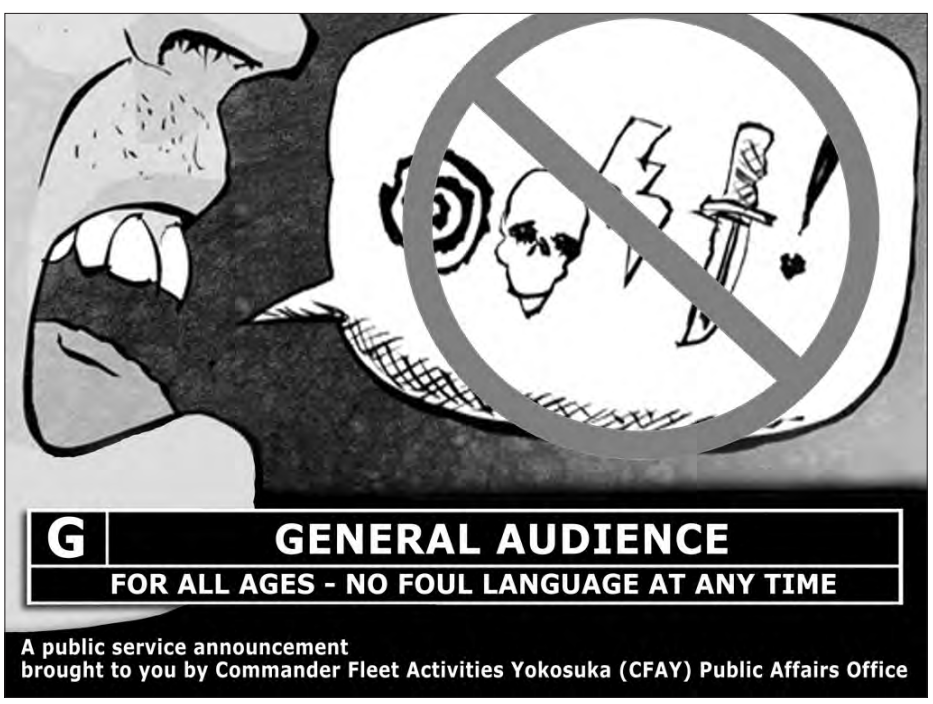
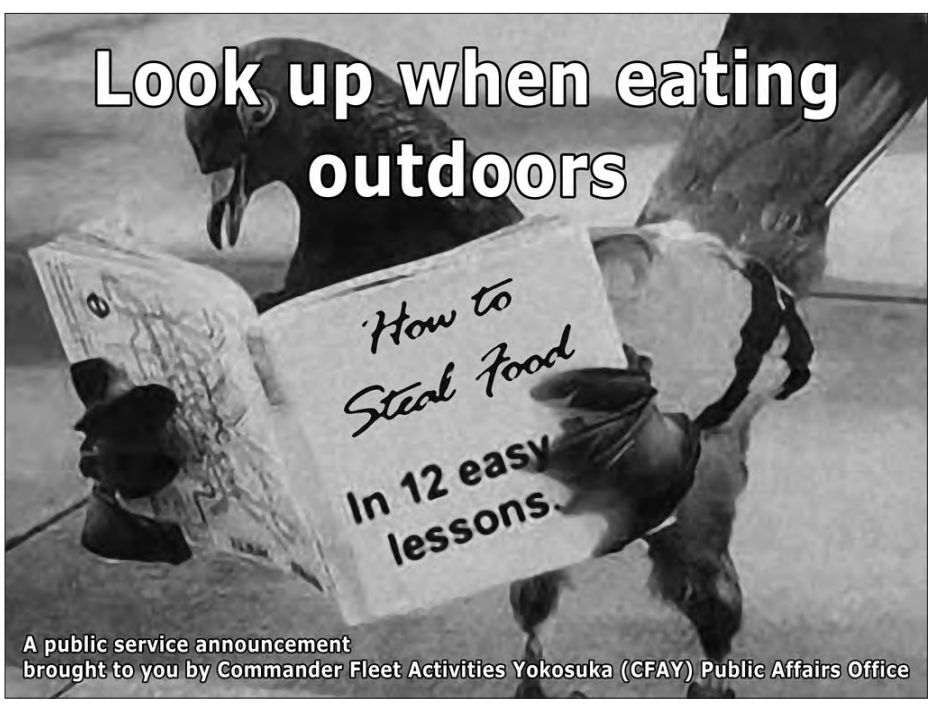
"There is no other Navy school like this, no other experience like this," said Judson. "If you want a challenge to reach out beyond what you are doing now, then try this on."

Once a candidate graduates NDACS, they enter a minimum one-year internship as a SARP counselor. After the first year, applicants take a certification exam, and if they pass, they are certified as a Navy Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC I).

After working in the profession for three years, they can apply and take an international certification exam that is recognized in 40 states, 14 countries and a number of federal-level certification boards. If they pass the exam, they receive an ADC II certification.

"Navy-trained counselors certified at the reciprocal level as ADC II are highly sought after in the civilian treatment community," said Judson. "Whoever the person is before they come into NDACS, they are better when they come out – better Sailors, better Marines, better spouses, better partners and better communicators. As drug and alcohol counselors, we do far more than just treat substance use disorders. The impact of what we do ripples out and affects work centers, squads, commands, as well as families and loved ones."

NDACS is staffed for class sizes of up to 40 students, but in recent years typical classes have had an average enrollment of 10-15 students, according to Judson.

"We would absolutely welcome another full class of 40 students, or even better - five classes of 40 students," said Judson.

For more information on board contact CFAY contact SARP Yokosuka Director John Baptiste by phone at 243-2623 or e-mail to john.baptiste@med.navy.mil.