

# Commentary: Readiness is everyone's responsibility

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Ready? It's time to take an 'I'm responsible' attitude toward the likelihood of natural disaster, contagious medical conditions, and a host of surprises.

Bottom line up front? Everyone should have a 3-day emergency supply kit, a family emergency plan, and understanding of the emergencies that could occur and appropriate responses.

Be educated to be ready. This Banner's theme is awareness ... resources ... readiness for possibilities ahead.

- Be aware of cardiovascular conditions in order to understand your role in health and fitness. Be ready to change, thanks to assessment programs of the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute and its APFRI Health Day to focus attention on awareness and resources. Women's Health Day, Oct. 5, will present cardiovascular issues and nutrition for women.

- Be aware that seasonal flu and H1N1 flu are not the same. Dunham Clinic will initiate seasonal flu shots here at the end of September. Be ready for flu shots, to be publicized in the Banner.

- Be aware that, this year, many will need a second vaccination, for H1N1. It's expected to be available about the time that seasonal flu vaccinations are completed. Be ready -- to wash hands often and avoid touching nose and mouth; know the symptoms, much like seasonal flu, and when to seek medical attention. Check the Banner online for updated information.

- Be aware that military kids here are at the head of the line for creative programming. Be ready to take advantage of the YS programs that link up on-post and off-post expertise for an extraordinary set of youth fun and learning.

- Be aware of the challenges and resources for aging parents, financial planning, family development, and more. Be ready to take advantage of the rich variety of Military Family Programs.

- Be aware that winter ice and snow are likely culprits for natural calamity in central Pennsylvania, although tornadoes visit irregularly. Be ready: keep ice-melt at home, retrain for winter driving tactics, and prepare an emergency kit for possible heat/power outage.

- Be aware that suicides are an alarming probability within our military force, and that your

colleague or spouse could be showing signs of depression. Be ready to Ask – Care – Escort to help.

“The fact that these some of the Army’s toughest Soldiers doesn’t protect them from inner demons,” said David Martin, CBS News, reporting from Fort Campbell earlier this year.

“We didn’t know depressions could kill you. We did not know you could die from depression,” said Maj. Gen. Mark Graham, who has spoken frankly about his son Kevin’s 2003 suicide.

“We train our Soldiers to be hard, to be tough for a fight because their life depends on it,” he said. “We also train them to help those fellow Soldiers that are hurt or wounded.

“If a Soldier’s got a broken leg, they know exactly what to do: they take them for help.

“Senior leaders Admiral Mullen, Chief of Staff Gen. Casey and Vice Chief Gen. Chiarelli are personally involved in this .... What we’re trying to do now is get ahead of suicide,” said Graham.

What are the warning signs? What do you do?

“If a Soldier starts feeling sad, or you start seeing that sad feeling in him, or if they’re not sleeping, or their attitude changes, or they start drinking too much ...

What do you do? You do something.

Ask the question: are you thinking about killing yourself?

Care for them if they are ... let them talk to you,

Escort them: “Physically go with them to get some help,” said Graham. “We do the buddy thing in the Army for so many things. We need to continue to do it here.

“Every door that a Soldier walks through for help needs to be a right door.”

Be aware of the warning signs. Be ready to A.C.E.