

81 MEDICAL GROUP



MISSION

The 81 Medical Group, the Air Force's third largest medical group, operates Keesler Medical Center, one of the largest medical centers in the Air Force. Its primary mission is to maintain medical readiness for worldwide contingencies by providing quality, cost-effective healthcare for 10,947 active duty and 46,981 eligible local beneficiaries in a 40-mile catchment area. The 81st MDG commander also oversees the Gulf Coast Multi-Service Market, which includes five military medical treatment facilities and two Coast Guard medical facilities stretching from Mobile, Ala., to New Orleans, coordinating care for 75,824 eligible beneficiaries along the Gulf Coast.

The 81 Medical Group provides the most comprehensive array and quality of services available in the Gulf Coast area. TRICARE Prime is the DoD's premier program for delivering comprehensive health care. Keesler Medical Center is clearly the best place to enroll for most all health care situations.

The 81 MDG is responsible for deploying an Expeditionary Medical Support hospital with support staff when directed and is responsible for managing the second largest mobility mission in the Air Force. The medical group continues to deploy medics in support of contingencies around the world.

Keesler Medical Center also serves as the Federal Coordinating Center for the National Disaster Medical System, the medical arm of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They manage and maintain memorandums of agreement with 25 civilian medical facilities throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The medical center offers almost 60 services and education programs with a staff of approximately 1,700 military and civilian members and partnerships with Tricare and the University of Mississippi Medical Center. The medical center has seven newly-renovated surgery suites and a myriad of improvements throughout the basement including flood barriers

on external doors and a re-alignment of high-dollar assets to floors above the basement level.

Keesler Medical Center opened its new Family Birthing Center unit on Jan. 8, 2007. The new unit offers large, airy rooms where women spend their entire stay throughout the delivery experience. They are light-filled, decorated with pastel colors and have wood floors. The medical equipment in the rooms is state-of-the art. Each has a TV and DVD player. Most important to mothers, the birthing center rooms have private bathrooms and each room has its own coastal theme. Babies stay with their mothers most of the time. The unit also includes a transitional nursery for newborns requiring a bit more attention after delivery. In addition to the delivery rooms, there are also antepartum rooms for expectant mothers who experience medical problems early in their pregnancies, and two operating rooms for Caesarian deliveries. A Newborn Intensive Care Unit offers care for premature and very ill newborns by a highly-trained staff of professionals, including neonatologists and specialized nurses and medical technicians.

The medical center's Diagnostic Imaging Department boasts state-of-the-art equipment, including the only 3-Tesla MRI system in the Air Force. In addition, the Keesler Warfighter Refractive Surgery Center is the Air Force's flagship for laser eye surgery in the Southeast.

Keesler Medical Center also is a teaching facility. Medical and surgical residencies have returned. However, the population demographics changed considerably post-Katrina due to an initial surge of younger, unmarried service members, leading to an insufficient number of children and expectant mothers among the beneficiary population to sustain independent pediatric and obstetrics/gynecology residency programs. In the interim, the Air Force has established an affiliation with the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson allowing Keesler Medical Center to place military residents in those specialties, to do part of their training at the UMMC facility. OB/GYN residents will spend six months in Jackson and six months at Keesler Medical Center. Pediatric residents will also be assigned to the UMMC but will complete two-month rotations at Keesler each academic year.

The medical center provides training to dental residents in Advanced Education in General Dentistry and Dental General Practice. The third dental residency, in endodontics, returns in the summer of 2008. Eight enlisted phase II training programs are offered as well as the Nurse Transition Program for nurses new to the Air Force.

Keesler Medical Center is one of only three Air Force medical facilities that has a formal clinical investigations program in a dedicated research facility with resources specifically designated to support such operations. The medical group also operates the only medical genetics center in the DOD.

LINEAGE

81 Station Medical Group constituted and activated, 1 May 1948

Redesignated 81 Medical Group, 16 Jul 1949

Redesignated 81 Tactical Infirmary, 8 Mar 1954

Redesignated 81 Tactical Hospital, 15 Mar 1956
Inactivated, 30 Jun 1971
Redesignated 81 Medical Group, 16 Jun 1993
Activated, 1 Jul 1993

STATIONS

Wheeler AFB, Oahu, T. H., 1 May 1948-21 May 1949
Kirtland AFB, NM, 5 Jun 1949
Moses Lake (later, Larson) AFB, WA, 1 May 1950-21 Aug 1951
Bentwaters RAF Station (later, RAF Bentwaters), England, 5 Sep 1951-30 Jun 1971
Keesler AFB, MS, 1 Jul 1993

ASSIGNMENTS

81 Fighter (later, 81 Fighter-Interceptor; 81 Fighter-Bomber; 81 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 1
May 1948-30 Jun 1971
81 Training Wing, 1 Jul 1993

COMMANDERS



LTC Herman S. Parish, Jr. (USAF photo)

LTC Herman S. Parish, Jr., #1959

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jul 1961-30 Jun 1963
1 Jun 1966-31 May 1968

1 Jul 1968-30 Jun 1970
1 Jul 1996-30 Jun 1997
1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1999
1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2001
1 Jun 2005-30 Jun 2006
1 Jul 2007- 30 Jun 2009
1 Jul 2009-30 Jun 2011
1 Jul 2011-30 Jun 2013

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MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 23 Aug 2010

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit yearbook. *81 Tactical Fighter Wing. 1959*. Reg. Cholerton. Newton-Le-Willows, England. 1959.