U.S. ARMY AFRICA'S MEDICAL THEATER ENTRY PORTAL: AN INNOVATIVE MEDICAL READINESS SYSTEM

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Introduction

All travelers entering the U.S. Africa Command area of operations must be medically, dentally, and psychologically fit.[1] Travelers must possess a current period health assessment and dental exam, take required medical tests, obtain required immunizations, and be free from deployment-limiting conditions.

From August to October 2017, 37 percent of U.S. Army Africa travelers were fully medically ready to depart the date of the travel request, 35 percent of travelers required a medical waiver, and the average medical clearance time was ten business days. The U.S. Army Africa Travel Medicine Team sent travelers over 300 emails per month and spent at least 35 minutes to assess the medical readiness status.
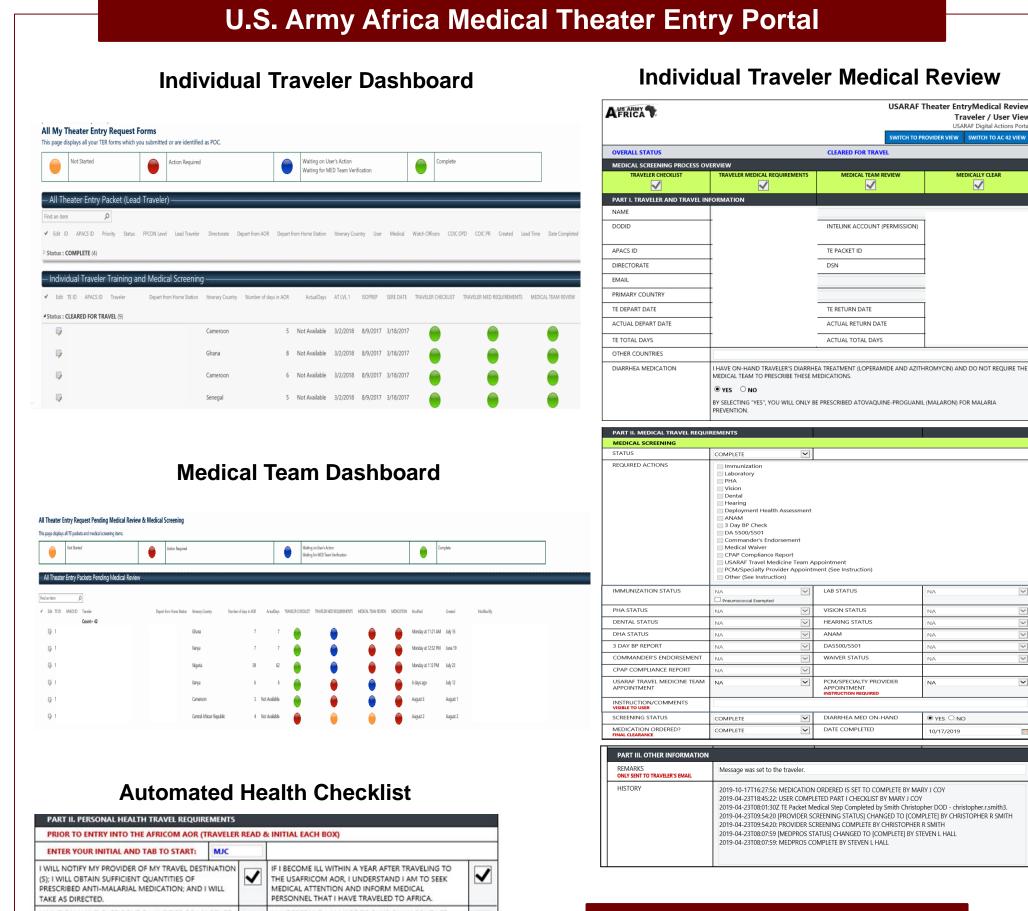
Aim

Design a medical travel clearance process and medical theater entry portal that is accurate, timely and usable for travelers, medical travel team, and commanders to make effective determination on the medical deployability of a traveler to Africa. The portal will meet all security and privacy requirements.

Methods

Using continuous quality improvement and Army Knowledge Management (KM) methodologies, a multidisciplinary team was created to identify ways to simplify the medical readiness clearance process, piece together medical readiness data to make information and produce knowledge for the commander to make effective decisions.

Maximizing Microsoft SharePoint functionality, the team created the U.S. Army Africa Medical Theater Entry Portal focused on navigational ease, content management compliance and streamlining business processes.

U.S. Army Africa Medical Theater Entry Portal

Individual Traveler Dashboard

Medical Team Dashboard

Automated Health Checklist

Individual Traveler Medical Review

Interventions

- Created a Travel Medicine Team and traveler real-time medical readiness dashboard for transparency, engagement and accountability
- Automated, interactive workflow and correspondence for efficient communication between the traveler and the Travel Medicine Team
- Date/time stamp of all communication
- Automated Africa Command Health Checklist
- Integrated travelers outside USARAF
- Used by greater than 3,000 travelers

Army Knowledge Management

The Army defines KM as the process of enabling knowledge flow to enhance shared understanding, learning, and decision making. Applying effective KM practices ensures that knowledge products and services are relevant, accurate, timely, and usable for commanders and decision makers.[2]

KM creates shared understanding through the alignment of people, processes, tools and organization in order to increase collaboration and understanding.[3] KM enables senior leaders to make informed, timely decisions despite the uncertainty of the operational environment.[4]

Conclusion

The U.S. Army Africa Medical Theater Entry Portal is an innovative solution that reshaped the travel medical clearance process resulting in greater efficiencies, integration of medical readiness information, and optimized technology for communication and coordination. This capability was seamlessly integrated with the overall theater entry process, which was utilized by U.S. Army Soldiers, civilians, and contractors entering Africa.

Each Geographic Combatant Command has unique medical readiness and force health protection requirements that requires a more comprehensive system to provide leaders with a realistic picture of the operational force's medical readiness. The U.S. Army Africa Medical Theater Entry Portal is an effective solution that is synchronized with all theater entry requirements providing leaders with a visualization of the traveler's readiness to operate in a dynamic environment.

Citations

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