Meeting the Health Care Needs of Women Veterans

From Policy to Implementation

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"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war...shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

-President George Washington
VA’s Vision

- Highest quality care to every woman veteran.
- Benefits and services that are on par with male veterans.
- Meet gender-specific needs of women veterans.
- Treat women veterans with dignity and respect.
- Provide state-of-the-art health care equipment and technology
Leaders in Women’s Health
Comprehensive Primary Care

Provision of complete primary care from one primary care provider at one site to include:

Care for acute and chronic illness
Gender specific primary care
Preventive Services
Mental Health Services
Coordination of care
More Women on the Way
Demographics of Female OEF/OIF Veterans seen within VAHCS

Over 230,000 served since 2001-2010
Over 128,000 separated
64,000 female veterans seen at VA

Army  63%
Air Force  18%
Navy  16%

47% less than 30 years- 78% less than 40

90% enlisted, 10% officers
56% Active duty, 44% reserve/guards
Deployment Issues

- Combat exposure (mortars, IED, RPG)
- Heavy gear/Ceramic vests/weapons
- Duties and responsibilities
- Heavy equipment
- Extreme temperature
- Hygiene issues
- Interactions with counterparts
- Family and other relationship issues
Medical diagnoses in female OEF/OIF Veterans seen in VA 2002-10
n=63,864

- Musculoskeletal: 52%
- Mental Disorders: 47%
- Neurological: 39%
- Genitourinary: 38%
- Gastro-intestinal: 37%
- Respiratory: 31%
Other Post-Deployment Issues

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Embedded Fragments
- Reproductive Health Concerns
- Psycho-Social concerns
Implication for Facilities

- Staff - Development
- Providers - Education
- Comprehensive Primary Care
- Gender Specific Specialty Care
- Co-located Mental Health Care
- Specialty Care
Stepping up to the Challenge

VA Palo-Alto has stepped up to meet the needs of growing women veterans and has enhanced many services.

This required the efforts and cooperation of leadership, providers and staff throughout the organization.
VA Palo Alto Women’s Health Program
From Policy to Facility
Implementation

- Clinical Program
- Research
- Education
- Mental Health
Patient Centered Care

Women's Health Center
Excellence in Women's Health Care

- Comprehensive Care
  - Gender Specific Care
  - Reproductive Care

- Comprehensive Breast Care

- Services for OEF/OIF Veterans

- Women's Health Center Psychologist

- Specialty Care
  - Musculoskeletal/PT
  - Endocrinology
  - Rheumatology

- Complimentary Medicine
Uniformity of Care
Community Based Out-Patient Clinics

- Designated WH Providers
- Comprehensive Primary Care
- Preventive Services
- Maternity Care
- Mental Health/ Social Work
- WH site liaisons

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Building Partnerships
Going Beyond

- Outreach (THRIVE)
- Rural Health Program
- Homeless Veterans Program
- Mental Health
- Specialty Services
- WRIISC
SHE SERVED

So we could live free

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S. Iqbal