



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

MEDDAC marches towards resiliency

By: Stacy Neumann, Medical Department Activity Public Affairs

Not even the first frost of the year could keep more than 1,000 Evans Army Community Hospital Family members from taking a step towards suicide prevention awareness. To be precise, it was enough steps to travel 2.8 miles on a course winding around the outside of the hospital.

As part of the Army-wide stand down to increase suicide awareness, the U.S. Army Medical Department created a Resiliency Walk for its employees and their Families. Those who couldn't walk attended an educational session in a hospital classroom.

"We know that being healthy is about mind, body and spirit," said Col. John M. McGrath, hospital commander. "This gave us a chance to share an experience with one another, get to know someone you'd never met, and enjoy the beautiful Colorado outdoors."

Decked out in Volksmarch gear and workout clothes, employees gathered in the morning to hear the commander speak. He emphasized the need to get to know the folks around you, break out of your comfort zone, and learn that we are all responsible for helping one another.

The staff then set off for the walk. Along the route, the hospital chaplains and behavioral health specialists set up five learning stations and gave mini-briefings on various topics. These included: learning about the warning signs of suicide, how to increase resiliency, decreasing stigma, and how to help a buddy.

Patricia Hunnell, Patient Administration Division, said, "I really liked it. One of the sergeants was speaking about not asking a depressed friend, 'Why?' I never thought about it. I'm going to go back and write down his advice."

OB/GYN employee Bernadette Farmer added, "It was great. There was a lot of good information and it was a huge morale boost to have everyone together. There was so much camaraderie."

McGrath and Command Sgt. Maj. Ly Lac greeted the marchers as they returned to the hospital, slapping high fives and shaking hands. Employees were then treated to fruit and looked over some static displays on suicide



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prevention before returning to their work day. Quality Support Division's Jennifer Cate smiled as she crossed the finish line.

"We ran around and introduced ourselves to other people. There was a lot to learn and it built morale to do it together. Just awesome," she said.

