



February 18, 2026

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The undersigned organizations—representing veterans as well as stomach cancer, ulcer, and gastritis patients, survivors, providers, researchers, and caregivers—write to express strong support for including a **cost and feasibility study in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to evaluate *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) testing for certain members of the Armed Forces.**

There is a significant risk of *H. pylori*—a known human carcinogen—among U.S. military service members¹. When undetected and untreated, *H. pylori* infection can lead to serious and sometimes fatal conditions, including stomach cancer², lymphoma³, ulcers, and chronic gastritis⁴. A recently published study estimates that one quarter of the U.S. veteran population is at risk for consequences of chronic *H. pylori* infection⁵. **Importantly, evidence shows that when *H. pylori* is identified through testing and treated to eradication, these risks are substantially reduced.**^{6,7}

Research also indicates that *H. pylori* infection may be present prior to enlistment or commissioning, particularly among individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or those who are foreign-born⁸. Active-duty service members may face additional risk during deployment outside the continental United States—especially in regions where *H. pylori* prevalence is high—or

¹ Carmack SW, Genta RM. Helicobacter pylori seroprevalence in symptomatic veterans: a study of 7310 patients over 11 years. *Helicobacter*. 2009 Aug;14(4):298-302. doi: 10.1111/j.1523-5378.2009.00693.x. PMID: 19674134.

² Program Booklet. Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program April 2025
https://cdmnp.health.mil/prcrp/pbks/PRCRP%20Program%20Book_Final.pdf

³ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2026*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2026.

⁴ Kang JK, Kim E, Kim KH, Oh SH. Association of Helicobacter pylori with gastritis and peptic ulcer diseases. *Yonsei Med J*. 1991 Jun;32(2):157-68. doi: 10.3349/ymj.1991.32.2.157. PMID: 1949918.

⁵ Shah SC, Halvorson AE, Lee D, Bustamante R, McBay B, et al. Helicobacter pylori Burden in the United States According to Individual Demographics and Geography: A Nationwide Analysis of the Veterans Healthcare System. *Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol*. 2024 Jan;22(1):42-50.e26. doi: 10.1016/j.cgh.2023.05.016. Epub 2023 May Sense26. PMID: 37245717.

⁶ Kumar S, Metz DC, Ellenberg S, Kaplan DE, Goldberg DS. Risk Factors and Incidence of Gastric Cancer After Detection of Helicobacter pylori Infection: A Large Cohort Study. *Gastroenterology*. 2020 Feb;158(3):527-536.e7. doi: 10.1053/j.gastro.2019.10.019. Epub 2019 Oct 22. PMID: 31654635; PMCID: PMC7010558.

⁷ Li D, Jiang SF, Lei NY, Shah SC, Corley DA. Effect of Helicobacter pylori Eradication Therapy on the Incidence of Noncardia Gastric Adenocarcinoma in a Large Diverse Population in the United States. *Gastroenterology*. 2023 Aug;165(2):391-401.e2. doi:10.1053/j.gastro.2023.04.026. Epub 2023 May 2. PMID: 37142201.e

⁸ Hyams KC, Taylor DN, Gray GC, Knowles JB, Hawkins R, Malone JD. The risk of Helicobacter pylori infection among U.S. military personnel deployed outside the United States. *Am J Trop Med Hyg*. 1995 Jan;52(1):109-12. doi: 10.4269/ajtmh.1995.52.109. PMID: 7856819.

due to crowded living conditions. Given the significant health burden, long-term costs of care, and potential impact on force readiness associated with untreated *H. pylori* infection, our organizations strongly support establishing an *H. pylori* testing program for members of the Armed Forces, along with clear processes and protocols for treatment when individuals test positive.

We respectfully urge you to include the language below—previously adopted in the Senate’s FY 2025 NDAA—in your FY 2027 NDAA request. For additional information, please contact Megan Gordon Don, Policy Advisor for Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer, at 202-246-8095 or mgdon@mgdstrategies.com. We would appreciate notification if you plan to include this language in your requests so that our coalition may recognize your support.

Sincerely,

American College of Gastroenterologists
(ACG)
American Gastroenterological Association
(AGA)
American Society for Gastrointestinal
Endoscopy (ASGE)
Army Week Association
Debbie’s Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach
Cancer (DDF)
Digestive Disease National Coalition (DDNC)

GI Cancers Alliance
Hope for Stomach Cancer
International Foundation for Gastrointestinal
Diseases (IFFGD)
Jacqueline Rush Foundation
No Stomach for Cancer
Project Periwinkle
The Raymond Foundation
SGT Sullivan Circle
Veterans for Common Sense

Suggested Language for FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Request

REPORT ON PLAN FOR TESTING FOR *HELICOBACTER PYLORI* FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing a plan, cost estimate, and feasibility study for implementing testing for *helicobacter pylori* (commonly known as “*H. pylori*”)—

- (1) during accession physicals for the Armed Forces; and
- (2) for members of the Armed Forces—

- (A) deployed to countries with high rates of *H. pylori*; or
- (B) subjected to crowded living conditions, such as ship berthing.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include an estimate of costs for implementing a program for conducting testing described in subsection (a), which shall include testing for *H. pylori* using breath and stool-based methods.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF EXPERTISE.—In preparing the report required under subsection (a), the Secretary may, and is encouraged to, seek the input and expertise of physician experts, including gastroenterologists who have expertise in—

- (1) the field of *H. pylori*;
- (2) the gastrointestinal diseases and disorders that arise from *H. pylori*; or
- (3) the screening and testing mechanisms for those diseases and disorders