What is Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services?

Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services (MHEMS) is the on-site health services clinic for USMMA midshipmen/plebe candidates and is located at Patten Hall. Healthcare services include: routine sea year physical assessments; medical laboratory procedures; immunizations (required for sea year clearance); treatment of routine illnesses; assistance with prescribed medications and pharmaceutical supplies; public health prevention education; annual oral evaluations, general dentistry and dental hygiene; and individual or group counseling sessions for maintaining personal wellness.

What happens if I am too sick to be cared for at Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services?

Students will be evaluated at MHEMS. If a determination is made that they require a higher level of care they will be transported to the nearest emergency room. Transportation will be arranged by the clinic staff and evaluated on an individual basis.

What is a “sick chit”?

A sick chit is a written pass that is given to an injured or sick student from a health care provider. This provides special instruction and/or permission to be excused from class and/or activities.

If I have not received any routine childhood immunizations, can I still attend the USMMA?

Acceptable documentation of childhood immunizations must be submitted to MHEMS prior to arriving at the Academy (for all primary, routine, and booster immunizations, please refer to the MHEMS Welcome Letter for additional details). Your immunization record becomes a permanent part of your medical chart and is necessary for the medical staff to confirm that Plebe Candidates can safely participate in and complete Indoctrination activities. Plebe Candidates without these immunizations, or without acceptable proof of immunization, are at risk for medical injury which would render him/her incapable of participating in Indoctrination. Additionally, at a later time, this proof of immunization also enables the medical staff to determine that a Midshipman is medically qualified for assignment to participate in required safety training at U.S. military facilities, and Sea Year training with commercial maritime companies, and U.S. military services. Last, but not least, successful matriculation and graduation from the Academy is impossible without this documentation.

If I only received 1 dose of Hepatitis A will I be able to attend INDOC?

Hepatitis A is a series of 2 shots that are given 6 months apart by your primary care physician. If the second dose was not given prior to INDOC you need to make an appointment with your private doctor during Thanksgiving or Christmas break for the second dose. The USMMA does not offer the Hepatitis A vaccine. We can make an appointment for you to go to a travel clinic or the department of health but you are responsible for any fees incurred. Failure to receive the 2nd dose of Hepatitis A may result in an inability to be medically cleared to go to sea.
Our family physician said the Tdap (Tetanus toxoid, Diphtheria, Pertussis) vaccine is usually given every 10 years. Why does the USMMA want it given every 5 years?

The Tdap vaccine will be administered after 5 years because there is a higher risk of infection when going out to sea. Some of the vaccine may be less effective throughout the 10 years, so a booster shot is recommended after 5 years.

Which vaccinations will I receive as a midshipman in preparation for Sea Duty?

You will receive Yellow Fever, Typhoid and Flu vaccinations in preparation for sea. If indicated, an updated Tetanus (Tdap) will also be administered. Administration of these vaccines will be provided at Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services. Information will be provided at the time of administration regarding the vaccination and any possible side effects or reactions.

Will I be required to receive a small pox vaccine?

This will be determined by the shipping company once a shipping assignment has been made. If necessary, small pox vaccine will be administered by the shipping company.

Can medications be brought to INDOC?

Plebe Candidates are instructed NOT to bring any over-the-counter medications with them. If they are brought to indoctrination they will be collected from all Plebe Candidates upon their arrival. This includes but is not limited to any pain medication (e.g. Tylenol, Aleve, Advil, aspirin, ibuprofen); allergy medications, antihistamine; decongestants; herbal supplements or remedies; vitamins and nutritional or sports supplements.

Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services will not be responsible for the return of any over-the-counter medication.

Plebe candidates should NOT bring any prescription medications with them unless the medication is specifically prescribed for them. There must be an accompanying note from the prescribing physician or dentist stating the reason why the medication was prescribed. These medications will be collected, identified and be recorded in the Candidate’s health record before being returned.

Any medication that is not in its original container or is unlabeled will be confiscated and disposed of by the Academy’s Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services without exception.

Do I have to take out my wisdom teeth if there is room in my mouth for them to grow?

If your wisdom teeth are fully erupted (no flap of skin covering the tooth) and there’s room in your mouth for them to grow out, then extraction is not required. If during your sea duty dental clearance exam, your wisdom teeth are partially erupted, you are required to remove the wisdom teeth. Partial eruption of a wisdom tooth creates a flap of gum tissue next to the tooth. The flap can trap bits of food and debris. It can turn into a hotbed for bacteria. While out at sea you might not have access to dental or medical care, therefore partially erupted wisdom teeth must come out to avoid a potential risk of infection.
Is there a waiting period from the day of my wisdom teeth extraction and the date of my sea year clearance?

After the extraction, you must be monitored by a dentist for at least four weeks before you can be cleared because it is possible to have postoperative complications (such as dry socket). Therefore, plan ahead and do not wait until the deadline date to make an appointment. It is also recommended to have the extraction done during the summer, Thanksgiving, winter or spring break to avoid disruptions in academic and extracurricular activities.

How can I request to be seen in Counseling (MCPD) during INDOC?

Plebe Candidates may self-refer by falling out of formation during morning sick call (daily, after 0720 post breakfast formation for Colors at Barney Square) and request to be seen by a Counselor at MCPD to the clinical medical triage team. Candidates are then escorted to MHEMS at Patten Hall by the medical triage team and are seen by the Counseling team at MCPD. Subsequent follow-up care is provided via pre-set appointments ensuring the least level of disruption to the Candidates’ training schedules.

MHEMS clinical service providers may also refer Plebe Candidates to be seen by the Counseling team at MCPD. This method of referral provides the highest level of confidentiality to the Candidates. All subsequent care is provided on a pre-set appointment basis ensuring the least level of disruption to the Candidates’ training schedules.

In addition, a Plebe Candidate may simply request to be seen by MHEMS at Patten Hall to regimental staff, athletic trainers, USMMA EMTs, or any other academy staff, who will then notify the 24/7 USMMA EMT Dispatcher to transport the Candidate to MHEMS at Patten Hall, or to North Shore University Hospital Emergency Department if MHEMS at Patten Hall is closed (1900 – 0700). Plebe Candidates who are treated at NSUH ED and return to USMMA overnight are seen by MHEMS providers at Patten Hall during morning sick call as described above.

It is important to note that access to medical care is treated with the highest level of sensitivity, and confidentiality. All INDOC teams on campus are briefed on how to properly handle protected health information (PHI) to be compliant with provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Privacy Act of 1974, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - to the extent that each law applies.

I expect that INDOC will be a big adjustment for me. What do I do if it starts to seem like it’s too much once I get there?

INDOC is a BIG adjustment and a BIG stress for each Plebe Candidate (even if most Candidates don’t say so out loud). Many Candidates initially report feeling “totally stressed out.” If these feelings ever start to interfere with your training, your sleep, your appetite or your sense of well-being, ask to be seen in Medical, describe your situation, and we will work with you to find the best solution for you.
What preventative measures can be taken to minimize the risk of injury or illness during INDOC?

Prior to INDOC it is important to get yourself in shape by exercising and running daily. Wearing proper fitting sneakers that have been “broken in” is very helpful. During INDOC, it is extremely important to maintain proper hygiene and wash your hands frequently. In addition, it is important to drink water frequently throughout the day to stay well hydrated. We recommend smaller amounts frequently rather than “chugging.”

18. Why is it important for me to disclose my full medical information?

It is essential that your complete past medical history is made known so that any issues can be resolved as soon as possible. In the past, there have been situations when non-disclosure of prior medical issues has resulted in a medical disqualification. Had this information been disclosed immediately, the students involved may have been eligible for a medical waiver to attend and or continue at the USMMA.

Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services staff is committed to optimizing the health and well-being of the midshipmen. We work closely with the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure that midshipmen maintain their medical eligibility for licensing and commissioning. It is always best to bring any new medical issues to the attention of the medical staff immediately. They will work to ensure the best possible resolution.

22. Will basic services continue to be provided by USMMA, MHEMS?

All Medical & Dental care that can be provided on site at MHEMS at Patten Hall in support of the Midshipman Program is considered to meet the definition of “limited medical & dental care” referred to in “Title 46: Shipping, PART 310—MERCHANT MARINE TRAINING, Subpart C—Admission and Training of Midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Specifically, § 310.62 (a) Items furnished: Each midshipman shall receive: Free tuition, quarters and subsistence; limited medical and dental care; and certain travel expenses,”

Limited medical & dental care includes any & all care needs that can be managed on site at USMMA within the confines of Patten Hall. Insurance will not be required for this onsite care. Any offsite healthcare intervention, outside of Patten Hall, required to support onsite care or if the onsite care needs exceed the capabilities of our onsite facility, said care will become an insurance billable event from offsite healthcare providers. A more in depth explanation can be found on the Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services Website, http://www.usmma.edu/

23. Will the EMT Squad continue to exist and be supported with Academy funding and will it still provide emergency transport to North Shore Hospital or will individual calls need to be made for emergencies as they arise?

There is no change to the Academy supported EMS Squad which is supervised and operated under Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services. The squad will continue to operate and provide emergency medical services to the Midshipmen. There is only one emergency number to request an
ambulance. It is 516.726.5858. These emergency care needs are considered part of the minimal medical care standard. There is no charge for emergency medical services.

30. Will any type of appointment scheduling be provided by staff at Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services?

Yes. Midshipmen Health & Emergency Medical Services has always managed appointment scheduling & will continue to provide this service.

33. Exactly what services are provided on site by MHEMS?

Generally, any healthcare needs required for graduation. There can be exceptions. Please visit www.usmma.edu/ for more information.