

Readiness Under Siege: US Military Chronic Disease Burden in 2024

Lifestyle medicine is crucial for *optimizing military cognitive performance, Warfighter lethality, and deployment readiness.*

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

With **\$58.7B** allocated by the DOD to healthcare spending in 2024, lifestyle medicine is essential to U.S. military recruitment, retention, and overall resilience.

>40% of Active Duty Service Members (ADSM) were diagnosed by a physician with **at least one of eight chronic preventable conditions:**

- hypertension
- back pain
- diabetes
- asthma
- angina
- high cholesterol
- heart disease
- bone/joint/muscle injuries including arthritis

PREDIABETES

More than **1 in 3** American adults has prediabetes

88M people in 2020

98M people in 2022

in just **2 yrs**

Prediabetes. CDC.gov, 2022; DOD Qualified Military Available Study, 2020

HYPERTENSION

70% of **Active Duty Army** study participants had **less than ideal blood pressure**

50% A study of **Active Duty Navy** members showed that **50% had detectable heart disease**

High blood pressure costs the United States

\$131-\$198B per year

Annually, an additional **\$234M** in healthcare cost is incurred by the DOD due to high blood pressure diagnoses

(an additional \$2,000 per person/year.)

J Am Heart Assoc. 2019 Jun 18;8(12); Navy Cardio, ACC, 2023; CDC, High Blood Pressure, 2022; Rand 2018 HRBS, JAHA, 2018; Hypertension. 2009;54:966-973

77%

of America's young adults (17-24) were **not eligible for military service in 2020**

These chronic preventable conditions have been identified as the leading causes of death, disability, and reduced quality of life in the United States.

2018 DoD HRBS. RAND, 2021

DIABETES

↑ 25%

increase in type 2 diabetes diagnoses in ADSM between **2018 - 2021**

~ 50% of ADSM met qualifications for prediabetes screening

~ 6% of ADSM were actually screened for prediabetes

Mil Obesity and Diabetes in Pandemic. DHA, 2023; Mil Obesity and Diabetes in Pandemic. DHA, 2023

GROWING CHRONIC DISEASE BURDEN IN WARFIGHTERS

ACUTE & CHRONIC DUTY INJURIES

• Injuries to Army soldiers in 2018 resulted in **\$4.7B** in direct and indirect medical costs

• **8 in 10** ADSM experienced physical trauma from overuse injuries in 2021

>**26%** ADSM with physician-diagnosed chronic physical injury

~**30%** ADSM who were “bothered a lot” by one or more bodily pain symptoms

>**20%** reported trouble sleeping as the most concerning symptom related to pain

DoD Health of the Force 2021; U.S. Army Public Health Center, PHIP 12-06-0322, 2022; 2018 DoD HRBS. RAND, 2021

MENTAL HEALTH

[23%]

of Active Duty Service Members have depression

~\$5.7B annual cost to DOD for treating depression

Federal Healthcare Data Trends, 2023

OBESITY

22% of ADSM were obese in 2021, up from **15%** in 2015

15% in 2015

22% in 2021

12% of ADSM under the age of 25 are classified as obese

DOD spends **>\$1.5B** per year treating obesity-related health care issues.

DOD Health of the Force, 2021; Chronic Disease and Mil Readiness. CDC, May 2024