



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC**

July 7, 2021

HQ USAF/SG
1780 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1780

Fellow Medics,

It is an honor to serve as the Surgeon General for both the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force, and oversee the incredible work accomplished everyday within the Air Force Medical Service. I have been in the role for just a month, but wanted to share my intent as we continue moving forward with Military Health System transformation and target our efforts providing operational health and readiness in support of those we have the privilege to serve.

We have all experienced unprecedented change as medics over the past year, and I could not be more proud of your response during the pandemic. The stakes are high and the challenges continue. Based on the Chief of Staff of the Air Force strategic initiatives, and informed by the Chief of Space Operations Planning Guidance, my challenge for each of us is to proactively *Lead Change...and Win*.

To achieve this goal, I have developed four action orders to help guide short-term decisions and conversations at every level. They may not change what you do each day, but they clarify what is important to me. My goal is that these action orders will help prioritize our limited time and resources as we work together to achieve mission success.

A. Airmen: Medics taking care of Medics

My first action order is most important—to make sure every Air Force Medical Service medic is cared for and set up for success. This applies to all officers, enlisted members, civilians, contractors, and volunteers that support our healthcare mission, regardless of their role. The most important piece in any organization is our human capital, and you are more important than any piece of hardware, policy or directive. Taking care of one another ensures ALL of our medics are able to thrive. If you thrive, then our patients thrive at home, at work, and on the battlefield.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -Mahatma Gandhi

B. Balance: Take care of your Professional, Personal, Fitness, and Spiritual life.

Over the last year it has been difficult to juggle work requirements, relationships and family responsibilities, outside interests, deployments, and responding to the largest international pandemic in the past 100 years. Even without a pandemic, there will always be more work than time to accomplish it. But, in our desire to say yes to everything at work and at home, it's easy to forget that when our stress levels spike, our productivity plummets. Take time for yourself personally, professionally, with your fitness, and with your own spiritual beliefs. All four domains are important and need continuous attention. Finding balance between all four domains is an ongoing challenge and is different for each of us, but it is critical for long term success in life. If you need to request time off to recharge and regroup, do it. If you need extra help from a coach, a counselor, or medical professional, take a courageous step to

reach out for it. We need you, and your nation needs you, so take the time to create the balance that works in your life.

*"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."
- Winston Churchill*

C. Currency & Competence: Train for the Mission...Educate for a lifetime.

The foundation of the Air Force Medical Service is based on the specialized skills that each of us provide. It starts with the first day of training and continues by building on knowledge, skills, confidence, and abilities throughout our career. We keep ourselves ready by creating a culture of continuous learning each and every day. This requires effort and a plan to fill the gaps each of us have, which is why a personal reading program can be so effective. There should not be a day that goes by without learning something new or teaching a fellow medic something new. In order to remain the premier medical capability in the world, we must also accelerate the change into new ways of training, new ways of thinking, and new ways of developing tomorrow's medic.

"We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training." -Archilochos

D. Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging: We value every member of the team!

The diverse makeup of the Air Force Medical Service is one of our greatest assets. When we incorporate the input from medics of different backgrounds, experiences, and professions to support a common mission, the result is a stronger and more effective force. We must make it our culture to include input from each member of the team, including our patients, in decisions made at every level. We must all be on the lookout for barriers and circumstances that prevent our medics or patients from feeling they don't belong. When barriers are found, have the courage to take the next step and be part of the solution. Most importantly, we need to find ways to ensure each medic recognizes their importance to the success of our organization.

"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color." -Maya Angelou

We are working to develop a plan for how best to align and adjust Air Force Medical Service strategic efforts to achieve these goals and expect those to be published in the next few months. In the meantime, I ask that you keep these four action orders: **Airmen; Balance; Currency & Competency; and Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging** in mind as you continue your important work as Air Force Medical Service medics. You make the magic happen!

I am proud to serve along side you as we support our Airmen and Guardians.

Lead Change—and Win!



ROBERT I. MILLER
Lieutenant General, USAF, MC
Surgeon General