

MCWP 4-11.1

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# Health Service Support Operations

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**U.S. Marine Corps**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
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FOREWORD

“*Corpsman Up!*” has echoed across numerous battlefields in America’s history. To answer this cry, medical personnel assigned to Marine Corps forces (MARFOR) must be knowledgeable, prepared, and able to provide responsive health service support (HSS) so Marines can do what they do best: win battles. Commanders must be aware of HSS requirements and their contributions to mission accomplishment.

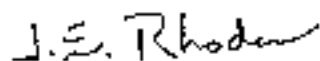
Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 4-11.1, *Health Service Support Operations*, disseminates information on the mission, functions, structure, and concept of employment of HSS units. This publication provides overarching doctrine and establishes a practical approach to HSS from the perspective of the commander or staff officer who can apply it without any significant medical background.

This publication establishes general guidance that requires judgment in application. Lower-level tactics, techniques, and procedures for specific application will be published in MCRP 4-22B, *HSS Field Reference Guide*. This MCWP pertains equally to small-unit leaders and senior commanders.

MCWP 4-11.1 supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 4-50, *Health Service Support*, dated 19 September 1990.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. E. Rhodes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

J. E. RHODES  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commanding General  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command

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## To Our Readers

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**Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both men and women are included.**

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## Chapter 1

# Fundamentals

Focus of health service support (HSS) in the past has been on establishing a large and complex system to maximize returns to duty. Our current focus emphasizes the provision of far-forward, mobile, medical and surgical support and stabilization and rapid evacuation of casualties who are unable to quickly return to duty.

HSS is a process that delivers on demand to the warfighter a healthy, fit, and medically ready force; counters the health threat to the deployed force; and provides critical care and management for combat casualties. Aided by technological innovation and logistics, HSS is the employment of medical forces in support of the warfighter.

HSS supports the National Military Strategy of forward presence and power projection. HSS strengthens the warfighting commander by providing essential care in the theater and rapid aeromedical evacuation (AE) of casualties to enhanced medical treatment facilities in the continental United States (CONUS) for definitive care without sacrificing quality of care.

### **1001. Mission**

The HSS mission is to minimize the effects that wounds, injuries, and disease have on units' effectiveness, readiness, and morale. The mission is accomplished by a preventive medicine program that safeguards personnel against potential health risks and by establishing an HSS system. The system provides support from

the point of wounding, injury, or illness and evacuation to a medical treatment facility that can provide the level of care required by the patient.

## 1002. Principles

HSS principles are guides for planning, organizing, managing, and executing Service support. Seldom will all principles exert equal influence; usually, one or two will dominate a given situation. Identifying which ones have priority is essential to establishing effective HSS. Joint Pub 4-02, *Doctrine for Health Service Support in Joint Operations*, states that each Service component has an HSS system that encompasses—

- Conformity—the medical plan must integrate and comply with the commander’s plan.
- Proximity—the medical plan must provide HSS as close to combat operations as the tactical situation permits.
- Flexibility—the medical plan must shift HSS resources to meet changing requirements.
- Mobility—the medical plan must anticipate requirements for rapid movement of HSS units to support combat forces during operations.
- Continuity—the medical plan must provide optimum, uninterrupted care and treatment to the wounded, injured, and sick.
- Coordination—the medical plan must ensure that HSS resources in short supply are efficiently employed and used effectively to support the planned operations.