81st MEDICAL GROUP

LINEAGE

STATIONS
Keesler AFB, MS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS
Service Streamers
Campaign Streamers
Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers
Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO
OPERATIONS
The 81st 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 81st 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 81st 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. However, 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 also 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 also offered as well as the Nurse Transition Program for nurses new to the Air Force.

Keesler Medical Center also 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.

Furthermore, the medical group also operates the only medical genetics center in the DOD.

81st Medical Group: assigned to ADC on 1 January 1951 at Larson AFB, WA, and assigned to 81st Fighter-Interceptor Wing; transferred to 3d AF, Suffolk, England, on 22 August 1951.

1 Jul 1993 HQ AETC activated the 81st Training Wing and assigned it to Second Air Force. The wing assumed the old center mission. Major components of the wing included the 81st Technical Training, 81st Support, 81st Logistics, and 81st Medical Groups.

25 Aug 1994 The 81st Medical Group's functions were divided among four newly-activated units: the 81st Medical Operations, 81st Aerospace Medicine, 81st Dental, and 81st Medical Support Squadrons.
The status of AETC's two largest medical facilities also changed on 1 July 1993. The command redesignated Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center at Lackland as the 59th Medical Wing, though the facility continued to be called Wilford Hall Medical Center, and replaced the Keesler Medical Center with the 81st Medical Group.