

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NATIONAL SECURITY

Strategies for ensuring readiness lethality, and longevity among our nation's current, future, and former service members.

PROBLEMS

1. RECRUITMENT:

- Physical inactivity and obesity levels of American youth are on the rise.
- **Only 41% of young adults (aged 17–24 years) are adequately physically active and weight-eligible for military training.**

2. READINESS AND RETENTION:

- Musculoskeletal injuries (MSKIs) are strongly correlated with low physical fitness.
- **MSKIs cause 25 million days of limited duty, costing the Department of Defense (DoD) \$3.7 billion annually.**
- Obesity prevalence among active component service members increased 20% from 2014-2020, while 22% of Army National Guard Members were categorized as obese in 2020.

3. RETIREMENT:

- **MSKIs are the most common medical condition among Veterans** of recent military operations.
- Veterans have significantly higher rates of chronic physical and mental illness compared to general population.

SOLUTIONS

- **Implement recommendations from the Military Settings Sector** of the U.S. National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP), along with its other nine sectors:
 - Opportunity to get “left and right of bang” (address the issue upstream and downstream).
 - Aligns with the current U.S. National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy.
 - Directly supports current Lines of Effort within the DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **Increase coordinated efforts** across government, industry, and academia to address low physical activity and its impact on multiple domains of fitness and health.

RESULTS OF INACTION

- **Decreased readiness and lethality** for fighting near peer threats.
- **Continued decline in quality and quantity of life** among Veterans.
- **Unsustainable costs** for treating largely preventable physical and mental conditions.