

# HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER

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## Initiative Spotlight



### Effectiveness of Different Mouthguards in Reducing Sports-related Mild Brain Injury

#### The issue:

Boxing is part of the Physical Education program at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Boxing, like other training and recreational activities, may put participants at risk for mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). MTBI is associated with measurable abnormalities in cognition, attention, and behavior, as well as neuropathological changes. To reduce the risk for MTBI, cadets at West Point are required to wear mouthguards while boxing.

#### The proposed solution:

The purpose of this initiative was to compare the effectiveness of the traditional boil-and-bite mouthguard with the "Brain Pad" Upper and Lower Teeth mouthguard. The "Brain Pad" was a new product being marketed as an innovative way to reduce the incidence and severity of MTBI.

#### Innovative approach for this initiative:

The "Brain Pad" Upper and Lower Teeth mouthguard was thought to be an innovative method to reduce the risk of MTBI.

#### Impact:

The initiative demonstrated that there is no significant difference between the ability of the traditional boil-and-bite mouthguard and a more expensive mouthguard to reduce the incidence and severity of mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). In addition, participants indicated that the more expensive mouthguard was actually less comfortable, which could affect whether or not individuals continue to use a mouthguard in the future.

#### Lessons learned:

- Major program changes are not always necessary. This initiative sought to make a small but significant improvement to a process that already existed.
- The initiative required no additional work on the part of stakeholders since mouthguards were already required for the boxing program. This significantly increased compliance.

## Healthy Steps

### Small Steps to a Healthier Life

- Eat half your dessert.
- Avoid food portions larger than your fist.
- Walk a dog.
- Don't eat late at night.
- More carrots, less cake.
- Fetch the newspaper yourself.
- Sit up straight at work.
- Play outside with your kids 30 minutes a day.
- Dance.
- Grill fruits or vegetables.
- Don't skip breakfast.
- Drink lots of water.
- Switch to skim milk.
- Go for a half-hour walk instead of watching TV.

Go to [www.smallstep.gov](http://www.smallstep.gov) for more small steps toward health.

## Prevention Resources

### Steps to a HealthierUS

This Health and Human Services conference addressed the four pillars of the Steps to a HealthierUS initiative: physical activity, nutrition, healthy choices, and preventive screening. The agenda focused on the establishment of model programs and policies that foster healthy behavior changes, encourage healthier lifestyle choices, and implement effective programs to impact health. For more information, visit: [http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/summit/summit2004/2nd\\_National\\_Summit\\_Program.pdf](http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/summit/summit2004/2nd_National_Summit_Program.pdf)

## Program Pointers

### Writing Effective Program Goals: Tips for Getting Started

Developing program goals can be a tough task but program goals are essential. Frequently, the hardest part is just getting started. The following tips should help you get started writing program goals.

- Begin by asking, “What would we like to see happen as a result of the program or intervention?” In other words, “What is the ultimate program outcome we desire?”
    - Keep in mind that the number of goals you set depends on the scope of your program. It may be appropriate to have only one goal, or you may have several. For example, a comprehensive health promotion program may have several goals. A focused program, such as tobacco cessation, may have only one goal.
  - Your goal(s) should be reachable. Be sure to consider your resources and make a realistic appraisal of your program’s potential impact.
    - Realistic goal: Reduce smokeless tobacco use among Soldiers in XYZ Battalion.
    - Unrealistic goal: Eliminate all tobacco use among Soldiers in XYZ Battalion.
  - Goals do not need to be written as complete sentences. They should contain two basic elements:
    - Who will be affected – in the example above: *Soldiers in XYZ Battalion*.
    - What will change as a result of the program – in the example above: *reduce smokeless tobacco*.
  - Goals are broad, long-term visions and do not need to be stated in explicitly measurable terms.
    - This is an example of a well-written goal: To improve the fitness level of Soldiers assigned to XYZ Brigade.
- Remember: the objectives that accompany your goals must be more specific and clearly state the desired outcomes in **measurable** terms.

## HPPI News & FAQs

### Lessons Learned from HPPI Programs

- New programs must be adapted to existing infrastructures. Don’t try to force a square peg into a round hole!
- Buy-in from all levels and all program stakeholders is critical.
- Cooperation between line/medical or medical/medical personnel is dependent upon communication and solid relationships. Build relationships now anticipating that you **will need to** interact with other personnel later.
- Feedback from program implementers, participants, and healthcare providers should be consistently solicited. This feedback should be incorporated into the program itself as soon as possible.

Have a marketing plan in place *well in advance* of beginning a program or creating a new product that requires distribution.

For more information about HPPI, or to see past issues of the HPPI newsletter, visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/HPPI.aspx>.

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## Don’t Reinvent the Wheel!

### Freedom Cards: Deck Stacked for Health

The USACHPPM Freedom Cards are a great resource for deploying soldiers. The deck contains standard playing cards with a health tip in the center of each card, such as:



- “Wear hearing protection in high noise areas.”
- “Ask for help when lifting heavy or awkward objects.”
- “Are you flossing?”

To obtain Freedom Cards, contact Lola Daniels at (410) 436-8074, DSN 584, or [lola.daniels@us.army.mil](mailto:lola.daniels@us.army.mil).