

Clinic closures lead to more appointments, speed

Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office

Clinic closures lead to more appointments, speed in care

June 30, 2009 – Clients of Dunham Army Health Clinic are seeing the benefits of the clinic's new schedule after just a few months.

The clinic began closing on Thursday afternoons in April to help maximize time for patient care. Dunham and its three subordinate clinics at the Defense Distribution Center in New Cumberland, Fort Indiantown Gap and Letterkenney Army Depot close every Thursday afternoon to complete mandatory training and administrative requirements.

"The dedicated weekly closure time helps optimize our ability to care for our patients," said **Col. Kenneth Trzepakowski**, Dunham Clinic Commander. This closure includes all ancillary services to include Pharmacy, Radiology, Laboratory and Immunizations. "Our goal is to have the right number of providers seeing patients, with the right number of nursing and ancillary staff in support, to take care of medical needs," he said.

Since the closures began, Dunham has been able to add about eight appointments a week, but the good news for patients doesn't end there.

"We've also been able to speed up our referral and other paperwork processes which means faster care and access for our users," said Trzepakowski. The ability to complete trainings and paperwork has also allowed the clinic to remain open on two military training holidays, further creating more access.

The decreased wait time for referrals has been great, according to one of their clients.

"It definitely seems like it's taken less time to get my referrals," said retired Air Force Col. **James Watson** who comes to the clinic for his medical care. "I think it's great."

The plan has been so effective Trzepakowski has been asked to brief it to other medical leaders at an upcoming North Atlantic Regional Medical Command workshop.

"Our ultimate goal here at Dunham is to maximize the time that providers are seeing patients in the

most efficient manner."

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 01 July 2009