

**BECAUSE WOMEN** now comprise almost 20 percent of our armed forces, they have become the fastest growing population in the VA health care system. Their numbers are expected to double within the next few years. Many women veterans, however, are not aware of the resources and assistance that are available to them. This brochure answers frequently asked questions and offers contact information.



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# Women Veterans

## Assistance & Resources



### **Who is the woman veteran advocate at my local VA Medical Center?**

Every VA Medical Center should have a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) whose duties are defined by a handbook of responsibilities coordinated by the Women Veterans Health Strategic Healthcare Group at the VA Central Office in Washington, D.C. The amount of time spent by these program managers is determined by the Medical Center Director. Certainly, as more women become veterans, the need for such managers will only increase.

If you are admitted to a VA Medical Center and are not contacted by the WVPM in a timely manner, request the staff to arrange to have the WVPM meet with you.

### **Do I have a voice regarding women veterans' care or services at my VA Medical Center?**

Each VA Medical Center should have a women veterans committee that meets on a regular basis. Your WVPM should be able to provide you with this information.

### **Are Guard and Reserve able to get VA care?**

Possibly. Check with a veteran service officer or the local VA Regional Office for specific clarification.

### **Can I get all my health care in a designated women's clinic at my VA Medical Center?**

The services, care, and treatment available in women's health clinics at VA Medical Centers vary, based on decisions made by the director, usually in concert with the chief of staff. An increased focus and investment in women's health care and its delivery is vital in meeting the needs of women veterans. Within the curriculum of medical schools across the country and in the current community health-care environment, women's health is viewed as a specialty and involves more than gender-specific gynecological care.

### **If I am pregnant, can the VA help me?**

Yes, If you are eligible, the VA will provide you with prenatal care and childbirth delivery by using a community obstetrician. This process begins when you contact your VA primary care provider or VA women's health clinic.

### **If I think I have Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other mental health concerns, whom can I talk to at the VA?**

If it is a situation that needs immediate attention, go directly to the nearest hospital or VA Medical Center emergency room. Otherwise you can call the VA women's health clinic for information and assistance; call the VA mental health clinic; or go to the nearest Vet Center, if one is available. Wherever you call, you may want to inquire if they have a clinician who works specifically with women veterans.

Because of the number of women who are now *de facto* combat veterans, and because of the nature of the fighting in both Afghanistan and Iraq, we have entered a new world of mental health needs for women who served.

### **Are special therapists available in the VA if I need help because of sexual harassment, domestic violence, or military sexual trauma?**

Yes. All VA Medical Centers and all Vet Centers have trained therapists who deal with these types of issues.

### **Is there a position similar to the Women Veterans Program Manager in the Veterans Benefits Administration?**

Yes. Each VA Regional Office is supposed to have a Women Veterans Coordinator. They do outreach on benefits and entitlements and interface with the WVPM at the medical center, helping women veterans with their claims when requested.

### **Does my state have a women veterans advocate?**

Each state department, division, or office of veterans' affairs is unique in its advocacy. Most states now have a Women Veterans Coordinator.

You should be able to access information by calling your local, county, or state office, division, or department of veterans affairs or by going to a listing of these entities on the Women Veterans Committee web page on the VVA web site, [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)

### **For further information:**

**VA Center for Women Veterans**  
202-273-6193  
[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)

**National Center for PTSD**  
[www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
800-799-7233

**VA Vet Centers**  
800-905-4675 (Eastern)  
866-496-8838 (Pacific)  
[www.va.gov/directory](http://www.va.gov/directory)

**National Women's Health Center**  
800-994-WOMAN

**Women's Research & Education Institute**  
[www.wrei.org](http://www.wrei.org)

**Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor**  
[www.dol.gov/wb](http://www.dol.gov/wb)

**Office on Violence Against Women,  
U.S. Department of Justice**  
[www.usdoj.gov/ovw](http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw)

**Department of Health & Human Services  
Women's Health**  
[www.4women.gov](http://www.4women.gov)

**National Association of State Departments  
of Veterans Affairs**  
[www.nasdva.com](http://www.nasdva.com)

**Defense Department Advisory Committee  
on Women in the Military Services**  
[www.dtic.mil/dacowits](http://www.dtic.mil/dacowits)

**Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation**  
[www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org)

**Women in Military Service for America**  
[www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org)