



Highlights of GAO-10-56, a report to congressional addressees

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) implemented the post-deployment health reassessment (PDHRA), which is required to be administered to servicemembers 90 to 180 days after their return from deployment. DOD established the PDHRA program to identify and address servicemembers' health concerns that emerge over time following deployments. This report is the second in response to a Senate Armed Services Committee report directing GAO to review DOD's administration of the PDHRA, and to additional congressional requests. In this report, GAO examined (1) the extent to which DOD's central repository contains PDHRA questionnaires for active and Reserve component servicemembers who returned from deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan and (2) how DOD monitors the administration of the PDHRA to Reserve component servicemembers. To conduct this review, GAO performed a quantitative analysis using DOD deployment and PDHRA data, reviewed relevant PDHRA policies, and interviewed DOD officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD (1) ensure that PDHRA questionnaires for all servicemembers to whom the requirement applies are in DOD's central repository and (2) require that the information obtained when monitoring the PDHRA program is documented in a manner consistent with internal control standards. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

[View GAO-10-56 or key components.](#)  
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## DEFENSE HEALTH CARE

### Post-Deployment Health Reassessment Documentation Needs Improvement

## What GAO Found

DOD policy requires that the military services electronically submit PDHRA questionnaires to DOD's central repository. Based on two separate queries to this repository in 2009, GAO did not find PDHRA questionnaires for a substantial percentage of the 319,000 active and Reserve component servicemembers who returned from deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan between January 1, 2007, and May 31, 2008. GAO's first query on April 15, 2009, showed that only 77 percent of this population of interest had questionnaires in the central repository, leaving approximately 74,000 servicemembers without questionnaires in the repository. On September 4, 2009, GAO queried DOD's central repository again to update its April 2009 data and found that DOD's central repository was still missing PDHRA questionnaires for about 72,000 servicemembers, or 23 percent of the servicemembers in GAO's original population of interest. When PDHRA questionnaires are not in DOD's central repository, DOD does not have reasonable assurance that servicemembers to whom the PDHRA requirement applies were given the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire and identify and address health concerns that could emerge over time following deployment.

DOD uses four methods to monitor the contractor, Logistics Health, Inc. (LHI), that administers the PDHRA to Reserve component servicemembers. The four monitoring methods are: (1) reviews of periodic reports from LHI; (2) inspections of LHI's administration of the PDHRA; (3) feedback on LHI's administration of the PDHRA from military service officials; and (4) weekly telephone discussions with LHI staff. These methods are used to help ensure that the objective of the PDHRA program is being met for Reserve component servicemembers. Through these methods, DOD identified a number of potential problems that may pose risks to the PDHRA program objective and to the welfare and safety of Reserve component servicemembers. However, GAO found that when monitoring the administration of the PDHRA to Reserve component servicemembers, DOD does not maintain clear documentation that is consistent with federal internal control standards. GAO found that the documentation generated by DOD generally did not clearly describe the potential problems, the actions taken to address the problems, and whether these actions had resolved the problems. Overall, this lack of clear documentation does not allow DOD to have reasonable assurance that potential problems related to the administration of the PDHRA to Reserve component servicemembers have been addressed and resolved.