

# WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve  
★ the best care anywhere.*



Considerations for Providing Healthcare to Women Veterans

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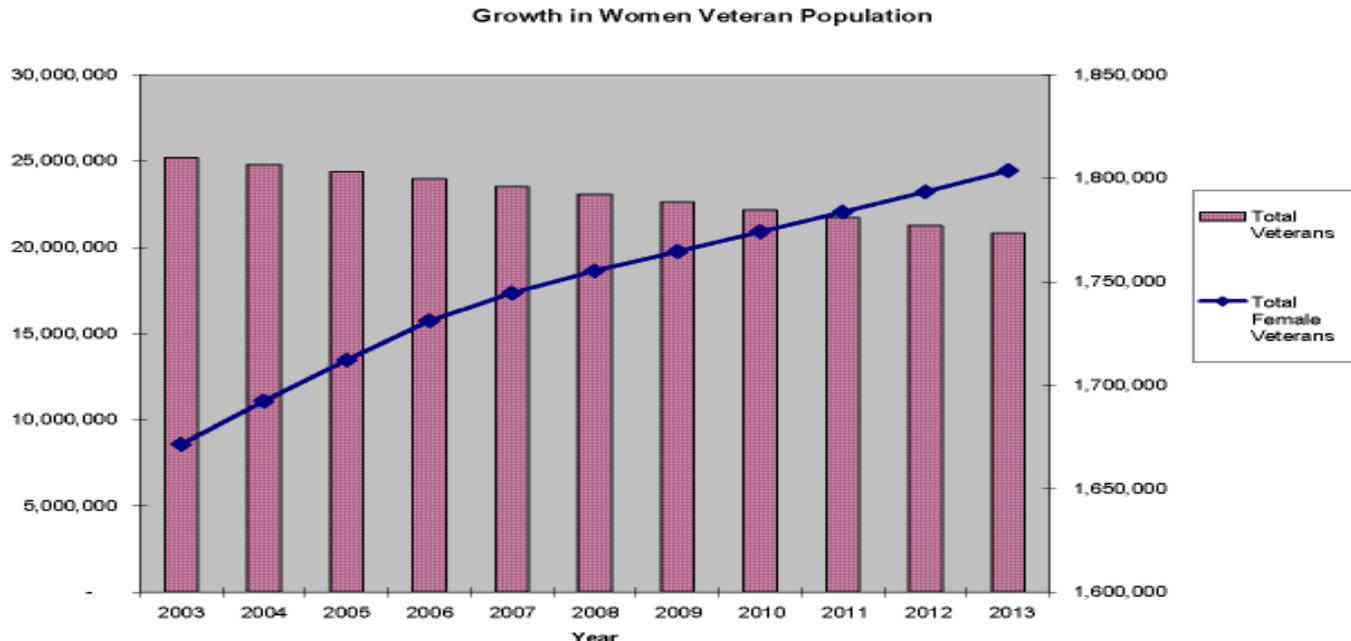
VHA is undergoing a tremendous change. These are a few of our newest women Veterans. Pictured here is the first all-female C-130 aircrew - they flew a combat mission in 2005, on a Vietnam-era C-130 Hercules. They brought 151 Marines and their equipment in and out of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa.

## An Expanding Women Veteran Population

The number of women Veterans (compared to male Veterans) is growing rapidly.

Data show high utilization by women who served in OEF/OIF

- ★ More than **125,000** Female OEF/OIF Veterans are enrolled (per ProClarity 3/2010)
- ★ >11,300 of them are 50% + Service Connected.
- ★ For users of VA health services, 89.4% used VHA at least 2-10 visits, 53.5% have used VA health care 11 or more times.



## Women Veteran Trends

- ★ In 2011, the percentage of Veterans who were female was 10%.
- ★ In 2013, the percentage of female veterans who served in OEF/OIF/OND is 12%.
- ★ The percentage of Veterans who are female are projected to be:  
14.3% by 2030
- ★ Currently women comprise 1 in 16 of VA enrollees, and this is projected to increase to 1 in 7 within the next 15 years.

(Source: <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/facts.asp>)

## Women Veteran Trends

- ★ In FY 2009 and FY 2010, Post-traumatic stress disorder, hypertension, and depression were the top three diagnostic categories for women Veterans treated by VHA.
- ★ About 1 in 5 women seen in VHA respond "yes" when screened for Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

(Source: <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/facts.asp>)

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## Demographic differences -- male & female Veterans

Women Veterans are younger –

- ★ **Average age of all Veterans, by gender, nationally**
  - Female Veteran = 48 years old
  - Male Veteran = 63 years old
- ★ Among women Veterans returning from OEF/OIF:
  - **85.3% are under age 40**
  - 58.0% are between ages 20-29

OEF/OIF Female Veteran Utilization			
Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Cum %
Under 20 years	3655	8.1%	8.1%
<b>20-29</b>	<b>26,182</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>66.1%</b>
<b>30-39</b>	8,668	19.2%	<b>85.3%</b>
40 and over	5,996	13.3%	98.6%
Unknown	651	1.4%	100%



**To serve Women Veterans, VA has proficient and interested:**

- **Primary care women's health providers**
- **Mental health specialists in women's mental health care**

## Women Veterans Health Program -- Overarching Goal

Ensure that every woman veteran has access to a VA primary care provider who can meet all her primary care needs, including gender-specific care, acute and chronic illness, preventive and mental health care in the context of an ongoing patient-clinician relationship.

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# VASDHS Patients

## VASDHS – Female Enrollment

- ★ FY11 7,927
- ★ FY12 8,930
- ★ FT13 9,086

## VAMC/CBOC – Female population/Active Assigned Patients

- ★ FY11 1,925
- ★ FY12 3,568
- ★ FY13 4,202

(assigned to Designated Women's Health Care Providers)

- ★ Total PCMM Assigned: 5,374

# VASDHS Patients

## ★ Utilization of OEF/OIF/OND Female Veterans

- FY10 1,605
- FY 11 1,917
- FY12 2,086
- **FY13 1,481**



# VASDHS Patients

## Gynecology consult totals (per year)

- ★ FY10: 600
- ★ FY11: 761
- ★ FY12: 898
- ★ **FY13 : 532**

## External service obstetrical/newborn consult totals (per year)

- ★ FY10 161
  - ★ FY11 126
  - ★ FY12 170
  - ★ **FY13 87**
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## In-house Services

- Primary Care - 30 Designated Women's Health Providers at Hospital and CBOCs; 32 Residents
- Breast Imaging
  - Ultrasound, Mammography, (MRI)
- Bone densitometry
- General Gynecology
- Surgical breast care
- Point of Care testing in all CBOCs
- Women's Telehealth
- Mental Health Services
  - Women's Group, MST treatment, PTSD treatment

## Telehealth at VASDHS



- ★ Health care program that gives women veterans a new way to improve their physical/mental health
- ★ Grant was awarded to VA San Diego Healthcare to fund the program
- ★ Patient and Care Coordinator link via phone line and internet
- ★ Equipments manages information such as blood pressure, blood sugar, or weight
- ★ Care Coordinator in regular communication with patient

## Outside Services

- ★ Sharing agreements with Naval Medical Center San Diego
    - Stereotactic breast biopsies
    - Obstetrics
  
  - ★ Fee-Based
    - Urogynecology
    - Gynecologic Oncology
    - Radiation Treatment
    - Eating Disorders
    - Chiropractic Care
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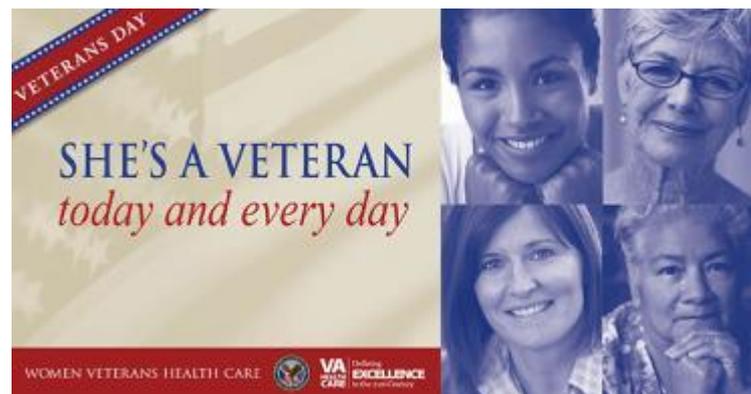


## **Barriers to Care**

# Women Don't Identify Themselves as Veterans

*“We don't know if it's because they had different roles, because they felt like they didn't do the same thing as some of our male Veterans ... whatever it is, they are still not self-identifying.”*

General Allison Hickey  
VA Under Secretary for Benefits  
9/27/12



## Lack of Knowledge of VA Services

- ★ 39% have zero or almost no knowledge of needed information about VA
- ★ Misperceptions in all cohorts about who is eligible for VA care
- ★ OEF/OIF/OND more knowledgeable than other cohorts about available women's health and readjustment services

Source: 2010 National Survey of Women Veterans, (D. Washington)

## Barriers to using VA health care among Women Veterans who considered, but did not use, VA\*

- ★ 31% didn't think they were eligible
- ★ 21% didn't know how to apply for benefits
- ★ 20% said closest VA is too far from home

*\*Not mutually exclusive*

Source: 2010 National Survey of Women Veterans,  
(D. Washington)

- ★ Other challenges:
  - Difficulty getting time off for appointments
  - Child/eldercare responsibilities

## Role of the WVPM



- ★ Required full-time in every health care system; must report to Facility Director or Chief of Staff
- ★ Linchpin for improved women's health services
- ★ Leader of facility women's program
- ★ Resource for women Veterans in the community

# Outreach

- ★ Facebook/Twitter
  - ★ Outreach to college campus events
  - ★ VA Internet Women's Health web page
  - ★ Word of mouth
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# Accomplishments

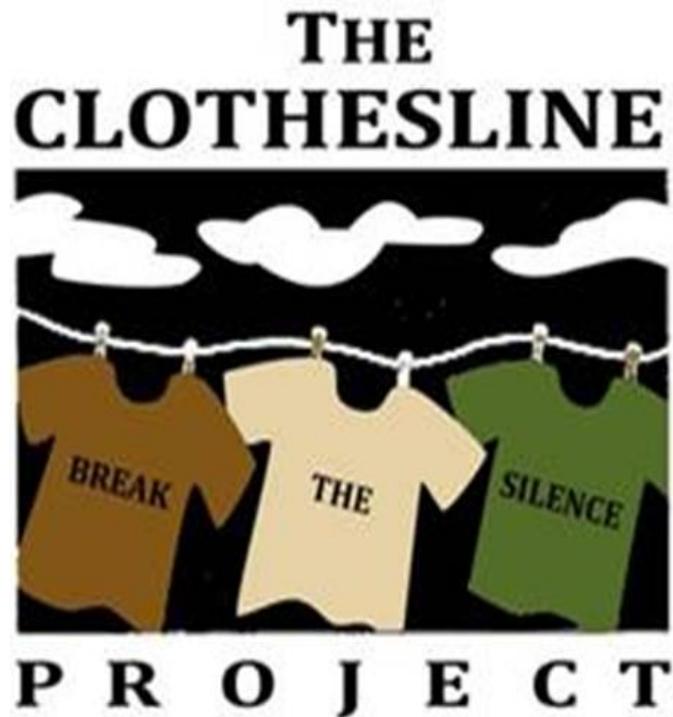
- ★ Practice Based Research Network (PBRN)
    - Selected as one of 37 VA facilities from across the nation to join the Women's Health Research Network. This Network supports investigators conducting women Veterans' health studies and promotes the inclusion of women Veterans in research.
  
  - ★ Selected as site for Advanced Fellowship in Women's Health 2012
  
  - ★ Partnership with GLA for Maternity Care Coordinator Telephone Care Program
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# Accomplishments

- ★ 3rd Annual Clothesline Project in April 2013
- ★ Primary Care Mental Health Integration for domestic violence survivors who screen positive
- ★ NMCSD Sharing Agreement
  - Baby layette program
  - Baby car seats



# Clothesline Project



- ★ A visual display that allows survivors to “Break their Silence” and share their stories by decorating a shirt or piece of their military uniform in a way that reflects the impact of sexual violence on their lives and their overcoming it.
- ★ Held during April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- ★ Aims to increase awareness of the problem of MST and to inform veterans of the services available to them, thereby increasing access

# Enrollment

- ★ To enroll, please complete the [Application for Health Care Benefits](#), **VA form 10-10EZ**. Complete the form and bring the form to our **Health Benefits & Enrollment Office**, located on the first floor of the medical center near the main lobby.
  - ★ When you come to enroll, please bring the following items:
    - a copy of your DD214, "Armed Forces Report of Transfer or Discharge"
    - a copy of both sides of your current insurance card (including Medicare or Medicaid)
    - Purple Heart recipients only: a copy of your award letter if "Purple Heart" is not noted on your DD214
  - ★ You can enroll at the medical center in La Jolla, or at our clinics in Oceanside, Mission Valley, or Chula Vista.
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# **These are tomorrow's veterans!**

**First all-female refueling crew, from 2003, over Iraq.**



## Women Veterans Program Healthcare Program VA San Diego Healthcare System

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