

# SAILOR **TO** SAILOR

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MYNAVYHR

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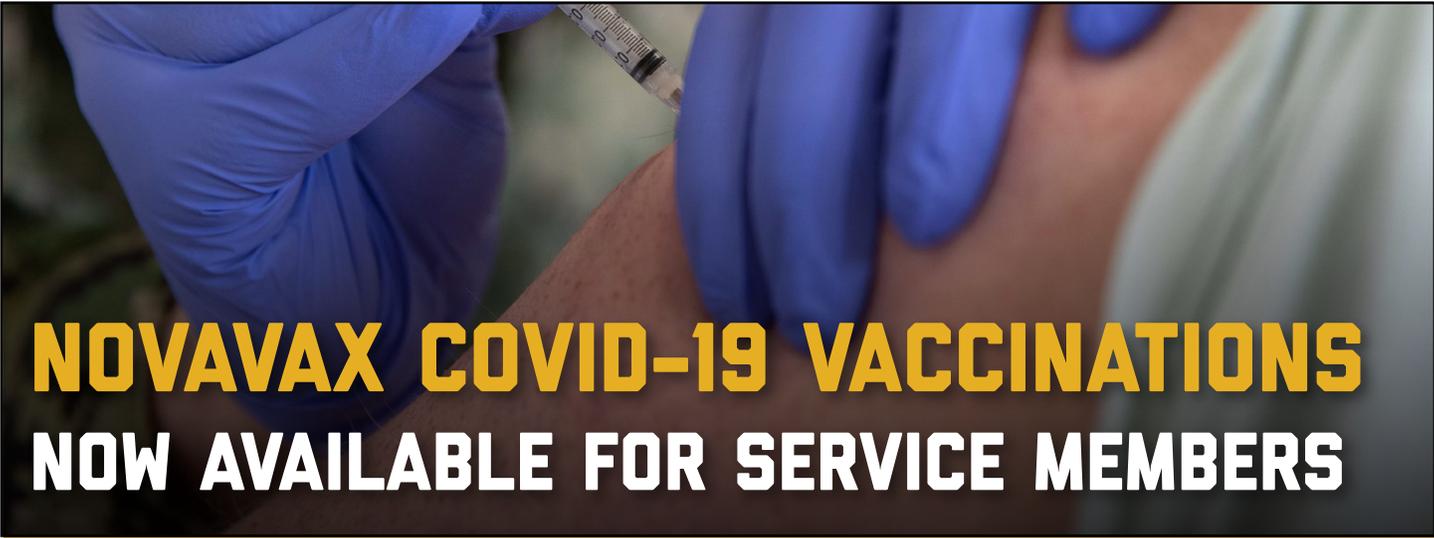
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**MyNAVYHR**  
Serving Sailors 24/7



# NOVAVAX COVID-19 VACCINATIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

HM3 Joseph Casassa, assigned to USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) dental department, administers a COVID-19 vaccine at the McCormick Gym onboard Naval Station Norfolk. (U.S. Navy Photo by MCSN Jackson Adkins)

By David Vergun, DOD News

The Defense Department is now offering Novavax as an option for COVID-19 vaccinations.

On August 19, the Food and Drug Administration updated their July 13 Emergency Use Authorization for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine to include individuals 12 years of age and older.

"We now have a range of COVID-19 vaccines available at our military medical treatment facilities, and they all provide strong protection against hospitalization, severe illness and death," Dr. Michael Malanoski, deputy director of the Defense Health Agency, said.

Other vaccines that DOD offers or has offered are those from Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

Unvaccinated service members can indicate their preference

of which vaccine they'd like, Malanoski said. "If they'd like to be vaccinated with Novavax, and it's not immediately available, we'll make sure the service member can be vaccinated with the Novavax vaccine within a few days."

The Novavax vaccine uses technology that has been used in other vaccines required by the military.

Novavax is not authorized for use as a booster dose at this time, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Although all [COVID-19] vaccines teach our immune system to recognize the spike protein on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, Novavax is unique compared to other available COVID-19 vaccines in that it is a protein subunit vaccine,"

Air Force Col. Tonya Rans, chief of the Immunization Healthcare Division at the Defense Health Agency, said.

"Protein subunit vaccines are a traditional platform of vaccines and have been used for decades to prevent disease," she added. "Examples of vaccines which use this platform include the current shingles [Zoster] vaccine, Hepatitis B, and [HPV] vaccine. The platform used by Novavax does not use mRNA or DNA technology and does not enter the nucleus of cells," she added.

Novavax was well tolerated in clinical studies, with the most common side effects being injection-site tenderness, headache, muscle pain, and fatigue of short duration.

[CLICK HERE TO FIND AVAILABLE VACCINE APPOINTMENTS IN YOUR AREA.](#)



NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

*Hispanics: One Endless Voice To Enhance Our Traditions*

## SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15

The heritage month's dates refer to Independence Day anniversaries of Latin American countries – Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico declared its independence Sept. 16, and Chile Sept. 18.

The Navy is strengthened by the diversity of its force as it underlines that patriots of Hispanic American Heritage continue to build legacies of freedom and diversity as they fight for the security of the country and the peace of the world.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the rich history of Hispanic Americans in the Navy.



# Q & A

with Navy Psychologist  
Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie Long, Ph.D., ABPP, MSCP

Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie Long serves as a licensed clinical psychologist with the Medical Service Corps.

## **What influenced you to become a Navy psychologist?**

My father was in the Army and we moved frequently when I was a child. I noticed that my brother struggled to adapt each time we had to change schools, whereas I enjoyed meeting new people. My desire to become a military psychologist stemmed from my curiosity about why we had two very different reactions to the same situation, and a desire to help those, like my brother, who struggled with the constant change that military children face.

## **Why is it important for Sailors and leaders to understand and prioritize mental wellness?**

Mental wellness is critical for a healthy, fulfilling life. According to the CDC, more than half of people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder at some point in their life and approximately 1 in 5 will experience a mental health disorder in a given year. These statistics are staggering. The more that we can prioritize mental wellness in ourselves and others, the more we can achieve goals consistent with the type of lives we'd like to lead.

## **From your time in uniform, what have been the most impactful changes and updates you've observed in the Navy's approach to mental health awareness and care?**

The most impactful change that I've noticed is the increase in demand for mental healthcare, including an increase in embedded mental health positions. There have been many efforts over the past decade to destigmatize seeking mental health care, and now there is overwhelming demand for mental health services in a variety of spheres. Commanders are asking for more embedded mental

health providers for their units, leaders are asking for more mental health resources to provide to their Sailors, and Sailors have been asking for more mental health treatment availability. Mental health stigma has decreased overall, although it still exists, and the supply of mental health providers has not increased commensurate with the demand.

## **Where are we at with addressing suicide and mental health counseling in the fleet?**

An important distinction I'd like to make is that suicide and mental health treatment are two separate, albeit related, topics. Suicide is a public health problem and anyone can be at risk for suicide, not only those with mental health challenges. In fact, about half of Sailors who die by suicide have any mental health history, and only about 60% of these Sailors have had mental health services in the year prior to their death.

The most common stressors we see in reviewing the circumstances around Sailor suicide are relationship problems and transition (e.g., PCS, upcoming retirement, separation from service). One important factor that differentiates between Sailors who experience these stressors and take their own lives from Sailors who experience these stressors and don't take their own lives is whether or not they consistently, safely store their personal firearms. Research indicates that presence of firearms in the household is a risk factor for suicide, perhaps because many individuals do not safely store their firearms.

In terms of mental health counseling, there is an unprecedented demand for mental health services and not enough providers to meet the demand as quickly as we would like.

## **How can leaders support the mental health of their Sailors at the command level?**

Leaders can support the mental health of their Sailors by encouraging and supporting consistent prevention strategies, which includes modeling these behaviors. The building blocks of health and well-being are establishment of solid sleep habits, strong social connections with others, sufficient physical activity, consumption of nutritious foods, spending time outside in nature, adequate hydration, and attention to spiritual needs. If leaders can consistently demonstrate these healthy behaviors, their Sailors are more likely to also engage in these behaviors, which will set the foundation for proactive mental health care.

## **If a Sailor is contemplating suicide or experiencing a mental health crisis, what resources do they have?**

Sailors have numerous resources and the Navy has a 'no wrong door' policy, so Sailors can request assistance from any helping professional or organization without having to know the subtle differences between these resources. Immediate resources include the chain of command, 911, the nearest ER, and the [VA Military/Veterans Crisis Line](#) (dial 988, then press 1).

Additionally, Sailors and their family members can seek help through any of the following: Chaplains, [Military OneSource](#), Fleet & Family Support Centers, Sailor Assistance & Intercept for Life (SAIL) Program Case Managers, embedded mental health providers, and outpatient mental health clinics.



# MYNAVY COACHING TEAM

## ENGAGES TRAINING COMMANDS AT GREAT LAKES

Navy Personnel Command's Talent Management Task Force visit with Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps leaders and Recruit Training Command leadership at Naval Station Great Lakes, Aug. 30. (U.S. Navy photo by MCI Marcus Meredith)

### By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mark Meredith

Members of the MyNavy Coaching team visited Naval Service Training Command, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC), and Recruit Training Command (RTC) at Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois, Aug. 22-23 to talk about the program and observe its implementation.

Meeting with NROTC leadership, the MyNavy Coaching team spoke about the value and benefits of adding coaching to the future NROTC curriculum during the midshipmen's sophomore year, specifically during their Leadership and Management classes. Inserting this coaching initiative into NROTC and conducting a future pilot will ensure all officer accession pipelines have MyNavy Coaching in addition to the insertion in Officer Training Command and the U.S. Naval Academy.

"It was encouraging speaking with the leadership of NROTC," said Master Chief Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Courtney Barber, MyNavy Coaching senior enlisted leader. "The NROTC cadets will be receiving leadership skills that will be beneficial to them not only as leaders, but also as young adults trying to navigate their lives, learning how to solve their own problems currently where they are. This is beneficial to them in college and setting goals for their path after school."

The team met with RTC staff including Capt. Kertreck V. Brooks, commanding officer of Recruit Training Command, and the MyNavy Coaching representatives on station. MyNavy Coaching is currently being implemented across every

RTC division in training, and the MyNavy Coaching team was able to observe a training for 150 recruits.

"The MyNavy Coaching team's visit to RTC is helping our team empower recruits to 'Get Real, Get Better' and prepare them for the challenges they'll face when they join the fleet," said Brooks.

"The recruits were engaged and hungry for knowledge," said Barber. "They want to know how they can be better individuals and Sailors - asking questions about MyNavy Coaching to help them better communicate. They understand what MyNavy Coaching is, how to have a coaching conversation, and they're hungry for more of it."

Also while in Great Lakes, the MyNavy Coaching team visited the Recruit Division Commander "C" school to speak to the

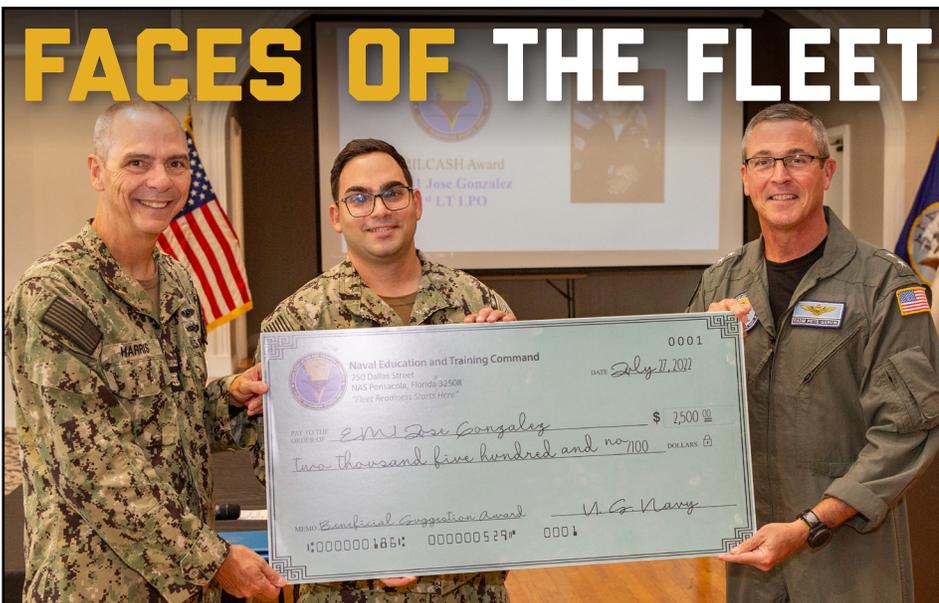
training team there. By training each RDC in essential coaching skills, they can spread coaching throughout the fleet.

“Once they leave as an RDC, they are detailed and billeted across the world, taking these skills to Guam, Japan, Hawaii, and spreading it across the world,” said Barber. “They know it works because they saw how it worked in RTC. They’ll have their hands in every point of the globe.”

Coaching demonstrates the Navy’s investment in Sailor development and empowerment to be the best version of themselves. MyNavy Coaching is one of several talent management

initiatives run by Navy Personnel Command’s Talent Management Task Force, led by Rear Adm. Michael Schwerin. The TMTF’s mission is to ensure the Navy attracts, develops, trains and retains top talent. The end state is effective Sailor development to retain the best and most fully qualified Sailors employed in the right assignments to maximize the Navy’s warfighting effectiveness.

For more information on MyNavy Coaching, please visit: <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Talent-Management/Coaching/>



Naval Education and Training Command’s (NETC) Force Master Chief Matt Harris, left, and NETC Commander Rear Adm. Pete Garvin, right, present EMI Jose Gonzalez with a \$2,500 Beneficial Suggestion (BeneSuggs) Program cash award. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Zachary Melvin)

### By Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

Electrician’s Mate 1st Class Jose Gonzalez, from Tampa Bay, Florida, assigned to Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), received a \$2,500 Beneficial Suggestion (BeneSuggs) Program cash

award in Pensacola, Florida, July 27, 2022.

Rear Adm. Pete Garvin, commander, NETC, officially congratulated and awarded Gonzalez with the \$2,500 by handing him a poster-size check

at an all-hands call.

Gonzalez played a major role during space optimization efforts at NETC headquarters. Part of the project required the removal of three large electronic filing systems.

“The initial estimate to use contract support for removal was approximately \$10,000 [each],” said Lt. Matthew Honabarger, NETC’s antiterrorism officer. “Petty Officer Gonzalez developed a plan and presented it to leadership. The plan was approved, and he assembled a team and removed all three filing systems, saving the government approximately \$30,000.”

Gonzalez also facilitated removing approximately 10 years’ worth of unserviceable furniture and equipment. He relocated approximately \$100,000 worth of cubicles and installed 52 cubicles at another NETC building. If the work was contracted, it would have cost the government approximately \$200,000.

To read the full story, visit: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/426804/netc-sailor-receives-benesuggs-award>.

**IF YOU KNOW A SAILOR WHO DESERVES RECOGNITION,  
PLEASE EMAIL THEIR STORY TO  
[NXAG\\_PA02@NAVY.MIL](mailto:NXAG_PA02@NAVY.MIL).**

# FREE UNIFORMS FOR PREGNANT SAILORS: NAVY MATERNITY PILOT PROGRAM STILL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR FY22

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Rebekah Watkins

Pregnancy can be both an exciting and stressful time – especially for service members. In the past, acquiring maternity uniform pieces has been a challenge for many pregnant Sailors. However, thanks to the Navy's new Maternity Pilot Program (MPP), the difficult task of obtaining all of the correct maternity uniforms has been alleviated.

Originally announced in December 2021 with the release of NAVADMIN 284/21, the MPP is a team effort, administratively managed by the Chief of Naval Personnel's Uniform Matters Office with the support of the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) for fulfillment.

"The goal of the program is to evaluate if providing returnable maternity uniforms is more feasible and efficient than providing a uniform allowance," said Rob Carroll, the head of uniform matters.

Carroll noted that the program is open to all pregnant officers and enlisted, active and reserve Sailors. Sailors are also allowed to participate in the MPP more than once in regards to future pregnancies.

Once approved and selected for the program, participants receive one set of maternity working, service and dress uniforms, and the maternity cardigan sweater at no charge as a loan, which participants will return once they have transitioned back to regular Navy uniforms. Maternity working uniforms come complete with sewn-on embroidered name tape, service tape and qualification insignia. Enlisted E-1 to E-6 maternity dress uniforms will come with sewn-on rank insignia. Hemming and shipment of uniforms is performed free of charge.



**"I WAS DRAWN TO THE PROGRAM BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE I WAS GETTING ALL OF THE MATERNITY UNIFORMS I NEEDED."**

**– HM3 ROMEY**

**HM3 Savana Romey, a dental assistant at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, wears the maternity Navy working uniform type III she received from the Maternity Pilot Program. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jeanette Mullinax)**

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Savana Romey, who is expecting her first child and currently assigned to the dental clinic at Walter Reed National Medical Center, learned about the program through a family planning class held at her command.

"I was drawn to the program because it seemed like the best

way to ensure I was getting all of the maternity uniforms I needed," said Romey. "The most appealing part to me was that I would have all the correct sizes of uniforms shipped to me for free, and I would not have run around to find all of the required uniform pieces."

Romey said the whole process of applying for the program

was very quick and easy, as the MyNavyHR website for the MPP had step-by-step instructions on how to apply. The Uniform Matters Office at MyNavyHR was also very helpful when it came to answering any questions she had.

Within one day of submitting her approved paperwork, Romey was accepted into the MPP and then shortly thereafter received all of her approved maternity uniforms at her doorstep.

"It really was the best option for getting maternity uniforms," said Romey. "It alleviated any stress I had about maternity uniforms, and was just one of the many supportive programs the Navy has for pregnant Sailors."

In order to apply for the program, Sailors must fill out the MPP application and route it through their chain of command. Once approved by their command, Sailors download a size measurement sheet from

the website, take it to the NEXCOM Uniform Shop and get measured for their maternity uniforms. If the Sailor is not stationed near an exchange, the website has a video with instructions on measuring themselves.

If stationed closer to an Army/Air Force or Marine Corps uniform center, those shops will also help measure Sailors. Uniform Matters then sends the approval and measurements to NEXCOM.

"The uniform items will be sent from NEXCOM's Southeast Distribution Center to the Sailor's home," said Cmdr. Terri Gabriel, Deputy Commander, Military Uniforms of NEXCOM. "The Sailor doesn't need to pick up or have their uniforms altered at the NEX. It will arrive at her door, ready to wear."

After the pregnancy is over and the maternity uniforms are no longer needed, the Sailor returns them to the NEXCOM Southeast

Distribution Center. The Navy again picks up the bill for shipping. Returned uniforms are inspected, laundered and repaired if necessary. NEXCOM will reissue returned uniforms that meet acceptable wear standards to other MPP participants.

All information and resources regarding the MPP can be found at <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/References/US-Navy-Uniforms/Maternity-Pilot-Program/>.



## Not You, Not Me, Not Us... Not Today.

This is a necessary discussion about a devastating public health crisis. Each of us knows someone or has heard of someone who has died by suicide. It's a tragedy that affects us all - but we can never stand idly by in the mission to prevent suicide.

Too frequently, our shipmates suffer in silence or do not receive the help they need. This is in part due to the stigma surrounding mental health challenges.

We've got to break down the barriers to talking about suicide. When we connect, we can better protect one another. This is why we do our best to conduct suicide prevention training in

person. It's not a check-in-the-box; it is to connect us to each other, and ensure we all have an understanding of what to look out for, and how to get help for ourselves or our shipmate. The more we talk about suicide, the better we become at handling these tough conversations.

Applying that training, you might notice some warning signs in another Sailor or even yourself. Don't be afraid to ask a shipmate, "Are you having suicidal thoughts?"

This is how we open the door to recovery.

I've had my share of negative conversations with myself, that range from fear of not being worthy enough to "am a burden to

my family and the Navy?"

By reaching out to my family and support network, taking the time to evaluate and address these thoughts, and finding what factors strengthened my resilience, I was able to recognize these thoughts were temporary. However, every Sailor's journey to mental wellness will not be the same.

Please look out for your Sailors. Please protect your health like you protect this nation. This is a crisis we must continue to fight together.

If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide or experiencing a crisis, please call or text 988 - the [Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). Your life is worth saving.

- Fleet J.

# PROPERLY STORING YOUR FIREARM CAN HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

A few moments to retrieve and unlock a secured firearm can interrupt the impulse and open the door for help.



✓ Store firearms unloaded with a gunlock in a secured cabinet, safe or case.

✓ Closets, drawers and shoeboxes are NOT safe locations.

✓ Keep ammunition in a separate secured storage location.

## DID YOU KNOW?

»»» Firearms are the most common method of suicide in the U.S.

»»» The majority of suicides and attempts occur within an hour of crisis.

»»» Studies have shown that when a highly lethal method of suicide is less accessible, the likelihood of the immediate attempt decreases.



To acquire a free firearm lock, contact your **Fleet and Family Support Center.**



**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN CRISIS,  
CALL OR TEXT 988.**

For more information,  
visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)