

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

STATEMENT OF

CAPTAIN MICHAEL B. MCGINNIS
FLEET SURGEON
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

RED HILL BULK FUEL STORAGE FACILITY: THE CURRENT CRISIS, THE RESPONSE,
AND THE WAY FORWARD

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

January 11, 2022

Chair Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of the Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility medical response and corrective efforts. The safety, care, and well-being of all personnel affected by the drinking water contamination at the Red Hill Shaft remains my highest priority.

In my capacity as the Pacific Fleet Surgeon, I am the senior medical advisor to Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and have been supporting the Pacific Fleet Crisis Action Team by leading a Joint Health Services Working Group that is comprised of senior leadership from our operational medical forces within the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, the on-island military treatment facility leadership, as well as interagency medical leaders from the Hawai'i Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the leaders of other state and federal medical agencies on island.

The priority of the Joint Health Services Working Group is the safety and care of all affected families. We are aggressively focused on delivering medical care ensuring people with symptoms or concerns from water related exposure have dedicated, rapid access to care, are screened and evaluated for the symptoms they may have, and receive clear guidance on health protection measures. We have a robust joint service and interagency team that created expanded medical access at military treatment facilities such as Tripler Army Medical Center, the Naval Health Clinic Hawaii, the 15th Medical Group on Hickam, as well as medical teams to assess and counsel families where they live, including housing at Red Hill, Aliamanu Military Reservation, Halsey Terrace, and embedded within the Emergency Family Assistance Center located by the

Pearl Harbor Navy Exchange. Senior leaders within our military medical organizations are engaged, coordinated, communicating and collaborating openly together to solve this problem.

Specific to our joint and interagency efforts, we provided medical information at town hall meetings, through Facebook posts on social media, and on the Pacific Fleet's Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam Water Updates website page. The Department of Defense TRICARE medical Nurse Health Advice line is available to take calls twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week, and a specific hotline has been established by Tripler Army Medical Center explicitly for families with symptoms or concerns of exposure to contaminated water from this incident. Additionally, military health agencies have mobilized from across the island to advise and treat in both conventional appointment and walk in settings. The joint medical force, with our strategic medical partners, is bringing the full breadth of our capability to this effort. The Hawai'i Department of Health, working in conjunction with CDC and ATSDR, is conducting a baseline assessment of the civilian population affected by the drinking water contamination. This includes collecting information on exposures, health systems, and unmet needs among affected civilians.

Looking to the future, we have established a DoD registry to capture information of those with potential exposure from our water contamination incident, to track our population over time, and to facilitate a more complete understanding of potential long term medical effects. While local Hawaii non-military citizens cannot be captured in the military registry, we are coordinating with the Hawai'i Department of Health, CDC, ATSDR, and the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center to assess the best approach for long term review of exposure of those citizens served by the Navy water distribution system.

Our strength and the greatest source of readiness will always be those in uniform, our civilian workforce, and the families alongside them. With my Navy and Service counterparts, partners at the Hawai'i Department of Health, CDC, and ATSDR, our ongoing commitment to resolve the Navy's drinking water crisis at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam is rock solid. I wish to thank the leaders and members of this Committee for your attention, interest, and support.