



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 6 2021

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 1631 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 (Public Law 111-383), as amended by section 537 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021, requires the Secretary of Defense to submit to the Committees on the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual report on sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces during the preceding year, including reports from each of the Military Departments.

The enclosed "Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military" presents statistics and analysis of reports of sexual assault during FY 2020 and discusses policy and program improvements to the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. The numerical data and statistics contained in this report fulfill reporting requirements outlined in the NDAAs for FYs 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2021. Additionally, Annex 1 of the report provides the status on restricted reporting of Department of Defense (DoD) Federal civilian employees of sexual assault as suggested by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT: Guidance Needed to Ensure Consistent Tracking, Response, and Training for DoD Civilians, recommendation 12, GAO-21-113, February 2021.

The Department remains committed to providing Congress with an accurate assessment of sexual assault in the military. On September 17, 2020, we informed Congress that due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and related challenges, the Department postponed administering the scientific Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of the Active Duty Military (WGRA) that estimates the prevalence rate of sexual assault and sexual harassment within active duty, and assesses aspects of unit climate. Prevalence rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment obtained through the WGRA, had one been administered, would likely be skewed and difficult to interpret given the Department's social distancing, telework, and other pandemic-related operational changes. We have scheduled the next WGRA for later this FY, with results to be included in next year's report.

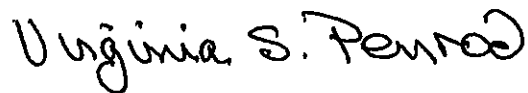
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largely because there were fewer reports from civilians alleging a sexual assault by a Service member.

The COVID-19 pandemic required all of us to change the way we work and live. Nevertheless, the Department continues to make meaningful progress in developing and executing policy and programs focused on preventing and responding to sexual assault. Despite our progress, sexual assault is still a risk for our Service members. We will not rest until we get our approach right. We will continue to work closely with experts both within and outside the DoD to field meaningful prevention programs, give our commanders and leaders the skills and assessment tools they need to counter sexual assault, improve our victim assistance and advocacy services, and hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members. I am sending similar letters to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia S. Penrod". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosures:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Ranking Member



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 6 2021

The Honorable Mark Takano
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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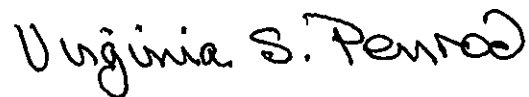
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Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosures:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Mike Bost
Ranking Member



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAY - 6 2021

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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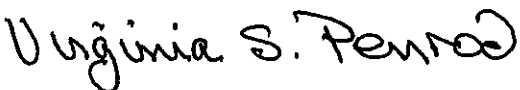
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Sincerely,



Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosures:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member



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MAY - 6 2021

The Honorable John Tester
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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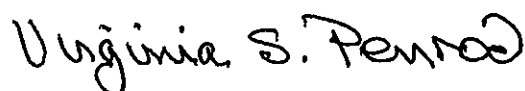
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Sincerely,



Virginia S. Penrod
Acting

Enclosures:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member



Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military

Fiscal Year 2020





*Department of Defense
Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military
Fiscal Year 2020*

The estimated cost of this report for the Department of Defense is approximately \$1,240,000 for the 2020 Fiscal Year. This includes \$313,000 in expenses and \$927,000 in labor.

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REPORTING REQUIREMENT:

- Congress requires the Department to provide an annual report on sexual assault involving members of the United States Armed Forces. This report satisfies that requirement.
- The Department uses the term “sexual assault” to refer to a range of crimes, including rape, sexual assault, forcible sodomy, aggravated sexual contact, abusive sexual contact, and attempts to commit these offenses, as defined in military law.

THIS YEAR’S FINDINGS:

- The coronavirus pandemic led the Department to postpone the active-duty sexual assault prevalence survey for 2020.
- The total number of sexual assault reports received by the Department (7,816) decreased by nine reports, compared to the previous Fiscal Year (7,825). The decrease was due to fewer reports from civilians against Service members as alleged offenders and fewer reports from Service members about pre-service incidents.

Continued on the next page

The complete report is available online at sapr.mil.

Introduction

This year’s Annual Report provides an update on the Department’s efforts to counter sexual assault and harassment in the military force, and includes sexual assault reporting information and updates on efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 (FY20; October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020).

The Department of Defense (DoD) is determined to further develop and maintain a military culture free from sexual assault and sexual harassment. All Service members deserve to work and live in a respectful, inclusive environment while serving our Nation. Each year, the Department uses this report to document its progress toward these goals.

Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Along with the entire Nation, DoD experienced a significant change in work and lifestyle in FY20 with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Service personnel and Department employees experienced disruptions in almost every aspect of daily living. Nevertheless, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocates (SAPR VA) remained available to support victims of sexual assault throughout the year. To make this happen, the Department and Military Services quickly pivoted delivery of victim assistance to virtual means. In addition, the Department re-issued key reporting documentation so that forms could be electronically signed by Service members and response personnel. Equally important, the Department increased its media presence to publicize the change in approach and the availability of DoD Safe Helpline (SHL) throughout the year to continue reporting and service delivery to all seeking assistance with an experience of sexual assault. SHL subsequently experienced a 35 percent increase in visitors using its website compared to FY19. In sum, Department personnel worked very hard to ensure that everyone who requested assistance received it.

Workplace and Gender Relations Survey Postponed

The Department delayed the scheduled administration of the *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members* (WGRA) to FY21. This scientific survey estimates the prevalence of sexual assault

FY20 ACTIVITIES:

- The Department and Military Services quickly pivoted to provide and publicize victim assistance throughout the pandemic. DoD Safe Helpline saw a considerable surge in online users seeking support and assistance.
- The Department revised the Defense Organizational Climate Survey to better assess unit strengths and challenges, and risk and protective factors for a variety of readiness detracting behaviors.
- Growing the DoD's prevention capabilities remained a primary focus. The Services and National Guard continued their efforts to address the gaps in prevention personnel, resourcing, and infrastructure identified in 2019. Prevention capability remains "early," but the Military Services reported modest growth.

WAY FORWARD:

- On February 26, 2021, the Secretary of Defense directed new initiatives to counter sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military:
 - Establish a 90-day Independent Review Commission to improve how the Department addresses sexual assault and sexual harassment
 - Assess compliance with sexual assault and harassment policies and prevention efforts
 - Conduct evaluations at high-risk installations
 - Establish a violence prevention workforce

and sexual harassment among active duty Service members, and assesses aspects of unit climate. Given the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and required response measures, the Department believed the estimated prevalence rates obtained in FY20 would be difficult to interpret. The Department provided official notice of the postponement in a memorandum to Congress on September 17, 2020 and plans to field the survey this fall.

Fiscal Year 2020 Reporting Requirements

The Department is required to submit an Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military by April 30th each year to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives. This report covers sexual assault allegations made during FY20. Enclosed with this report are concurrent reports from the Department of the Army (Enclosure 1), Department of the Navy (Enclosure 2), Department of the Air Force (Enclosure 3), and the National Guard Bureau (NGB; Enclosure 4). The FY20 report also serves as the Department's assessment of the Military Services' prevention and response efforts from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

Fiscal Year 2020 Focus Areas

On February 26, 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin committed to addressing sexual assault and harassment in the military and directed new initiatives to counter sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military. This included:

- Establish a 90-day Independent Review Commission (IRC) to improve how the Department addresses sexual assault and sexual harassment
- Assess compliance with sexual assault and harassment policies and prevention efforts
- Conduct evaluations at high-risk installations
- Establish a violence prevention workforce

These efforts complemented and enhanced prior direction, which informed the Department's FY20 efforts. Specifically, in May 2019, then-Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan issued a "Call to Action" memorandum to focus Department actions on addressing sexual assault and related risk factors, such as sexual harassment, workplace incivility, and gender discrimination. The "Call to Action" memorandum directed the Department and Military Services to act on the following items:

- Provide commanders with improved assessment tools and address risk factors in military units
- Implement the CATCH a Serial Offender Program (CATCH) to help address barriers to reporting sexual assault
- Prepare new leaders and first-line supervisors to act upon misconduct that heightens risk
- Implement recommendations from the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force (SAITF) Report to improve accountability, comprehensive support to victims, and protection of rights for both the victim and accused
- Execute the Prevention Plan of Action (PPoA) to ensure initiatives that reduce and stop sexual assault have the best chance for success

The Department focused much of its FY20 effort in this mission space to continue implementing these directives. Updates on many of the actions taken are provided in the following areas:

- Sexual Assault Reporting
- Unit Climate
- Sexual Assault Prevention
- Victim Assistance

Sexual Assault Reporting

The Department encourages greater reporting to promote more help-seeking by Service members and hold alleged offenders appropriately accountable. The number of sexual assault reports by Service members for incidents that occurred during military service increased by 1 percent (54 reports) in FY20, compared to FY19. The Military Services received 6,290 such sexual assault reports in FY20, an increase from 6,236 in FY19 (see Exhibit 1). No reporting rate can be calculated this year due to the postponement of the prevalence survey until fall 2021.

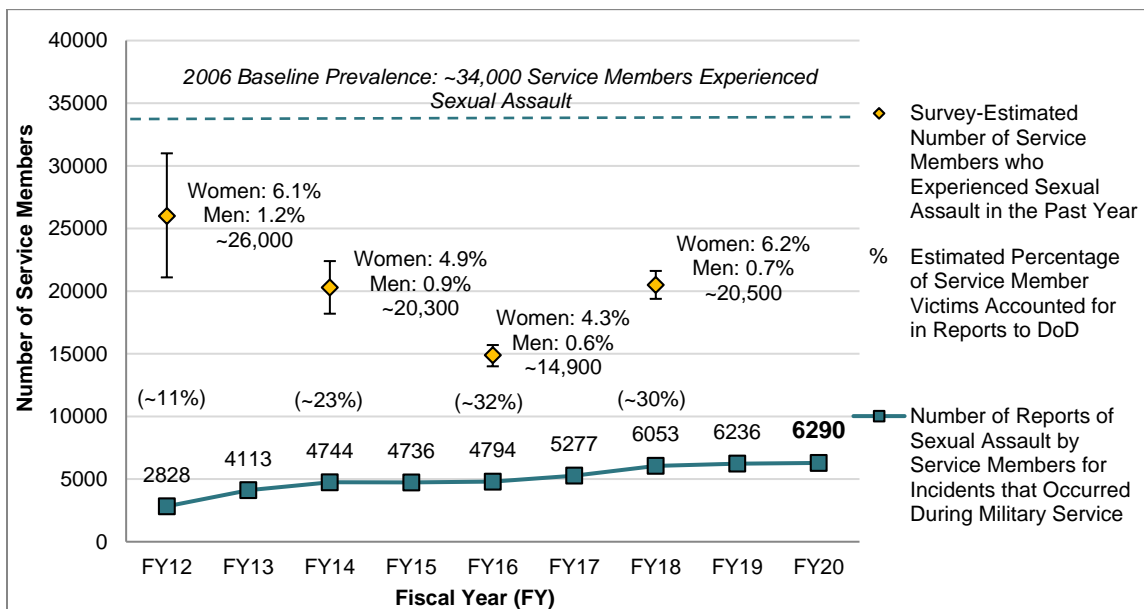


Exhibit 1. Active Duty Estimated Biennial Prevalence Compared to Annual Reporting of Sexual Assault

In total, the Department received 7,816 reports of sexual assault involving Service members as victims and/or subjects, nine less than the 7,825 reports received in FY19. In addition to the 6,290 Service member reports described previously, the Department received an additional 912 reports from United States civilians and foreign nationals who alleged a sexual assault by a Service member, and 614 reports from Service members who sought assistance for a sexual assault that occurred prior to military service. Table 1 illustrates the changes within reporting categories between FY19 and FY20.

Table 1. Reporting Category Comparisons, FY19 and FY20

Type of Report	FY19	FY20	+/- Δ
Service member reports for an incident <i>during</i> military service	6,236	6,290	+54
Service member reports for an incident <i>prior to</i> military service	652	614	-38
Civilian and foreign national reports against Service members	937	912	-25
Total	7,825	7,816	-9

CATCH a Serial Offender Program

The Department launched CATCH in 2019, allowing Service members making Restricted Reports the opportunity to confidentially provide information about alleged offenders and incidents. If investigators discover a potential match to other reported incidents, victims are notified and provided an opportunity to convert their report from Restricted to Unrestricted and participate in the military justice process.

This FY, CATCH received 444 submissions from victims who had previously filed a Restricted Report. As of September 30, 2020, these submissions resulted in 11 matches. Since its launch in August 2019, CATCH has received 636 victim submissions resulting in 25 matches.

Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force Recommendations Implementation

In FY20, the Department continued implementing the 22 recommendations from the 2019 SAAITF Report. To date, seven of the 22 recommendations have been completed:

- Drafting and posting for public comment in the Federal Register a proposed Executive Order establishing a specific crime of sexual harassment under Article 134, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
- Drafting and posting for public comment in the Federal Register a proposed Executive Order expanding judicial authorities to adjudicate pre-referral matters
- Issuing guidance to commanders to keep victims informed of their case's progress in the military justice process
- Developing and enhancing the training and education of Sexual Assault Initial Disposition Authorities
- Extending the Defense Advisory Committee on the Investigation, Prosecution, and Defense of Sexual Assault in the Armed Forces for another 5-year term
- Modifying applicable Military Service instructions to incorporate Special Victim Investigation and Prosecution Capability within the investigative process
- Protecting the confidentiality of information within CATCH

Department stakeholders took action to implement the remaining 15 recommendations in 2020. As of the publication of this report, nine recommendations are on track for completion on time, with the other six in progress but delayed due to the pandemic or other logistical reasons. The full task force report describing all 22 initiatives is available at <https://www.sapr.mil/other-government-reports>.

Unit Climate

The Department focuses on military climate and culture because over a decade of research concludes that respectful and healthy workplace climates reduce the risk of sexual assault.

Fiscal Year 2020 Actions

Provide Commanders with Improved Means to Assess and Address Risk Factors

At the heart of promoting healthy unit climates is the need to provide commanders and leaders with tools to evaluate and address these challenges. Accordingly, the Department's primary assessment tool for assessing unit climate, the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), underwent significant revision in FY20. The Office of People Analytics took action on three lines of effort, including developing a new DEOCS portal, creating new survey content, and designing a dashboard to display survey results. The new survey administration portal launched on July 28, 2020, alongside a beta version of the dashboard, allowing leaders to view survey results or download their units' results into a printable format. The new survey became available to units in January 2021.

Prepare New Leaders and First-Line Supervisors to Promote Respectful Unit Climates

Last year, the Department worked with the Junior Leader Working Group (JLWG), comprised of Military Service and NGB stakeholders, to identify the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to prepare junior leaders to encourage a positive workplace climate and understand their role in sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. The driving factor behind the JLWG is survey data which show the risk of sexual assault and other misconduct is highest among the 17 to 24-year-old demographic. Front-line supervisors and new leaders have the most contact with Service members at greatest risk and play a critical role in setting the correct workplace tone. This year, the Services reviewed the learning objectives identified by the JLWG and began updating their relevant courses of instruction within professional military education programs and training activities. The Military Services are required to submit their after action reports by April 2021 describing the activities they undertook to improve junior leader education and training.

Sexual Assault Prevention

The Department works to prevent sexual assault to reduce the crime's toll on human lives, improve mission readiness, enhance recruitment and retention, and strengthen international alliances.

Fiscal Year 2020 Actions

Execute the Prevention Plan of Action

The Department's PPOA provides a framework for the necessary steps to advance primary prevention within DoD and reduce the occurrence of sexual assault. The PPOA is being implemented in four phases. Phase 1, completed in 2019, required the Department, Military Services, and NGB to conduct a self-assessment of their headquarters' prevention capabilities. The self-assessment highlighted strengths in leadership support and collaborative relationships. Gaps from the assessment included the need for an equipped and empowered prevention workforce and metrics that assess the quality, implementation, and effectiveness of prevention activities.

In FY20, the Department, Military Services, and NGB completed Phase 2 of the Plan, which involved developing a plan of action and milestones for addressing the gaps identified in Phase 1. In addition, the Department helped the Military Services and NGB prepare to execute the Plan's Phases 3 and 4 (implementation and evaluation, respectively) by providing technical assistance throughout the year.

Sexual Assault Prevention through Integrated Violence Prevention

Under the leadership of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency, the Prevention Collaboration Forum brings together leaders and data from diverse programs that address sexual assault, sexual harassment, self-harm, domestic abuse, and other readiness detracting behaviors. The Forum focuses on policy actions to address the full spectrum of violence prevention, as well as assessment and evaluation of such efforts. The Director of the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) serves on the Executive Council of the Prevention Collaboration Forum and through this integrated body, the Department issued the first ever integrated violence prevention policy in FY20. Informed by the latest evidence in the field, this policy creates a Department-wide unity of effort across prevention programs and policies; establishes a common, research-based framework for violence prevention; and focuses prevention efforts on those activities that have the greatest potential to reduce multiple forms of violence impacting the military community.

The integrated violence prevention policy leverages approaches from military and civilian settings that have demonstrated cross-cutting prevention effects. This policy covers several critical elements and requires the Department to field prevention personnel who are equipped to carry out prevention activities across the continuum of readiness detracting behaviors. It also directs targeted prevention efforts for those personnel at highest risk and eliminates "one-size-fits-all" approaches. The policy further expands prevention activities to better address critical risk factors (e.g., unhealthy coping strategies, poor communication, unhealthy relationship behaviors).

Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

As required by the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Department established the Defense Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct. The Department completed the committee's Charter, Membership Balance Plan, and identified a Designated Federal Officer to support the committee. The Advisory Committee, which was formally established on November 30, 2020, will provide independent advice and

recommendations on the prevention of sexual assault and related behaviors involving members of the armed forces.

Prevention Plan of Action Execution

Prevention Plan of Action Prevention Process Initiatives

Data Snapshot Tool

Program evaluation is a key component of any successful prevention strategy as it helps determine which programs are working and whether any changes are needed. DoD developed and disseminated the Data Snapshot Tool and Guidebook to support prevention practitioners across the Military Departments and NGB in carrying out basic evaluations for programs related to sexual assault and harassment prevention.

Getting to Outcomes®

Getting to Outcomes® is a prevention tool that uses a 10-step process to enhance existing prevention programs. The Department continues to work with RAND developers to identify, enhance, evaluate, and sustain prevention programs at sites around DoD, including at the Military Service Academies. In FY20, participating sites advanced their prevention work by moving through the Getting to Outcomes process. Multiple sites moved to the evaluation phase, while others experienced delays in implementing in-person prevention activities due to social distancing and remote work environments. However, the Getting to Outcomes process was used to trouble shoot and adjust plans based on these limitations, which enables sites to move forward in executing prevention plans.

Victim Assistance

The Department enacts policies to promote high-quality services and support to military victims of sexual assault that are intended to strengthen resiliency and instill confidence and trust in the reporting process.

Fiscal Year 2020 Actions

Response to the coronavirus pandemic required the Department to quickly pivot from in-person meetings with victims to providing assistance via telephone or virtual means. SAPRO provided the Military Services and NGB with recommended guidelines for achieving the shift to measures that respected physical distancing requirements. Despite this rapid change, the Military Services and NGB reported continuity of services for victims. In addition, the Military Services provided comprehensive, remote response resources for members to leverage while mitigating in-person contact restrictions.

Mitigating the Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Reporting and Victim Assistance

As the Nation instituted physical distancing requirements for the coronavirus pandemic, DoD SAPRO increased efforts to encourage use of the SHL and other telephonic and internet resources. The Department expanded outreach efforts throughout the year to publicize the continuity of services for victims. DoD SAPRO also sponsored a surge in SHL social media advertising during the summer and early fall. This surge strategy continued to remind the

military community of the range of services and help available via the SHL. During the time of the media surge, post engagement rates (e.g., clicks, shares, “likes”) increased by 10 percent on Twitter and by 42 percent on Facebook. In addition, the number of online SHL visitors increased by 35 percent from FY19 to FY20. Additional information about the increased usage of SHL is in Appendix E.

Actions Addressing Retaliation for Sexual Assault Reporting

On October 15, 2019, then-acting Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) James Stewart signed a policy memorandum with specific actions for the Department, Military Services, and NGB to take regarding retaliation allegations associated with sexual assault reporting, as directed by §543 of the FY17 NDAA. The memorandum directed that SARCs or SAPR VAs assist reporters in documenting an official retaliation report using Department of Defense (DD) Form 2910-2, “Retaliation Reporting Statement for Unrestricted Sexual Assault Cases.” Persons eligible to file a DD Form 2910-2 include: adult sexual assault victims who have previously made an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault; sexual assault victims’ adult family members; witnesses; bystanders (who intervened); the SARC or SAPR VA supporting the case; responders; and other parties to the incident (e.g., friend, co-worker). In accordance with the law, retaliation reports can also be filed outside the SAPR Program. SARCs and SAPR VAs provide assistance to retaliation reporters who submit DD 2910-2 forms (or request referrals) and must facilitate the retaliation allegation referral to the appropriate DoD authority. The DD Form 2910-2 will be completed and uploaded into the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID) within 48 hours of the receipt of the report. The SARC or SAPR VA will track the retaliation report in DSAID until case disposition is completed. If the retaliation reporter chooses, the status of a retaliation case will be discussed at monthly SAPR Case Management Group (CMG) meetings.

Expansion of the Expedited Transfer Procedures

An expedited transfer is an option allowing victims who file an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault to request a transfer to a new duty location or installation to promote recovery and healing. In November 2019, the Department updated guidance to expand expedited transfer eligibility and procedures. The new guidance improved victim safety measures and continuity of care. Further, the expedited transfer policy allows Service members to request a transfer if their adult dependent makes an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault that is not domestic abuse related.

The Establishment of a Quarterly Case Management Group Meeting to Enhance Victim Safety and Response System Coordination

In November 2019, the Department directed that senior installation commanders hold quarterly CMG meetings to review and improve the efficiency and operation of the installation’s response system. The quarterly CMG Meetings address the following topics: system coordination challenges among CMG members; timely victim access to medical, mental health, advocacy, legal, spiritual, and other services within the installation and through established agreements with external civilian agencies; High Risk Response Team and other organizational responses to victim safety issues; retaliation allegation reporting and other associated data; timeliness of moves after expedited transfer approvals; resource sharing in joint environments; tenant command concerns; and reporting and service access trends for the installation. This is a separate discussion from individual case management oversight (which occurs at the monthly

CMG meetings) and no information directly related to Unrestricted Reports and/or specific victims is discussed to protect victim privacy.

“Preservation of Restricted Report Option for Adult Sexual Assault Victims,” Congressional Report

Section 540K of the FY20 NDAA required the submission of a report on the advisability of a policy for the Department that preserves recourse to a Restricted Report on sexual assault for victims, following certain victim or third-party communications. The Department notified Congress through this report of its decision to update its policy and expand eligibility for Restricted Reporting. The Department recommended such a policy change in SAAITF Recommendation 2.2. The Department plans to issue further guidance in FY21 to capture the policy decisions in the §540K report provided to Congress in June 2020.

Publication of a Final Rule in the Federal Register

After a multi-year effort, the Department published a Final Rule for the SAPR Program in the Federal Register, under 10 CFR Part 103, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program." DoD finalized two interim final rules in a single final rule which deleted all guidance internal to DoD, and incorporated only those policy provisions directly affecting the Department's obligations to provide SAPR services to certain members of the public who are adult victims of sexual assault. This revision also makes SAPR policy updates as required by legal mandates. The final rule became effective on August 14, 2020. This final rule is available in the Federal Register, Volume 85, No. 136, July 15, 2020, Rules and Regulations, page 42707.

Responding to Sexual Assault of Military Men

In coordination with the Military Services, the Department developed a communications toolkit and an outreach campaign to assist the Military Services with messaging about the sexual assault of military men. In addition, the Department developed a plan for an outreach campaign to help key audiences understand more about sexual assaults of military men as well as encourage reporting of those who might have been victims. The Department intends to further develop the outreach campaign in FY21 to encourage greater assistance seeking by military men coping with an experience of sexual assault.

Safe Helpline

The SHL continued to support Service members throughout FY20 as the Department's anonymous, confidential hotline for victims of sexual assault. SHL hosted 68 total in-person and virtual events, distributed over 500,000 promotional materials, and continued to expand outreach efforts. SHL also launched two new initiatives: a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) video (online at: <https://safehelpline.org/SAFE>) and a self-paced online module, *Brainstorming to Support Healing*. The SAFE video provides victims of sexual assault in the DoD community with information on how the exam is conducted. The brainstorming module helps victims identify their own strengths and options for next steps in their healing process.

Oversight Program Expansion

Although the Department has an oversight process for monitoring compliance with SAPR program requirements, SAPRO recognized the need for greater assessment of program

execution within the DoD and military Services. In FY20, SAPRO worked to detail two Commissioned Officers of the U.S. Public Health Service to lead efforts to proactively identify gaps and challenges in the implementation and execution of SAPR policies and programs. Through this approach the office developed a Concept of Operations and an Oversight Management Challenges document. The Military Services and NGB, along with SAPRO, collaboratively identified focus areas for assessment and potential improvement. Next steps include developing and executing plans to work in selected focus areas in FY21.

Way Forward

The Department continues to address sexual assault holistically by advancing prevention, addressing problematic culture, improving the skills of leaders at all levels, and evaluating ways to make reporting of sexual assault easier and safer for victims.

Secretary of Defense Immediate Actions

To ensure action in this space, the Department was tasked on February 26, 2021 by the Secretary of Defense to take the following immediate actions:

Assessing Compliance with Sexual Assault and Harassment Policies and Integrated Violence Prevention Efforts. This assessment will review execution of DoD prevention and response policies by the Services. In line with this action, the Military Departments and NGB will submit a summary of compliance findings in June 2021.

Conducting Evaluations at High Risk Installations. The Department will be conducting a Department-wide climate survey to assess strengths and challenges throughout the active and reserve force. Using survey results and other data, the Department will identify installations with elevated risk as well as those installations showing promise in their climate results. The Department will then conduct on-site visits to a combination of both higher and lower risk installations in the summer of 2021 to identify key differences and opportunities for targeted assistance.

Establishing a Violence Prevention Workforce. DoD must identify and resource personnel whose duties are dedicated to the prevention of interpersonal violence and self-harm. By October 1, 2021, the Military Departments will provide reports on their workforce distribution, staffing, and planned resourcing. Additionally, by June 2022, Military Departments will train their identified workforce.

Establishment of the Secretary of Defense's Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault and Harassment in the Military

In addition to the immediate actions, the Secretary directed the creation of a 90-Day IRC to examine military sexual assault and harassment. The IRC's recommendations will guide the Department's approach to reducing, stopping, and responding to sexual assault. The Commission is acting along four lines of effort: accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support. As such, the IRC will examine the role of the UCMJ in building trust and encouraging reporting. Related to prevention, the Commission will conduct a comprehensive assessment of ongoing prevention efforts and will identify gaps in activities. It will also review evidence-based approaches to improve unit climate and culture. For the last

line of effort, the Commission will conduct a review of both clinical and non-clinical victim services, such that those processes can be improved where necessary.

The combination of the Immediate Actions and the work of the IRC will provide the Department with a holistic assessment and evaluation of sexual assault and harassment activities and guide the way forward. On his second day in office, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin released a powerful and targeted memo describing the effort required to eradicate sexual misconduct from the Department. Secretary Austin's words highlight the breadth and importance of DoD SAPRO's mission. Protecting all those who serve our Nation from sexual assault and sexual harassment is not an option, it is a moral imperative. Our Service members deserve to serve in an environment of respect and dignity. In the words of Secretary of Defense Austin, "We must do more. All of us."

