



JOINT BASE WATER DAILY UPDATE

Joint Information Center

(808) 471-5013

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[3/10/2022]

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 00:09

Hello everyone, and welcome to the daily water update for today, Thursday, March 10. I am Cmdr. Alia McHenry, Deputy Chief of Staff of Navy Region Hawaii. I will be filling in over the next few days for Capt. Gunther, our Chief of Staff. As you are noticing more neighborhoods have had their health advisories lifted, with the water being certified as safe by the Department of Health. Today we are joined by Captain Mike McGinnis, who is a physician and the fleet surgeon for Commander, United States Pacific Fleet. He will answer some water related medical questions and concerns that have been shared by our communities on Facebook and via email. Before talking with Captain McGinnis, though, let's take a look at our map and talk through our updates and expectations over the next day or so. Okay, so we've had nine zones now that have been under an amended Department of Health Advisory, no updates to that advisory as of today, we have seven zones that are under the Department of Health review, our most recent zone that was accepted by the Department of Health includes C2. And so in that zone and we're doing C2 here, we are they were accepted. That's Hale Alii, Marine Barracks and Hospital Point. We still have three zones C1, C3 and D3 that are under IDWST review. And then, you know, as folks are moving in and you see we're getting a lot more green and a lot more things that are under DOH review. How they received them is how they're reviewing them. And that that timeframe for the review is really unknown. And as you saw somewhere a little bit faster last week. And so we're hoping that that continues. As the movements occur. If you have any concerns with your water, then please use the packet that is emailed to you with the Rapid Response Team information and please call them with any concerns. And that's all I have about the map today. So even as more and more communities are having their water certified safe by the Department of Health, some of you have voiced concerns about whether or not the water you consumed during this crisis has impacted your health. Some of you have shared health concerns, both on Facebook and via email, and are concerned with the long term effects if not short term. We are being joined by Captain Mike McGinnis, the fleet surgeon for the US Pacific Fleet here in Hawaii. And he is a physician that has been part of our team and this crisis response since the beginning. We have pulled some of the medical related questions that you have asked and hope to ask Captain McGinnis for some responses to those. Captain, welcome to our daily update. Thank you for joining us.

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 03:21

Thank you.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 03:21

Could you please just tell us a little bit about yourself, sir?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 03:24



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Sure. Capt. Michael McGinnis. I'm the US Pacific Fleet Surgeon and Senior Medical Advisor to Admiral Paparo and the Pac Fleet Staff. In response to this public health crisis, I lead the joint health services working group, which is the joint medical team from our operational medical forces, our components, as well as the senior leaders in our military treatment facilities. And as part of the joint health services working group, we work in close coordination with the Department of Health in the interagency.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 03:55

Thank you, sir. So I'm just going to ask you kind of question and answer. So the first question is, what is the Navy doing to ensure it understands the long term effects of exposure?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 04:08

You know, at first, I would just want to reiterate the commitment that I and the team has to the health and safety of all the beneficiaries, the service members, families and civilians on the Navy water distribution system. We're taking all the complaints that have manifested seriously. And we're fully committed to ensuring that our families remain safe and using the water in a safe way. The long term effects is a question that's come up. And the question is how do we ensure over time that we are aware of the potential health impacts of the water? Specifically, the DOD has established a incident registry for to capture all the individuals that may have been exposed to this contaminated water event. So specifically, we're capturing the families that live in housing on the Navy water distribution system, as well as the commands and for the active duty and DOD personnel that work on bases that are supplied by the Navy water distribution system.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 05:20

Thank you, sir. So, next question is, then how can affected personnel report their health concerns to the Navy.

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 05:29

So if you have a health concern, you should absolutely make note of that, call attention to your primary care provider, ideally, schedule an appointment. You can also communicate with your provider through the Secure Messaging app through the new electronic medical record, the MHS Genesis portal, you also are able to call the nurse advice, line 24/7, and incite your concerns to the nurse advice line. You know, we are monitoring calls that come in, as well as patient visits to all our military treatment facilities, because we want to be very aware of what our families and our beneficiaries are experiencing, and being sure that we're not missing anything.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 06:13

Yes, sir. So, the nurse advice line MHS Genesis, going in to see a primary care provider and then if an emergency going to the nearest emergency room?



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CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 06:23

Absolutely. What I would highlight is, you know, through the joint health services working group, the discussions that we have between the operational medical leadership, the military treatment facility leadership, we're closely coordinated and aware so that if anyone is seeing something, we're able to quickly communicate that across the board, as well as inform our providers as far as this event and bring the subject matter experts to inform them as they evaluate our patients, one on one to ensure that we're addressing all concerns completely.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 06:55

Thank you, sir. So next question is families are reporting long standing illness and symptoms concurrent with exposure to harmful chemicals. Can you provide any comments or elaborate in regard to this?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 07:11

Sure, you know, we are aware of families that have cited or attributed long term health complaints to the water, specifically going beyond the dates of this specific incident. And we're concerned about that we want families that have those type of concerns to come in. And, you know, relay those to their primary care provider. We are also assessing over time, you know, what group of individuals may have these concerns to see if there's any specific trends that we that may be developing. You know, specifically though, what we've seen with this event is, you know, rapidly at the end of November, the beginning of December, we had a large group of individuals that were clearly impacted from specific areas within the Navy water distribution system. You know, the symptoms, were pretty specific to a petroleum-based toxic drum, or a collection of symptoms. And what we were seeing were nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, as well as skin complaints as far as skin rash, and skin itching. So, we saw that within the first two weeks of this incident and rapid dissipation of events, we do see families now, but primarily, it's for a desire to document their potential exposure, as well, as any resolved health concerns. We are not seeing a, you know, ongoing active symptoms. However, we are very sensitive to that and want to be sure that any that do present, that we're looking at that closely to be sure that we're not missing anything.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 08:51

Okay, sir. So, just so I ensure that I, again, as I'm trying to review what you said in it, so a lot of it was in the initial kind of gastrointestinal type, stomach problems, skin problems that folks had pretty immediately. You have not seen that, over the course of recent days since our our teams have been in and flushing and folks who've been out of their homes. Are there anything that that you are aware of any longer term things that complaints that are showing up now that aren't related to those?



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CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 09:25

Well, you know, so it's the the families that are presenting now with chronic medical conditions, and, you know, we're looking to ensure that we're aware, just across the board, we have a joint discussion about that among the the senior medical leadership is, you know, very individual as far as the complaints, you know, and they're fairly broad. What makes this challenging is that we don't have a cluster of similar type illnesses or diseases that are manifesting that are attributed to chronic exposure. However, that's where you know how This registry is important to be sure that we have an ability to closely monitor our population over time to be sensitive to any potential long term health effects. You know, based on what we know, as far as the duration and the intensity of exposure from this event, we do not anticipate long term health concerns. But, you know, we don't know definitively, and that's why we want to monitor over time.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 10:27

Okay, so the next question. Families say they are concerned about if they are getting truthful information from the military leaders regarding their health concerns, how do you respond to this?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 10:40

You know, so I as the Pac Fleet Surgeon, and really the entire joint health services working group, we're fully committed to being transparent and open. We want our families, our service members, those on the DOD, within the DOD and non DOD, to be fully aware of what we know. And if there are medical concerns, we want to educate and to share information across the board. We're fully committed to the health and safety of all those on the Navy water distribution system. And we do take every concern or complaint seriously. And so there's significant discussion to ensure that we're fully aware of what's happening within our groups.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 11:22

Thank you. So I know there was a question about bio monitoring, it's come up in questions and comments. Can you tell me a little bit about whether it is required? Or if folks need any other long term medical surveillance? You know, you just talked about and the registry and surveilling folks. But is there anything more with this?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 11:47

Sure, you know, and we are aware of a desire to monitor and test. And, you know, first and foremost, if you have a concern or a complaint, come in, we'll evaluate you. And we will do all the indicated medical evaluation, starting with a great history and physical and taking it from there. Certainly our providers will order whatever tests are indicated. Biomonitoring is the scientific assessment of the environment of an ecosystem, including components of biodiversity to include people over time. And as you biomonitor a population, you may do testing, such as blood, urine, saliva testing. In this incident,



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what we've experienced together, we have a bounded event, where and a known pathogen, you know, a known petroleum based product. And in this specific incident, biomonitoring is not indicated. However, that is not to preclude, on an individual level, any limitations on specific testing, but in general, broadly, biomonitoring is not indicated for this event.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 13:04

Okay. So that's why then the Navy's not across the board testing, folks for the biomonitoring is that

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 13:11

That's right. I mean, its from a medical perspective, it's not indicated and in a broad population based way. And that's where, you know, as the patients, those that are impacted with complaints, need to present to our healthcare teams, and we'll make an individual assessment on, you know, what is indicated based on the individual's concern as well as past medical history?

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 13:35

Thank you, sir. So I think, see, I have one more question for you, sir. And I do appreciate you being here.

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 13:42

Absolutely.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 13:43

What assurances do victims have that their health will be taken care of?

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 13:48

The DoD in Pac Fleet, the joint health team and in all our collective leadership are fully committed to the safety and well being of the DoD beneficiaries, the families, the service members, you know, and so we're demonstrating this through development of this incident registry, as well as the ongoing coordination and close collaboration between the Department of Health and the joint health services working group. We're fully committed, again, to being open, transparent and coordinated, to ensure that we're being bringing the best that we have within the DOD and within a civilian health care to support our families in this response.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 14:33

Thank you, sir. And so, in closing, if folks have questions or concerns, they can certainly reach out to medical through the various means that you talked about, which is the nurse advice line and through Genesis through email with their provider or going into the clinic or an emergency room, if it's an emergent situation, and that there's a DOD



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wide approach to evaluating, really the impact of the water contamination on individual's health. I do appreciate, sir, your time. And if there's anything additional, you'd like to add, and now would be the time to do so.

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 15:14

Well, I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you and just talk to our families in the audience out there. And what I would say is, you know, we are sensitive, aware, we're committed, and you know, closely coordinated as a integrated health care system, not service specific, you know, we're a close knit family, really, within the communities. And that's true within the medical realm as well. You know, so we are looking for inputs closely monitoring that, what we see in open source within the media, how we're getting this also from social media, from our Public Affairs experts giving us feedback to ensure that, you know, we're closely connected and sharing information, we're looking forward to specifically as we become fully and safely reintegrated into our neighborhoods, we're looking to share to give that assurance and notify those that had been actively enrolled within our registry. We are beyond 80 to 90% enrolled as far as all of our families, and we're looking to send out notifications next week. That's going to be one mechanism. Another way that if you have concerns whether you have been entered within our registry program, there's a number that you can call that's maintained by our public health subject matter experts and you can easily refer to that within your Resident Reference Guide.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 16:48

Okay, perfect. Thank you, sir. And thank you again, for your insights and really responses to those questions. And as questions come up in the future, we may ask you to come back. We appreciate your time, sir.

CAPT. MICHAEL MCGINNIS 17:01

Happy to be here and happy to support.

CMDR ALEAH MCHENRY 17:04

So to really to recap, again, if anyone has any medical concerns, we went through the ways that that you would go about going through them we also have our EFAC, which is an additional support center location that is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 5pm. And then the DOD registry that Capt. McGinnis talked about, and the phone number is 1-800-984-8523. So that was your daily water update for today. We are monitoring your questions via Facebook, and you can also email questions if you have specific questions you can email them to see NRHPAO@gmail.com Don't forget our water info website navy.mil/jointbasewater or you can find MWR resources at greatlifehawaii.com/wegotyou. We are in this together as one community and family or ohana. Until tomorrow, please stay safe. Look out for yourself and look out for one another. Thank you.