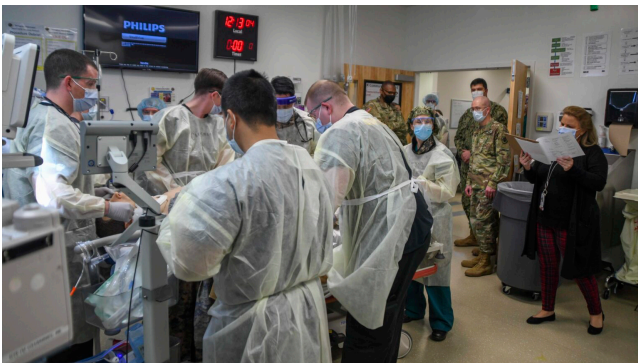


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# **‘This acquisition is no longer required:’ Defense Health Agency cancels \$96M wearable solicitation**

The cancellation comes after the solicitation was hit by two protests and the removal of DHA head Gen. Telita Crossland last week.

By CARLEY WELCH on March 05, 2025 at 1:45 PM



*Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune recently hosted the Director for Defense Health Agency, U.S. Army Lieutenant General Ronald Place and Senior Enlisted Leader for the Defense Health Agency, U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Michael L. Gragg.*

*(Photo by Michelle Cornell,  
Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune)*

WASHINGTON — The Defense Health Agency has cancelled its effort to buy \$96 million worth of biometric ring trackers, according to documentation obtained by Breaking Defense.

Initial documentation reviewed by Breaking Defense only said that the agency had determined, “This acquisition is no longer required.” A separate document, a letter from DHA addressed to the Government Accountability Office, confirmed that the solicitation had been canceled on Tuesday, adding that the request for the “biometric wearables program” was “no longer considered a priority for the Defense Health Agency.”

The DHA did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

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The move appears to put an end to a disputed contract that saw two of the giants in the wearable technology sphere launching protests and accusations at each other over a lucrative department program.

Last August, the DHA put up a notice on the government contracting site Sam.gov, announcing it was going to sole-source a \$96 million contract for wearable devices and a “wellbeing platform” to Ouraring, the US subsidiary of Finnish firm Oura

Health. The wellbeing platform refers to a system that takes data from a user's wearable device, for example a ring, watch or band, and creates a custom plan based on what the user's biometrics indicate needs improvement.

While \$96 million isn't major by Pentagon standards it was a big win for Oura; for comparison, its December series D round of fundraising was \$200 million.

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But it didn't take long for the deal to take a turn. Wearable company WHOOP protested the award to the Government Accountability Office, saying the intent to sole source lacked sufficient information.

Shortly after, the DHA wrote to GAO that they were going to cancel the sole source contract and requested that the WHOOP protest be dismissed. (Breaking Defense obtained a copy and verified the protest documents.)

After the initial contract was cancelled, another request for information and subsequent request for proposal were posted to Sam.gov by the DHA in November and December respectively, specifying that the wearable must be a ring. There are a handful of alternative wearable ring companies, but the DHA has acknowledged to lawmakers that Oura is the only wearable ring company that is cleared by DoD for use in secure facilities, according to documents reviewed by Breaking Defense. In January, WHOOP issued a second protest.

An Oura executive confirmed with Breaking Defense that the company received word from the DHA that the solicitation was cancelled.

“This contract was meant to be an efficiency initiative, and we believe that the DHA had a clear business case for how this would have

reduced costs and operational inefficiencies from burnout,” the Oura executive told Breaking Defense. “If the insights gained from a successful wearable-led initiative at DHA led to even just a 1% reduction in burnout and turnover, then the contract would have achieved a positive return on investment for an agency that spends billions of dollars on staffing.”



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By CARLEY  
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With the contract's cancellation, DHA told GAO that WHOOP's protest, therefore, is now "academic or moot."

In a statement Thursday, WHOOP said, "We commend the Department of Defense for intervening on the side of fair competition and common sense. We believe that wearables are going to transform the way DOD supports core readiness, but that future should not be built on backroom deals that inexplicably exclude qualified American businesses. WHOOP looks forward to competing on a level playing field for future opportunities to support warfighters throughout the DOD." (The DHA letter to GAO made no mention of whether WHOOP's protest was valid or not.)

The change comes during a period of upheaval at the Pentagon, as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered a review of the Pentagon's fiscal 2026 budget plans aimed at shifting funds from legacy programs toward President Donald Trump's priorities. It also comes following last week's exit of DHA head Gen. Telita Crossland, whom Reuters

reported was “forced” into retirement after her 32-year military career.

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The goal of Hegseth’s review is to find roughly \$50 billion, or 8 percent of the FY26 plan, and reprioritize it. That effort seems to be a parallel but different one from the cuts expected to be pushed by the Elon Musk-led DOGE office, which arrived in the Pentagon a few weeks ago.

***UPDATED 3/6/2025 at 1:20pm ET to include information from additional documentation as well as a company statement from WHOOP.***



Topics: cyber security, Defense Health Agency, Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), networks, Pentagon, Pete Hegseth, technology

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