Deputy Secretary’s Women Veterans Forum

June 23, 2020
12:30-12:45 – Secretary of VA Robert L. Wilkie (Air Force and Navy) – Introductory Remarks

12:45-1:00 – Deputy Secretary of VA Ms. Pamela Powers (Air Force) – Introductory Remarks

1:00-1:30 – Dr. Lynda Davis (Army) (Veterans Experience Office (VEO)) – What the data are telling us about the Women Veterans experience

1:30-2:00 – Ms. Jacquie Hayes-Byrd (Air Force) (Center for Women Veterans (CWV)) – Outreach Experience

2:00-2:15 – Ms. Elizabeth Estabrooks (Army) – I am Not Invisible Campaign

2:15-2:45 – Ms. Margarita Devlin (Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)) – VBA Benefits and Services and Response to COVID-19/Women Veteran Data and Initiatives

2:45-3:15 – Dr. Patty Hayes (Veterans Health Administration (VHA)) – Women Veteran health issues

3:15-3:30 – Wrap up
House Keeping

• This call is intended for those interested in Women Veteran’s information and is not open to the media.

• Since we have a large group attending, we can only take questions through the chat function from those signed in via WebEx.

• If you are a caller and would like to ask a question, please click the link to the WebEx and you will find the ability to send a text question from there.

• If we DO NOT get to every question today we will determine the best way to get that information out afterwards.

• We want your recommendations and suggestions! Please add those in the chat as well.
MEETING THE CUSTOMER SERVICE MISSION AT VA

The Veterans Experience Office (VEO)

VEO supports all VA administrations and offices with internal and industry best practices to drive customer experience (CX) improvements in care, benefits, and services so that Veterans, their families, caregivers, survivors, and VA employees trust and choose VA.

» CX is codified in VA’s Code of Federal Regulations
» CX is tracked in Performance.gov and VA’s Agency Priority Goals
» CX is infused in VA policy
» VEO helps VA lead the President’s Management Agenda Cross Agency Priority Goal, on improving CX with Federal Services

“The Veterans Experience Office (VEO) is my lead organization for achieving our customer service priority and provides the department a core customer experience capability. VEO offers four core customer experience capabilities, including real-time customer experience data, tangible customer experience tools, modern technology, and targeted engagement.”

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie

ACHIEVEMENTS

VA’s OVERALL TRUST score has increased 19% since 2017, now at 80%, an all-time high.

VA’s OUTPATIENT TRUST score continues to climb, now at 89.1%.
Listening to the Voice of Women Veterans

White House VA Hotline

- Calls are answered by a live agent 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The hotline is staffed by more than 60 agents who have had extensive training on VA programs and services. Most of these agents are a Veteran, military family member, caregiver or a survivor.
- The White House VA Hotline conducts immediate warm hand offs for at-crisis risk Veterans needing the services of the Veterans Crisis Line.
  - 453K calls received (10/2017 – 6/2020)
  - 98% cases resolved
Since the launch of the **VA-Wide Trust Survey** in FY17 Q4, Women Veterans have been able to provide comments on the services they receive including their Trust, Effectiveness, Ease, and Emotion. Between FY17 Q4 and FY20 Q2, Trust increased 11% from 69% to 80%, Effectiveness increased 2% from 76% to 78%, Ease increased 8% from 67% to 75%, and Emotion increased 7% from 70% to 77%.

* VEO administers 35 surveys across multiple VA business lines and more in development.
Analyzing the Experience of Woman Veterans VA-Wide

The VA-Wide Trust Survey, allows VA to better understand the experience of woman Veterans. Overall, males show higher Trust than females but between FY17 Q4 and FY20 Q2, both male and female Trust has increased: male Trust increased 6% and female Trust increased 10%.

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Asking about the Experience of Veterans Outpatient Services

The VHA Outpatient Services Trust Surveys showed that the Trust of Veterans increased 5.1% from 84.9% to 89.0% between FY17 Q4 and FY20 Q2.
Analyzing the Experience of Women Veterans Outpatient Services

The VHA Outpatient Services Surveys, show higher Trust for male than female Veterans between FY14 Q4 and FY20 Q2 but both male and female Trust has increased. Between FY17 Q4 and FY20 Q2, male Trust increased 4.1% and female Trust increased 3.9%.

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Mapping the Patient Experience of Women Veterans

VA WOMEN VETERANS
PATIENT EXPERIENCE
JOURNEY MAP

By understanding the moments that matter, VA can best serve the pain points of the fastest growing demographic of Veterans in the US, Women Veterans, making up 9.5% of the 20M Veterans alive today.

https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/57372/building-trust-women-veterans/

Published March 2019
Serving Women Veterans Virtually

VA connected with Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors 102M times (3/2020).
- 62M VetResources e-mail opens with #VetResources digital newsletter.
- VEText sent 40M text messages with important updates and resources, like VA expanding services at select facilities.

Improving the way in which Veterans interact with the VA.
- Piloting “I am here” which allows Veterans to check-in for VA appointments from the parking lot.
- VA coronavirus chatbot provides immediate answers and recommendations for next steps.

Helping Veterans and their families navigate VA services and resources.
- VA311 (844-698-2311) has answered 268,641 calls since March 16, 2020.
- White House VA Hotline has answered 41,842 calls since March 16, 2020.
- 575K downloads of the VA Welcome Kit and 11 Quick Start Guides like “Applying for survivor benefits.”

Veteran trust in VA reached 80% in April, reflecting a 19% increase since January 2017.
- VA has received 5M+ Veteran surveys sharing the ease, effectiveness, emotional resonance and trust of Veterans and their concerns, recommendations, complements, in real time.
Veterans Experience Live (VetXL): Women Together

Providing Resources and References for Women Veterans

Resources for Women Veterans

- **Women Health Eligibility**: [https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/womenshealthservices/healthcare_eligibility_enrollment.asp](https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/womenshealthservices/healthcare_eligibility_enrollment.asp)
- **VA**: [https://www.VA.gov](https://www.VA.gov)
- **VA Welcome Kit**: [https://www.VA.gov/Welcome-Kit/](https://www.VA.gov/Welcome-Kit/)
- **VEO**: [https://www.VA.gov/VE/](https://www.VA.gov/VE/)
- **Community Resources, Information, and Toolkits**: [https://www.VA.gov/VE/Engagement/Resources.asp](https://www.VA.gov/VE/Engagement/Resources.asp)
Supporting Women Veterans

Center for Women Veterans

Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd, Executive Director
Center for Women Veterans
Center for Women Veterans established November 2, 1994 by Congress.

**Our Mission:**
- To monitor and coordinate VA’s administration of healthcare, benefits, services and programs for Women Veterans.
- To serve as an advocate for cultural transformation (within and in the general public) in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military.
- To raise awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.

**Our Vision:**
Modernize the Center to become the portal for all things women Veterans and extend its outreach to all women Veteran Champions, reaching women Veterans nationally and internationally, ensuring equity in access, eligibility, care, and service delivery.
CWV’s Strategic Approach and Operating Plan identifies four critical areas in accordance with Public Law 103-446:

1. **Outreach**: Change Cultural Perspective For and About Women Veterans Internally and Externally.
2. **Research**: Advocate for the inclusion of women in research that informs VA policy and practices.
3. **Performance Management and Compliance**: Build a culture of compliance and accountability.
4. **SECVA**: Support the Executive Director with sufficient resources.

Modernization and Alignment will ensure CWV assists with enterprise-wide performance management and compliance in order to ensure women Veterans receive equitable services and benefits.
• CWV Social Media numbers increase from 1,500 to 10,000 followers in 8 short months.

• CWV/VEO Collaboration.

• Women Veterans Outreach in 2020 – Connect with all 10M Veterans to assist in changing the culture for Women Veterans.

• Journey Map – Use the Quick Start Guide.

• Primary Focus - Bring Women Veterans HOME to the VA.

• Focus towards underserved Sister Veterans, newly discharged Sister Veterans and Sister Veterans who may have discharged 5 or 50 years ago but stopped using the VA. We aim to bring them home.
Current Outreach Initiatives To Enhance Cultural Change Include:

1. Women Veterans Summit – Postponed to October 2021
2. I AM NOT INVISIBLE Campaign
3. Monthly Partners Breakfast
4. Continue to Collaborate with Our Women Veteran Stakeholders and Champions in Support of Our Women Veterans
5. “Women Veterans Power Play”

Special thanks to Veteran Canteen Service for their sponsorship of our initiatives.
I am Not Invisible (IANI) Campaign

Center for Women Veterans
Browse the VA Website, become familiar.

• VHA Women Veterans Call Center: Call or Text 1-855-VA-WOMEN or 1-855-829-6636.

• Chat through WV Healthcare Website: www.womenshealth.va.gov (http://womenshealth.va.gov/).


• Chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net or send a text to 838255 to receive support from specially trained professionals, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

• White House VA Hotline: 1-855-948-2311.
• Center for Women Veterans: (http://www.va.gov/womenvet/)
• Other Resources from www.va.gov
• eBenefits: (https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal)
• Caregiver Support: (http://www.caregiver.va.gov/)
• Make the Connection: (http://maketheconnection.net/)
• Homeless Veterans (http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.asp)
• Burials and Memorials: (http://www.cem.va.gov)
• MyHealthEVet: (https://www.myhealth.va.gov/)
• Office of Survivors Assistance: www.va.gov/survivors/
• Center for Minority Veterans (https://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/)
1) Phone: (202) 461-6193
2) Email: 00w@VA.Gov
3) Find us online at www.va.gov/womenvet
4) Facebook and Twitter using @VAWomenVets
5) Women Veterans Call Center

6) Crisis Hotline:
Supporting Women Veterans

Center for Women Veterans

Elizabeth Estabrooks, Deputy Director
Center for Women Veterans
Introduction

- U.S. Army Veteran.
- Bachelors in Gender Studies and Political Science, Eastern Oregon University.
- Masters in Social Work, Policy from Columbia University.
- Career:
  - Worked in the field of domestic violence and sexual assault for eight years.
  - 17 years consulting, training, researching on topics of violence against women, community health, gender-specific services, and strategic planning.
  - Began focusing on women veteran issues, including military sexual assault, suicide, and homelessness in 2011 during graduate school.
  - Served on Department of Veterans Affairs Domestic Violence Task Force in 2012.
  - Became the Oregon Women Veterans Coordinator in 2016.
  - Founded the I Am Not Invisible project in 2017.
The Origins

• Oregon, 2017 Women’s History Month.
• Address invisibility – a word used by women veterans.
• Diverse spectrum of 22 Oregon women: age, race, ability, geography, era.
I Am Not Invisible

WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE
More Than Just Photos

For Women Veterans:
• Sense of pride and belonging.
• Healing from participating.
• Sisterhood via connecting during and after.

For the VA and partners:
• Intentionally including women in facilities.
• Path to advocacy.
• Partnership building (e.g. USAA).
• Showing women we see them.
• Conversation openers.
Women Veteran Roundtable

Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits
Margarita Devlin

June 23, 2020
“To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”
Abraham Lincoln

VBA FOOTPRINT – FY19

- **Compensation**: Paid $94.9B to nearly 5.3M Veterans & survivors
- **Pension**: Paid $4.9B to nearly 435K beneficiaries
- **Education**: Provided $12.0B to 909K beneficiaries for all EDU programs
- **VR&E**: Paid nearly $1.4B, with 122K program participants
- **Housing**: Guaranteed 661K loans totaling $187.4B
- **Insurance**: Provided $1.2T in coverage to 5.7M Service members, Veterans and family members
- **Decision Review**: Paid over $2.1M in benefits
25,506 EMPLOYEES

56% VETERANS

$31B In benefits distributed in FY20 Q2

Provide Veterans with the benefits they have earned in a manner that honors their service.

Ensure we are strong fiscal stewards of the money entrusted to us.

Foster a culture of collaboration.

540 Intake sites, out-based facilities, VetSuccess on campus sites, and VR&E offices.

56 Regional offices.

39 Other special processing and call centers.
Prepped workforce to function in virtual environment (most of workforce already tele-work enabled).

Closed ROs & continued to serve Veterans, families, beneficiaries remotely.

Legislation passed ensuring students would retain full benefits when schools went online.

Claims Processing continues & payments distributed on time!

Suspended collections on all debts established after April 3.

Veterans can still buy or refinance a home!

Waived requirement for Wet Signatures.

TAP Moved online.

VR&E moved to full tele-counseling.

USB conducting Tele-Townhalls by state, with a goal of reaching over 1M Veterans (over 650K Veterans engaged to-date).

Extended application deadlines for Veterans Group Life Insurance.
VBA: What We Do for Women Veterans

**Compensation, Pension & Fiduciary:**
- FY 20 Compensation Claims for women: Gross $7,558,351,083 (5,063,700 records); Pension Claims: $11,008,468 (9,989 records).
- P&F paid approximately $137 million to 10,541 Female Veterans in FY19.
- Medical Disability Examinations: all medical providers take military sexual trauma training and recertify every three years; Veterans can request male or female exam providers.
- In FY20, 41.7% of participants in the WARTAC - Warrior Training Advancement Course were women.

**Home Loans:**
- In 2019, women received 75,695 VA-guaranteed home loans, or 12% of the total loans.

**Education:**
- In FY 2019, over 208.3K Women Veterans or 29% of the 714K beneficiaries used the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- 11.2K Women Veterans used Yellow Ribbon to help pay tuition & fees.
- Of the $11.1B paid on behalf of beneficiaries in FY19 for Post-9/11 GI Bill, $3.1B went to Women Veterans.

**Transition & Economic Development:**
- Initiatives: Military to Civilian Readiness Pathway (M2C Ready); VA Solid Start (VASS); Personalized Career Planning Guidance (PCPG).
## Decision Review
- Developed 3 VSignals Customer Satisfaction Surveys to be released in July.
- The data from these surveys will allow VBA to analyze the experience of women as opposed to men in seeking review of VA claims decisions.

## Life Insurance:
- Identifying opportunities to collaborate with women to educate them about VA Life Insurance.
- Developing outreach engagement targeted toward women Veterans.
- Identifying opportunities to improve VA Insurance programs to better meet women Veterans’ unique needs.

## Outreach & Engagement:
- Enhanced O&E engagement with VA’s Office of Center for Women Veterans and collaborated on a virtual town hall with VSO Camouflaged Sisters, LLC on May 20, 2020 with over 240 attendees.
- VBA recently reviewed the gender specific data contained in the FY 2018 Annual Benefits Report (ABR): no notable disparities observed in VBA benefits.
In FY 2018, women Veterans made up 9.8% of the total Veteran population. VBA’s Annual Benefits Report for FY 2018 reflects how women Veterans are accessing benefits:

**Disability Compensation:**

Disability Ratings

- 11.2% of newly granted disability ratings were assigned to women Veterans.
- For disability ratings from 50-100%, a higher percentage of women received those ratings than men on their initial rating.

**Home Loans:**

- 11.7% of VA home loans were guaranteed to Women Veterans.

**Insurance:**

- Women Veterans held 14% of all Veterans’ Group Life Insurance policies.
- Women Service members held 18% of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance policies.

**Veteran Readiness and Employment:**

- Women represent 23% of the individuals who were receiving VR&E service.
Opportunity: As the number of women Veterans grows, more women apply for VA benefits and services. VBA strives to better understand women Veterans’ journeys and identify the moments that matter as they navigate the VA system.

Approach: VBA is using human-centered design (HCD) methodology to speak with male and female Veterans to map their benefits journey. By interviewing Veterans and listening for bright spots and pain points, the journey mapping process allows VBA to:

• Discover opportunities and take action to improve processes and services for women Veterans, and
• Empower VBA employees to deliver benefits in a manner that honors their service.

Call to Action: If you or someone you know is interested and willing to participate in an HCD interview, please email VBA_CX.VBACO@va.gov.
COVID-19 Resources

Benefits Questions
1 (800) 827-1000

Debt Relief
1 (800) 827-0648

In Crisis?
1 (800) 273-8255

COVID Microsite - www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/
FAQ - www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions/
This webcast and materials will be posted at: benefits.va.gov/stakeholder

For VA customer service, call: 1-800-827-1000

To learn more about VA Benefits, visit: benefits.va.gov

For more specific questions, access: Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS)

#BestYearEver VBA FY20
Thank You
Women’s Health

Patricia M. Hayes, PhD
Chief Officer
Women’s Health
Veterans Health Administration
June 23, 2020
Women Veterans History And Demographics

Number Of Women Veteran VHA Patients Fiscal Year 2000-2018

Cohort: Women Veteran VHA patients in each year. Women in FY00: N=159,810; Women in FY18: N=510,179. Source: WHEI Master Database, FY00-FY18.
• Comprehensive Primary Care  
  (acute care, chronic illness and gender-specific care from a single provider)  
• Routine Gynecological care  
• Mental Health  
• Disease Management, Prevention and Screening  
• Emergency Care  
• Infertility Care  
• Maternity Care (Newborn care up to 7 days)  
• Specialty Care  
• Hospice/Palliative Care  
• Long-Term Care Services and Supports
Women’s Health Primary Care Providers

• VA has at least two Women’s Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) at all of VA’s health care systems in addition, 90 percent of community-based outpatient clinics have a WH-PCP in place.

• VA has trained over 4700 primary care providers in women’s health mini-residency since 2008.

• Women assigned to WH-PCPs had higher overall experiences with care compared to women assigned to other primary care providers.

• Women assigned to WH-PCPs were more likely to receive age appropriate cervical cancer screening (94.4% vs. 91.9 %) and breast cancer screening (86% vs 83.3%).
Women Veterans Call Center

- Implemented a Call Center specific to women Veterans in 2014.
- Women Veterans may now call, chat or text.
- As of February 2020, WVCC has made over 1,753,000 calls, and sent 73,784 informational packets to women Veterans.
• Maintaining access to essential services such as contraception, mental health services, and intimate partner violence support and intervention is especially crucial during this time.

• VA is using telehealth, including VA Video Connect direct to Veteran’s homes. This existing and enhanced virtual care has allowed us to quickly provide continued primary care throughout the stay-at-home orders.

• VHA has developed and disseminated educational materials for women Veterans and their providers.

• VA Maternity Care Coordinators are proactively connecting with our currently pregnant women Veterans.

• VHA recently launched a special six-session training series focusing on gender-related aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
• The VA IPV Assistance Program (IPVAP) is dedicated to ensuring Veterans, their partners, and VA staff have current resources and supports readily available in response to COVID-19:
  – Every VA Medical Center has a dedicated IPVAP coordinator, ready to help.

• Talk to your local VA IPVAP-Coordinator or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
  The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE(7233)

• Safe Helpline:
  – Safehelpline.org or via text at 55-247.
  – Women Veterans Call Center 1-855-VA Women.
  – And anonymous chat www.womenshealth.va.gov.
Information resources:

- Women Veteran Call Center 1-855-VA-WOMEN
During the COVID-19 pandemic, many new providers used VA Video Connect (VVC).
- Designated Women’s Health Providers lead in VVC capability across VA.
- Goal for 100% of ambulatory providers to be VVC capable by FY21.
Women’s Health Transition Training (WHTT)

• Live, interactive training for transitioning Servicewomen to learn about VA health care resources available to them after they separate from the military.
• Training topics include - eligibility for VA benefits, how to enroll in the VA, how to navigate VA, gender specific health care services, and other transition resources.
• Training is led by a woman veteran who has experience using the VA.
• A VA Women Veteran’s Program Manager (WVPM) is available during the training to answer questions.
• For more details go to: https://www.va.gov/womenvet/whtt/.
Did You Know?
VA provides a full spectrum of women’s health care services, including primary, general medical, mental health, reproductive, and maternity care. You may be eligible to use both TRICARE and VA health care when you retire.

Women’s Health Matters
If you are transitioning from active duty to the reserve components or to civilian life, register with the link or QR code below for the VA Women’s Health Transition Training. Learn about women-focused health services, your eligibility, and the VA enrollment process.

Scan QR Code with your smart phone or visit: va.gov/womenvetlwhtt
?QUESTIONS?