

**2026
DEFENSE HEALTH INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM**

**AUGUST 11-13, 2026
HYATT REGENCY NEW ORLEANS
NEW ORLEANS, LA**

Fail Fast, Field Faster ↔ Driving DHA Combat Innovation at the Speed of Relevance

CDR John de Geus, MD

Ms. Christine Sordillo, Strategic Acquisition Advisor

CPT Dylan Bowman, RN

LTJG James Owens, MSC



Agenda

- 1** Bottom Line Up Front
- 2** Operationalizing the Director's Intent
- 3** The Core Gap (Tools vs. Pathways)
- 4** Overcoming Historical Friction
- 5** The "Paved Road" from Pilot to Transition
- 6** Putting it into Practice: The ARMOR Initiative
- 7** Call to Action

Speaker Introduction



**CDR John de Geus,
MD**
OWHA



Ms. Christine Sordillo
Strategic
Acquisition Advisor



**CPT Dylon Bowman,
RN**
OWHA



LTJG James Owens
OWHA



Learning Objectives

- 1** Evaluate the gap between adopting flexible contracting tools (CSOs/OTAs) and executing rapid capability delivery to identify why historical innovation efforts have bottlenecked.
- 2** Discuss how the Office of Warfighting Health Advantage is structured as a dedicated "test/fail" cell to isolate high-priority pilots from traditional bureaucratic friction.
- 3** Identify strategies to align rapid acquisition pathways with the Director's strategic intent, solidifying DHA's role as a highly responsive combat support agency.

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)



The Goal

Deliver ready, resilient, lethal combat support capabilities at the speed of relevance.



The Reality

Flexible contracting tools (OTAs, CSOs) are necessary, but they alone do not create a rapid acquisition pathway.



The Solution

OWHA is building a dedicated, enterprise-backed "test/fail" cell to bypass historical bottlenecks, pilot innovation safely, and field solutions faster to the medical force.

Operationalizing the Director's Intent

The Strategic Mandate

DHA as a highly responsive Combat Support Agency.

The Director's Vision

Move faster, take calculated risks, and prioritize warfighter readiness.

The Execution

OWHA: A standing, resourced cell that can scope, award, and test pilots in months—not years.



The Core Gap (Tools vs. Pathways)

Feature	Flexible Tools (OTAs, CSOs)	Rapid Pathways (OWHA Cell)
Function	How we buy it (Contracting Mechanism)	How we process it (Bureaucratic Pipeline)
Current State	Available and authorized	Lacking a formalized, enterprise-wide lane
The Risk & Result	Fast tool + Slow pipeline = Bottleneck Innovation gets stuck in compliance loops	Fast tool + Fast pipeline = Speed of Relevance Innovation is tested, validated, and fielded

Overcoming Historical Friction

Previous Efforts

Past rapid cells faced debilitating inter-agency resistance because they were treated as isolated "side projects."

Lessons Learned

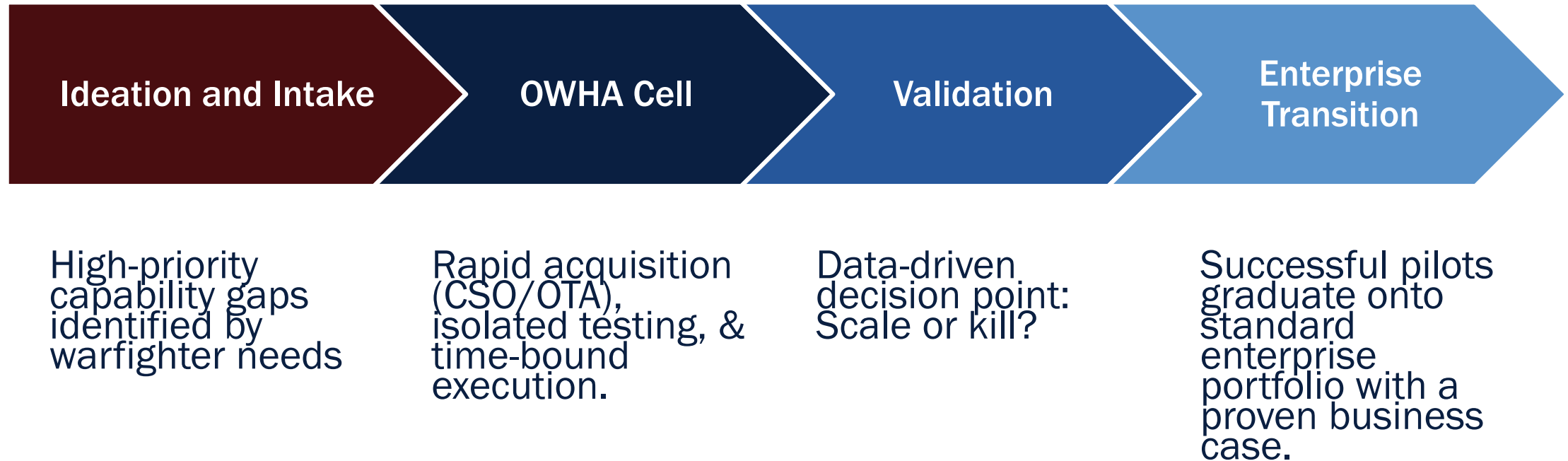
Without agency enterprise-wide buy-in, innovation cells are viewed as disruptive rather than supportive.

The OWHA Shift

We are not building a workaround; we are building a paved road. OWHA's pathway is designed to align incentives across the DHA enterprise.



The Paved Road from Pilot to Transition



Putting it into Practice: The ARMOR Initiative

1

The Challenge

Specialized Systems: Structural, workforce, qualification, and medical clearance & restriction data are housed in separate, disconnected systems.

High Latency: Current processes rely on slow, manual data reconciliation.

The Result: Delayed, risk-prone decisions on workforce allocation.

2

The Solution: ARMOR

Unified Data Fabric: Connects existing systems, avoiding disruptive replacement.

Single Source of Truth: Real-time visibility of the total medical force.

Workforce Optimization Insight: Data-driven analysis to enhance personnel allocation.

3

Fail Fast: Test & Iterate

Skip the Multi-Year Wait: Bypass slower, traditional acquisition pipelines.

90-Day Prototypes: Pilot core integrations, individually, quickly and safely.

De-Risk & Scale: Prove value early to guarantee enterprise adoption.



Call to Action



Shift the Culture

Embrace early-stage failure as the price of fielding readiness-enhancing capabilities before the next conflict.



Respect the Pathway

Treat the OWHA test/fail cell as the rapid lane for combat support capabilities, not a workaround, but the way we get lethal effects to the warfighter faster.



Partner with Us

Innovation is a team sport. Bring us high-impact solutions tied directly to readiness, resilience, and lethality of the medical force



Contact

CDR John deGeus
john.b.degeus.mil@health.mil

Ms. Christine Sordillo
Christine.f.sordillo.civ@health.mil

**2026
DEFENSE HEALTH INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM**

AUGUST 11-13, 2026
HYATT REGENCY NEW ORLEANS
NEW ORLEANS, LA

Thank You!



UNCLASSIFIED