

BASE VISIT REPORT**Keesler Air Force Base****18 June 2005****LEAD COMMISSIONER:** Admiral Gehman**ACCOMPANYING COMMISSIONER:** N/A**COMMISSION STAFF:** Justin Breitschopf, Air Force Team Analyst; Brian McDaniel, Navy Team Analyst**LIST OF ATTENDEES:**

- Mr. James Vollmuth, BRAC Trusted Agent, 81 TRW/XP
- Mr Jerry Taranto, 81 TRW/PA
- Lt Charity Brandy, , 81st Training Wing Public Affairs Office (81 TRW/PA)
- SMSgt Patricia Craft, 81 TRW/CCP
- Mr Steve Pivnick, 81 MDG/PA
- Capt Sandra Byrum, 81st Training Wing Protocol (81 TRW/CCP)
- Brig Gen David G. Young III, Commander, 81st Medical Group (81 MDG/CC)
- Col Doug Hayner, Vice Commander, 81st Training Wing (81 TRW/CV)
- Maj Gen (S) Bill Lord, 81 TRW/CC
- Mr Mitch Waldman, National Security Adviser, Office of Senator Trent Lott
- Ms Myrtis Franke, Executive Assistant, Office of Senator Trent Lott
- Ms Suzanne Case, Office Director, Office of Senator Thad Cochran
- Mr Steven Peranich, Chief of Staff for Congressman Gene Taylor
- Mr Brian Martin, Policy Director for Congressman Gene Taylor
- Mr William Crawford, Dep Dir MS Development Authority (Office of Gov Barbour)
- Lt Col John Tenaglia, Legislative Liaison, SAF/LLP
- Mr. Steve Pivnick, 81 MDG/PA
- MSgt Roger Drinnon, 81 TRW/PA

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:

Installation Mission: "Advance Critical Mission Capabilities of the Air and Space Expeditionary Force...Warriors...Training Warriors...For Warriors!"

Medical Mission: Medical Readiness is the primary mission of the 81st Medical Group that operates Keesler Medical Center, the second largest medical center in the entire Air Force.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

Realign Keesler Air Force Base, MS, by disestablishing the inpatient mission at the 81st Medical Group; converting the medical center to a clinic with an ambulatory surgery center.

Note: This is one of nine hospitals that DoD is recommending be disestablished and converted to a clinic with an ambulatory surgery center under the Convert Inpatient Services to Clinics Recommendation. (The other facilities are: Naval Hospital Cherry Point, NC; Ft. Eustis Medical Facility; Ft. Carson Medical Facility; Andres AFB, MD 89th Medical Group; MacDill AFB, FL 6th Medical Group; Fort Knox, KY; Scott AFB, IL 375th Medical Group; and Naval Hospital Great Lakes, IL.)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

The Department will rely on the civilian medical network for inpatient services. This recommendation supports strategies of reducing excess capacity and locating military personnel in activities with higher military value with a more diverse workload, providing them with enhance opportunities to maintain their medical currency to meet COCOM requirements. Additionally, a robust network with available inpatient capacity of Joint Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO) and/or Medicare accredited civilian/Veterans Affairs hospitals is located within 40 miles of the referenced facility.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:

Keesler Medical Center

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Ability of area hospitals to absorb the additional workload as a result of recommendation.
- Loss of training programs Keesler Medical Center (Graduate Medical Education) will be able to offer.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED

- Loss of Graduate Medical Education training program
- Diminished response time
- Accurately measuring bed utilization in area hospitals and comparing this with Keesler facilities used in developing this recommendation
- Outsourcing as measured by the 40 mile radius as dedicated in the SECDEF's recommendation does not account for the half of the area that is under water in this circle. Thus, available coverage by outside hospitals is cut in half.
- Limited medical services
- Willingness of area hospitals to accept TRICARE

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

- Job loss
- Diminished access to quality healthcare

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT: N/A