



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2021

VA provides free support to help Veterans heal from military sexual trauma

“WE BELIEVE YOU – AND WE BELIEVE IN YOU”

As part of its outreach and recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, VA launches a new campaign every year to promote its [military sexual trauma \(MST\)](#) services and invite Veterans who experienced MST into a community that listens, understands and believes in them.

This year, VA’s message for Sexual Assault Awareness Month focuses on VA’s support for MST survivors and confidence in their strength and resilience: “We believe you — and we believe in you.”

“We want MST survivors to know that we are here with free, private MST-related services that can help,” said VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System Director Donald Koenig. “It can be tremendously healing for survivors to learn that someone believes they have been through something difficult, takes their experiences of trauma seriously and is confident in their ability to heal. We are here to help Veterans through it, no matter how long it has been since the trauma.”

VA uses the term “MST” to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service. Even though significant numbers of Veterans of all genders and backgrounds have experienced MST, many survivors feel alone, ashamed or unable to ask for help.

VA offers free counseling and treatment to Veterans for mental and physical health conditions related to MST. Veterans do not need to have a VA disability rating, have previously reported the MST or have other documentation of the experience to get this care. They may be able to receive services even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

Another important milestone for the MST program is the availability of VA’s free [Beyond MST](#) app on [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#). The app launched in February and can help Veterans and others manage recovery, find inspiration and much more, whether or not they are receiving treatment for their MST. Learn more by watching this [short video](#).

VA encourages everyone to learn about MST to discover ways to foster the recovery of Veterans and help take practical action as part of the larger supportive community.

Veterans in the greater Pittsburgh region who have experienced MST and would like to learn more about VA support may call VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System at 412-822-3000 and speak with the MST coordinator or a VA health care provider.

Information about MST and VA's MST-related services is available at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp.

Events

April 6, 13, 20, 27

Teal Tuesdays - Show your support for Veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST) by wearing teal clothing or accessories each Tuesday in April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM).

April 9 - Noon–1 p.m.

MST and the Service Connection Claims Process

[Veterans Leadership Program \(VLP\) Monthly Speakers Series](#) Features Jacqueline Albright, public contact outreach specialist, VBA and Dr. Roksana Korchynsky, VAPHS MST coordinator. Register: bit.ly/vlpWV49

April 15 - 7–8:30 p.m.

Double Edged Sword of Military Culture: Helping and Hurting the Warrior

[Veterans Breakfast Club's Generation 9/11](#) Discussion in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) with Drs. Roksana Korchynsky, VAPHS MST coordinator, and Mary Dorritie, VAPHS clinical psychologist and Army Veteran.

April 19, 26 - 9 a.m.

[Veterans Breakfast Club Scuttlebutt](#) Two-part podcast in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) with Veteran military sexual trauma (MST) survivor Timothy Jones as well as treatment and recovery with Dr. Roksana Korchynsky VAPHS MST coordinator and Ryan Ahl, Veteran outreach program specialist at the Pittsburgh Vet Center and U.S. Army Veteran. Download audio wherever you get your podcasts and watch on [YouTube](#).

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About VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System is one of the largest and most progressive VA health care systems in the nation. More than 3,800 employees serve approximately 72,000 Veterans every year, providing a range of services from transplant medicine to primary care. It is also a center of research and learning, with more than \$13 million in research projects and a robust training program for residents and students. The system is a leader in virtual care delivery through telemedicine.

Medical centers are in Oakland and O'Hara Township. Outpatient clinics are in Beaver, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania and Belmont County in Ohio. Veterans can check on their eligibility and enrollment by calling 412-822-2040. Visit pittsburgh.va.gov and facebook.com/vaphs.