Family Care Plan revised

By MCC(SW) Maria Yager, NPC Public Affairs

Navy officials announced revisions to its Family Care Plan policy, which includes a new deployment deferment option for eligible Sailors.

"Under the new policy, Sailors who are required to complete a family care plan and may be deployed to an area authorized imminent danger pay are allowed to request a deferment of deployment due to unforeseen circumstances," said Policy Coordinator Kathy Wells.

The change is a result of guidance from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), section 586, Family Care Plans and Deferment of Deployment of Single Parent or Dual Military Couples with Minor Dependents.

"Service members on active duty make requests for deferment to their commanding officer. Commanding officers can grant deferments for up to four months," said Wells.

The NDAA provides broad guidance and does not specifically define unforeseen circumstances, according to Wells.

More information can be found in the Family Care Plan instruction, OPNAVINST 1740.4D.

A Family Care Plan is a group of documents which identifies and outlines who will provide care for a Sailor's minor children in the event the Sailor is deployed.

Formal documentation of a Family Care Plan is required under any of the following conditions:

• A Sailor with primary or shared physical custody of a minor child or children who is not married to the other natural or adoptive parent of the minor child or children.

• Both members of a married dual-military couple where one or both have primary or shared physical custody of a minor child or children.

• Sailors who are legally responsible for an adult family member who is incapable of providing for themselves in the absence of the Sailor.

For more information, visit the Family Care Plans section at www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/CommunitySupportProgramPolicies/familycareplan.htm.

H1N1 vaccines crucial to fleet, family readiness

By U.S. Fleet Forces Public Affairs

HM2 Eric Pacheco administers the H1N1 flu vaccine to IC2 Stuart Ringrose at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Dec. 14. Together with the vaccine efforts, medical personnel Navywide are also helping disseminate information about the H1N1 flu virus and its prevention.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew R. White

Commands and medical clinics throughout U.S. Fleet Forces (USFF) continue to execute a strategy of information awareness and vaccination of personnel to fight against the H1N1 flu.

Currently, all active duty personnel and Department of Defense beneficiaries are eligible to receive the H1N1 vaccine. NAVADMIN 340/09 requires all commands to utilize the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System to report H1N1 vaccinations for all active duty, reserve, government civilian and contractor employees. The reporting of civilian and contractor employees is strictly voluntary.

"The vaccination program is going very well," said Rear Adm. Alton Stocks, USFF fleet surgeon. "In just the past two weeks we have made tremendous strides in getting the vaccine doses out to the fleet to our first priority group, which are deployers."

According to Stocks, afloat operational units and those ashore who are preparing to deploy are among the first to be receiving the vaccine, and deliveries to those units continue to arrive every day.

In order to detect early outbreaks of H1N1 flu, all influenza-like illnesses are monitored in the fleet and reported to Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC). NMCPHC collects data from the fleet as well as throughout the Navy and recommends appropriate interventions to mitigate further spread of the H1N1 flu. Influenza-like illnesses and H1N1 cases continue to decline throughout the fleet and Navywide according to Capt. Tina Davidson, USFF fleet nurse.

The symptoms of the H1N1 flu are almost the same as the seasonal flu: fever, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, muscle aches and feeling rundown. The 2009 H1N1 virus - formerly known as swine flu - is a pandemic virus, according to the World Health Organization. Officials urge people to take actions to mitigate the effects of it.

Together with the vaccine efforts, medical personnel Navywide are helping disseminate information about the flu and its prevention, such as staying home when sick, frequent hand-washing, and taking common sense precautions to stay healthy.

"The bottom line is we must get our Sailors who are on the front lines vaccinated in a timely manner, and that has been our number one priority." said USFF Fleet Medical Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Michael Hedden. "We're making great strides in fleet-wide distribution to ensure our ships remain mission ready."

Visit the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov, or the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center at http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/ for more information.

New Year's resolutions for a better financial future

By Michael J. Spiltener, Fleet and Family Support Center

'Tis the season for New Year's resolutions. Resolutions require self-regulation. That's the ability to restrain impulses that tempt us to choose immediate gratification such as chocolate, cigarettes, and buying on credit over longer-term goals, such as good health, financial well-being and stronger interpersonal relationships.

Self-regulation mainly involves four factors: controlling thoughts; controlling emotions; impulse control, or restraining desire; and performance control, which will enable yourself to persist when you feel like quitting.

The implications for people making a money resolution in the New Year are clear:

• Make it your only resolution.

• Write down your financial goal, with a specific plan for how you will achieve it. Post your goal where you will see it often.

• If your goal involves multiple decisions, break the process into small steps and commit to one step each week, making it a "to do" on your calendar, with a deadline.

• Monitor your goal: Write down what you spend daily for at least 30 days, noting what you bought, to get a good feeling of where your money is going. Do this even if you use debit or credit cards; or just commit to paying for purchases in cash for a month. If you're paying down debt, chart your progress in a graphic way.

• Limit your decision-making by automating your behavior. Have money for retirement, education, debt repayments or other goals automatically withdrawn from your paycheck or checking account on a monthly basis. If you're tempted by the delicacies at your grocery store, don't shop on an empty stomach and try not to go alone. When you have lunch outside the office, lock your wallet in your desk and take only enough money for food to prevent indulgence shopping.

• Remove emotion from the equation. Don't engage in retail therapy. When you feel bad, take a brisk walk, listen to a favorite CD, or call a sympathetic friend.

Here's the good news: will power is like a muscle – although it can be depleted in the short term, it's actually strengthened through regular exercise over the long term. That offers plenty of hope for people seeking to change their financial lives. So go for it in 2010, roar like a tiger.

Energy Management Course steers commands toward energy savings

By R. Inman, NAVFAC Public Affairs

More than 25 energy and utility managers representing 16 installations throughout the Far East and Guam participated in the Civil Engineer Corps Officer School Facilities Energy Management Course and Utilities and Energy Management (UEM) Workshop Dec. 14-18 aboard Fleet Activities Yokosuka.

The course provides fundamental energy management training and guidance on topics ranging from basic awareness, energy and water management practices and audits to projects and execution, use of Energy Star products and project designs, renewable energy and new technologies.

"There is no substitute for a well-trained, competent, dedicated installation energy manager and support personnel," said Energy Course Director and Naval Facilities Engineering Command Energy Training Coordinator Gil Siqueido.

In addition to the comprehensive course, the workshop enabled participants to draft energy and water use reduction plans to take back to their installations.

"One of the results of the course is the network created between the personnel in the region," Siqueido said. "This powerful network links experience and knowledge between many energy managers who are now able to help each other within the region."