

Air National Guard Wing Directors of Psychological Health (WDPH)

What is it? The Air National Guard Wing Director of Psychological Health (WDPH) program was developed to address behavioral health needs of ANG Airmen for overall operational readiness and psychological wellness. The Air National Guard was the only Service component that did not have medical, mental health resource capabilities at unit level. A contract was developed and funding has started to ensure that each ANG Wing receives a Wing Director of Psychological health to direct congressionally mandated, DoD, AF, and State Psychosocial Health directives and policy.

The WDPH directs DoD, AF, and State psychological health programs to include: suicide awareness training and tracking of suicides through the DODSER; automated neuropsychological assessment review/referral for deployers; psychosocial health programs associated with family, alcohol, drug, and sexual abuse case management and referral; post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury referrals and case management; Crisis Action Information Boards (CAIB) management; Deployment Resiliency Assessments (DRA) as mandated by NDAA 2010, Sec 708 for four separate person-to-person mental health screenings for all deployers; telemental health initiatives; ANG Resiliency efforts; management of psychological health training initiatives (i.e. Frontline Supervisors, Wingman Program, Violence and Suicide Prevention); and provides state-side crisis management for Wings following disaster response or domestic operations specific to the ANG mission.

What has the Air National Guard done? The ANG has secured contracts for the WDPH program and received initial funding to place a Director of Psychological Health in the ANGRC SG office and at 47 high-risk Wings.

The ANG has incorporated NGB and Air Force resiliency programs involving the four “pillars” of resiliency (emotional, physical, spiritual, and social) as a Total Force Initiative. This resiliency is incorporated throughout the service career of an Airman from initial training through separation or retirement. The ANG offers “Airman Resiliency Training” for ANG warriors, Frontline Supervisors Training, and the Wingman Program as resiliency tools to assist Airmen in recognizing the signs of distress, how to manage other Airmen who may be in distress and offers training on when and how to seek help for themselves or others.

What continued efforts have the Air National Guard planned for the future? The ANG is working to secure funding for the remaining 42 ANG wings and placed funding requirements for the WDPH in the 2013 POM. The ANG continues to develop guidance, standards of practice, and tools for the WDPH. An annual Psychological Health course will be offered through the SG directed Readiness Frontiers Training. The ANGRC SG office will receive an Active Duty mental health officer in the summer of 2011. The member will serve as a liaison between DoD, ADAF, other Service Component, and State mental health professionals to direct and manage psychological health initiatives.

Why is this important to the Air National Guard? The overall psychological health of the 106,700 Guard Airman and their families is vital for the ANG. With approximately 12,000 annual deployers and DOMOPS missions, it is paramount to ensure a mentally ANG force ready to meet operational requirements.