

# The OWRC Briefing Board

The Newsletter of Ohio Western Reserve Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America

April 2024 | VOLUME 24 ISSUE 4 | OWRC.NET AND MOAA.ORG

For questions contact the Chapter President and Webmaster at [andy@andrewemanuele.com](mailto:andy@andrewemanuele.com)



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From National MOAA

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**President's Notes** We still need a nominee for 2nd Vice President. This is a very good way to learn how the Chapter works and to ease yourself into helping run it. We also need a Newsletter Editor, a Photographer, and a ROTC/JROTC Liaison. Please contact me if you are interested.

April is also the time of our **ROTC/JROTC Recognition and Awards Banquet** for local ROTC and JROTC Detachments. This Banquet is one of the most important things the Chapter does all year. We can have an impact on future officers. The success of the Banquet depends on participation and support from the chapter members. Please look at the information on the OWRC website and consider helping the Chapter. <https://owrc.net/events/?event=814>

**Summit County Stand Down** is now called Veterans Appreciation Day. This year it will happen on Tuesday, 10 September 2024, from 9AM to 3PM at Guy's Party Center, 500 E. Waterloo Rd, Akron, OH 44319. It is for both men and women Vets and includes VA Screening and help to apply for benefits. Stand Down will include a Foot and Eye Clinic, HIV Screening, Blood pressure Screening, Mental health, and Flu Shots (if available). If want to volunteer to help or donate, the next training day is 10 September at 1PM. Contact them at <https://summitcountystanddown.org>

**MOAA is changing the Service Center hours** to more closely align with MOAA core operating hours. The intent is to better serve our members and sustain our high level of customer satisfaction rates. Beginning, Monday, April 8, the new Member Service Center hours will be Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Eastern. Additional information is available here: [MSC Hours Guidance.pdf](#)

And don't forget our weekly lunches, 1130 every Wednesday at Michaels' s AM, 1562 Akron Peninsula Rd, Akron, OH 44313. Across the road from PaPa Joe's

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## White House Budget Request Offers Good News for TRICARE Beneficiaries

*By: Karen Ruedisueli*

The FY 2025 DoD budget proposal includes no mention of TRICARE cost-sharing requirements or other fee increases – good news for beneficiaries, as past TRICARE fee increase proposals have originated with the annual budget request.

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The [White House budget](#), released March 11, includes a Unified Medical Budget (UMB) request of \$61.4 billion, up 4.6% from the FY 2024 budget request. The UMB is made up of several accounts within the annual defense appropriations bill including Operations and Maintenance (O&M), MILPERS (funding for military personnel operating the MHS), and MILCON, which funds Military Health System (MHS) construction projects.

The request for the Defense Health Program (DHP) sits at \$40.3 billion, up from \$38.4 billion in the FY 2024 request. DHP, a sub-account of O&M, funds MHS functions such as health care delivery in military treatment facilities (MTFs); TRICARE; certain medical readiness activities and expeditionary medical capabilities; and education and training programs.

DHP spending growth is driven predominantly by MTF investment designed to sustain direct care capabilities and modernize electronic health records/digital health. Within the FY 2025 DHP request, \$20.6 billion, or 51%, is for purchased care via TRICARE.

## ‘Strategic Imperative’

The budget narrative underscores the updated MHS strategy to restore MTF capacity, reattract beneficiaries to the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics, and increase opportunities to sustain uniformed medical provider clinical readiness.

“We recognize a strategic imperative to rebuild our military and civilian medical workforce and resource the MHS,” [the budget overview states](#). “The DoD leadership determined the most effective way to take care of our people, support the National Defense Strategy, increase clinical readiness, mitigate risks to requirements, and reduce long-term cost growth in private sector care is to reattract beneficiaries to Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) and maximize medical education and training pipelines.”

The budget document also provides an update on past medical billet cut proposals, an initiative [MOAA successfully advocated to halt](#) in several consecutive defense authorization bills. DoD has suspended planned clinical military medical end strength divestitures and will use this congressionally directed pause to conduct an assessment of current military medical end strength to match operational requirements.

Following this assessment, DoD will submit a report to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees that certifies the completion of a comprehensive review of military medical Manning and justification for any proposed changes to the composition of military medical end strength. The report will include plans to address civilian backfill and persistent civilian vacancies or risks associated with the planned reductions.

As the FY 2025 NDAA process moves forward, MOAA remains focused on legislation and congressional oversight that will ensure beneficiaries have access to quality care as DoD implements the new MHS stabilization strategy. Please watch your MOAA newsletter and our [Advocacy News page](#) for opportunities to support our efforts through MOAA’s [Legislative Action Center](#).

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## State of the Coast Guard: 'We Cannot Do the Same With Less'

By: Mark Belinsky

The Coast Guard's funding will cover only half its maintenance requirements in the coming year, the service's top officer said in the annual State of the Coast Guard speech – a familiar situation for all who serve and one that will have ripple effects for the ongoing recruiting crisis.

"The quality of our facilities and ships not only impacts mission readiness; it is an important factor potential recruits think about when they consider Coast Guard service," Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan said during the March 20 address to lawmakers at the Cannon House office building. "And recruiting is critical to operational readiness."

Fagan did suggest the service will be scaling back some operations in the face of the funding and end strength challenges.

"Like the other branches of the armed forces, the Coast Guard is experiencing a personnel shortfall," she said. "The service cannot maintain the same level of operations with this gap. We cannot do the same with less."

Despite inadequate funding, the Coast Guard has adapted with modern talent management investments that have helped it continue its global work to partner with nations under the larger Indo-Pacific strategy, interdict narcotics, and save nearly 5,000 lives.

Innovation through the service's talent management task force has resulted in reforms to training and talent acquisition. Assessments of existing personnel skills are now evaluated before training and have resulted in the service delivering trained petty officers 31% faster to the force. The [Scout Talent and Refer \(STAR\) program](#) also embraces the ability for current servicemembers and retirees to find talent for the service; a referral by a retiree or servicemember can also come with a \$1,000 cash incentive.

Such referrals have a higher training completion rate, according to a Coast Guard senior leader. It should come as no surprise that retirees are good at spotting those with the aptitude and character fit for service. Along with attributes that indicate such potential, there is also the added bonus of coaching and mentoring provided by these retirees.

The cash incentive is an innovative way for the Coast Guard to leverage retirees to support the total force ... and possibly a model for DoD to consider.

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## VA Joins New Program to Support Military Spouse Hiring

By: Kevin Lilley

The VA became the latest employer to join a new program designed to boost military spouse hiring – and the department has a lot of room to grow.

Of the VA's 50,240 new hires in FY 2021 – the last year for which figures are [immediately available](#) – just 68, or 0.13%, were military spouses. That's down from 0.22% the previous year and falls well behind the FY 2021 DoD total (2.71%) and that year's executive branch agency average (0.90%).

Part of the department's work to improve this figure includes participating in the [4+1 Commitment](#), a program led by Blue Star Families and Hiring Our Heroes where participating employers commit to at least one of the following ways to help military spouses:

- Facilitate job transferability
- Offer remote or telework
- Offer flexible work hours
- Provide paid PCS leave

Participants also would consider joining an existing government spouse employment program – the "+1" part of the program. The VA has been part of one of those programs, the [Military Spouse Employment Partnership](#), since 2019.

"To build the strongest possible workforce to serve our nation's heroes, we need to hire and support military spouses – many of whom are Veterans themselves," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough said in a March 6 news release announcing the department's [participation in the program](#). "We at VA are proud to make these commitments and support our nation's military spouses every way we can."

MOAA will continue its work in [support of the 4+1 Commitment](#) while urging strong action from Congress to increase military spouse employment opportunities across the federal spectrum, not just the VA. [A recent MOAA.org article](#) highlighted significant concerns with the first-ever federal strategic plan addressing barriers to spouse, caregiver, and survivor employment, and ongoing efforts to address the problem via legislation include support of the bipartisan READINESS Act, which would allow federally employed spouses facing a PCS move to:

- Seek an individual determination from their employer about whether their job can be done remotely (on a temporary basis) or be relocated.
- Obtain a determination on a transfer to a similar position, if the above options aren't available.
- Move into non-pay status, which would let the employee retain nonmonetary benefits, such as a security clearance.

Learn more about other MOAA legislative efforts on this and other topics at [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#).

[Write your lawmakers today to make your voice heard](#) – Congress needs to pass the funding bills our community relies upon.

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## OWRC Purpose and Mission Statement

Support the purposes and objectives of the Military Officers Association of America; promote camaraderie among the officer (retired, active and former) within the OWRC region and relationships with other veteran organizations; and support projects for those pursuing military service (ROTC programs) and assisting veterans (wounded, jobless and homeless).

**Join or Renew** your local chapter membership, go to [chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx](http://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx) , select Ohio and select Ohio Western Reserve Chapter.

## Legislative Contacts:

**MOAA Legislative Update** [MOAA | Legislative Action Center \(quorum.us\)](http://MOAA | Legislative Action Center (quorum.us)) .

**President Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D)** The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington DC 20500 Switchboard: 202-456-1414

[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

**Senator Sherrod Brown (D)** U.S. Senate 713 Hart Senate Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-2315 [www.brown.senate.gov](http://www.brown.senate.gov)

**Senator James D. (J.D.) Vance (R)** U.S. Senate B40-C Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Phone:(202)224-3353

<https://www.vance.senate.gov> or 240 East 9th Street, Room 3061 Cleveland, OH 44199

**Representative Bill Johnson (R)** U.S. Congressional **OH District 6** 192 East State St. Salem, OH 44460 Phone (330) 337-6951

<https://www.billjohnson.house.gov> or Washington, D.C. Office 2082 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Tel: (202) 225-5705 or 4137 Boardman-Canfield Road Suite 106 Canfield, OH 44406 T (330) 967-7312

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