

VA

Women's Health Transition Training



PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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Acronyms

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Welcome to the Women's Health Transition Training Participant Handbook.

On this page, we have highlighted interactive tools you can use to navigate this digital guide.

- Select this **Home** button to return to the Table of Contents.
- Select this **Acronyms** button to reference the VA Acronym list at the beginning of the handbook.
- Select these tabs to navigate to the start of **Modules 1–5**.
- Select these tabs to navigate to the start of **Appendices A–C**.

The word transition in this training refers to transitioning from active duty to Veterans' status.

VA Acronym List

The list below describes frequently used acronyms throughout the Participant Handbook.

Table 1: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
CBOC	Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
DOD	Department of Defense
IDES	Integrated Disability Evaluation System
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IPVAP	Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program
LARC	Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives
LEEP	Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure
LGBTQ+*	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identifying and Queer identities. The “+” sign captures identities beyond LGBTQ,* including but not limited to questioning, pansexual, asexual, agender, gender-diverse, nonbinary, gender-neutral and other identities.
LGBTQ+* VCC	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identifying and Queer, plus Veteran Care Coordinator
MHS	Military Health System
MST	Military Sexual Trauma
OEF/OIF/OND/OFS	Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn/Operation Freedom’s Sentinel
OTH	Other Than Honorable
PCM	Primary Care Manager
PC-MHI	Primary Care-Mental Health Integration
PCP	Primary Care Provider

* T stands for Trans-identifying



Acronym	Description
PFPT	Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy
PSAS	Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service
PSC	Polytrauma System of Care
PTS	Posttraumatic Stress
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
SAFE	Sexual Assault Forensic Exams
SAPRO	Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TCM	Transition and Case Management
TPA	Transition Patient Advocate
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VAMC	VA Medical Center
VBA	Veterans Benefits Administration
VISN	Veterans Integrated Services Network
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
WHC	Women's Health Center
WHCC	Women's Health Clinic Champion
WHTT	Women's Health Transition Training
WHMD	Women's Health Medical Director
WH-PCP	Women's Health Primary Care Provider
WMHC	Women's Mental Health Champion
WVPM	Women Veterans Program Manager

Welcome!

Welcome to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Women's Health Transition Training (WHTT)!

WHTT consists of five modules to promote a better understanding of how VA can support women Veterans' health care needs post-separation from the military:

Module 1: Shift From Active Duty

Shifting from an active-duty role is more than just a career change. It is a cultural change. This section focuses on the shift in mentality from the Military Health System (MHS) to VA health care. The role of a Service member transitioning from active duty will differ between the Military Health System (MHS) and VA.

Module 2: Understanding VA Health Care

This section discusses VA's transformation, specifically the changes to the infrastructure, care models and VA culture. This transformation enables transitioning Service members to take charge of their health and well-being.

Module 3: Available Women's Health Services

Using the innovative Whole Health approach, VA Women's Health offers a wide range of services for women Veterans. Whole Health services include comprehensive primary care, cancer screenings, preventive care and well-being services and coaching. In addition, VA Women's Health offers complementary and integrative health approaches, reproductive health, mental health and specialty care.

Module 4: Enrolling and Accessing VA Health Care

This section explains how a Service member transitioning from active duty can navigate the enrollment process with information about eligibility and the necessary forms. Module 4 also explains how to make a first appointment and what a Service member transitioning out of the military should bring.

Module 5: Assistance Transitioning from Active Duty

Resources to help Service members transitioning to civilian life include social support services. VA is here to help Service members as they move to civilian status.

Access this Participant Handbook online

Visit the [Participant Handbook](#) or scan the QR code



Course Goal

By the end of this training, women transitioning Service members and Veterans will be able to determine if VA women's health care is right for them.

Transition Assistance Program

VA offers WHTT as part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), which includes training, information and services to help Service members and their families shift to civilian life. This training is complementary to the TAP VA Benefits and Services course. To learn more, visit [VA Transition Assistance Program](#).

Upon completion of this course, the participant will be able to:

- **Identify** the impacts of the shift from military health care to VA health care.
- **Identify** the structure of VA health care and VA women's health services.
- **Identify** VA women's health care resources and services to support women Veterans' Whole Health.
- **Recall** the tools to apply and enroll in VA women's health care.
- **Recognize** resources, organizations and programs dedicated to supporting women Veterans during their journey from active duty to civilian life.





Acronyms

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Module 1

Version 3.0
Revised May 2025 for release May 2025

Women's Health Transition Training Participant Handbook
Module 1: Shift From Active Duty

Shift From Active Duty

Why Women's Health Transition Training?

VA recognizes that Servicewomen have distinct healthcare needs.

Transitioning out of the military into civilian life will encompass many areas of life. It is a career change and a psychological and cultural change. As a Service member transitions out of the military, it is important that they become proactive about health and fully understand the health care options available. Because women are a distinct minority in VA, there is a widely held misperception that women-specific care is not available through VA.

Over the last two decades, VA has made significant strides to become a place for women Veterans to receive high-quality health care from providers that understand their unique health care needs. Service members and Veterans will need to set goals for their health and well-being and work toward managing those goals. They will be their own advocate. VA is here to help them get started.



Module 1 Learning Objective

Upon completion of Module 1, the participant will be able to:

Identify the impacts of transitioning from military health care to VA health care.

Why WHTT? 5 Reasons

Top 5 reasons former Women's Health Transition Training participants recommend this course:

1. Knowledge—Gained knowledge on earned health services and women-specific services that every Servicewoman needs to know.
2. Support—Women-only course design created a supportive environment conducive to honest conversation.
3. Preparation—Empowering and positive mental preparation for transition from active duty to civilian life.
4. Navigation—VA eligibility and enrollment navigation.
5. Resources—Thorough curriculum and resources.



Making the Change

From Military Health System (MHS) to VA

Women often experience a notable health care culture change after leaving active duty. There are many differences between the Military Health System (MHS) and VA health care systems.

Table 2: Health System Differences

Topic	Military Health System (MHS)	VA
Organization Purpose	Maintain a medically ready force to support the full range of military operations.	Provide health care to improve overall health and well-being for Veterans post-military service.
Health Care Ownership	The chain of command is responsible for making sure a Veteran meets their health care requirements.	Empower and equip women Veterans to take charge of their health care. Veterans and their care team work together on health and well-being, from urgent care or specialty care to complementary, integrative health.
Eligibility	Military Health System (MHS) provides virtually all health care services for the medical needs of Veterans.	Eligibility for benefits may vary.
Facility Options	There are limited choices for dedicated women-specific health areas or spaces at Military Health System (MHS) facilities.	Women's health care can either be delivered in a women-only clinic or in an integrated primary care setting.
Health Care Providers	Women Veterans may have both a Primary Care Manager (PCM) and a gynecologist to address their needs.	Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCPs) can continue to address all primary and most women-specific health care needs.
Women's Health Care Navigators	Military Health System (MHS) does not have specific women's health care navigators to help coordinate health care.	Women Veterans Program Managers (WVPM) are advocates for women Veterans' needs at every VA Medical Center (VAMC).
Dependent Care	Dependents are often enrolled in TRICARE.	Veterans' dependents must meet specific criteria for health care coverage eligibility. Veterans can talk to the Eligibility Office for more information.

Topic	Military Health System (MHS)	VA
Making an Appointment	Women Veterans can call the TRICARE helpline or make online appointments through the Military Health System (MHS) GENESIS Patient Portal	After enrolling, women Veterans can call their assigned VA facility to make an appointment. They can also schedule an appointment in person, online through the My Health ^e Vet portal or by walking into a VA Urgent Care Clinic.
Assigned Facility	Women Veterans are assigned a main Military Treatment Facility (MTF). They can also receive care at any MTF or in the community if medically necessary.	Women Veterans designate their preferred VA Medical Center (VAMC), and VA prefers that they receive the majority of their health care at that facility.
Confidentiality	Women Veterans' health procedures and outcomes may sometimes be available to their chain of command due to readiness requirements (for example, dental).	Women Veterans' must consent to share any medical information with another person, including their spouse. All information is confidential.



A List of Who's Who

Table 3: Who Does What at MHS & VA

Topic	Military Health System (MHS)	VA
Manages the MTF or VA facility	Hospital Commanding Officer (CO/CC)	Medical Center Director
Assists in managing the MTF or VA facility	Hospital Executive Officer/Deputy (XO)	Deputy Director
Oversees a specific specialty department at the MTF or VA facility	Department leaders	Department Heads or Service Line Chiefs
Manages the junior enlisted working in the MTFs	Senior Enlisted	N/A
Provides primary clinical care during medical visits	Primary Care Manager (PCM)	Women's Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP)
Advocates for women Veteran patients at every VAMC	N/A	Women Veterans Program Managers (WVPM)
Point of contact for women's mental health services at VA facilities	N/A	Women's Mental Health Champion (WMHC)
Coordinates care and provides case management for Service members transitioning from active duty and post-9/11 era Veterans at Military Health System (MHS) or VA facilities.	PCM	Transition and Case Management (TCM) Team
Coordinates care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identifying and Queer, plus (LGBTQ+) individuals receiving care at Military Health System (MHS) or VA facilities	PCM	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identifying and Queer, plus Veteran Care Coordinator (LGBTQ+ VCC)
Coordinates care for pregnant women receiving maternity care benefits from MHS or VA	PCM	Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC)
Provides information about services related to military sexual harassment and assault and assists in accessing care	DOD Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocate (VA), DOD Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) office or Army Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) representative	Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Coordinator

VA Health Care Value

VA understands Servicewomen may have other health care options as they transition from Service.

Some key considerations when making this decision may include:

- Cost of care
- Location and access to health care services and facilities
- Health care services available
- Quality of network providers

At VA, Veterans receive a host of health care benefits, including:

- **Free or low-cost care:** Veterans have earned access to free or low-cost health care as a benefit of their service. Veterans should assume they are eligible for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services until they confirm otherwise. If they enroll in TRICARE, Medicare or another form of insurance, they can still use that plan and add VA as a supplemental form of health care.
- **Integrated health care system:** VA offers an integrated, nationwide health care system with many access points and individuals available to help Veterans navigate VHA. Additionally, VA can mail prescription refills to them at a temporary address.
- **Veteran-centered care:** VA provides a Veteran-centered health care option. VA providers understand the importance of women Veterans receiving health care in a community that understands the health impact of their military service. VA staff receive training to see, hear and understand women Veterans. They recognize the connection between their service and their health.
- **High-quality care:** VA ensures women Veterans receive high-quality health care from trained providers who understand their unique health care needs. When they enroll in VA health care, they will have access to highly qualified providers who will support them on their health journey. Also, VA has partnerships with private hospitals and other medical and health-focused organizations nationwide. VA is committed to providing women Veterans with world-class service and support.
- **Comprehensive Care for Whole Health:** A Veteran's journey with VA health care will begin on a solid foundation with a Women's Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP). From there, they will have access to VA specialty care, mental health care, Whole Health—Integrative Health and Wellness services. These will provide well-rounded care tailored to their specific needs.

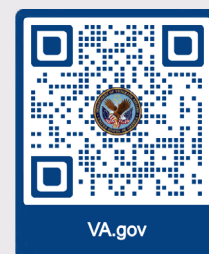
Choose What Is Used

Based on their eligibility, women Veterans can choose how much VA health care they use.

- » **All:** Use VA health care for all of their health care needs.
- » **Some:** Use VA for their specific health care needs.
- » **Supplementary:** Use VA health care with TRICARE, Medicare or private insurance to meet their health care needs.
- » **Back-Up:** Enroll in VA health care as a backup for their health care needs.

For More Information

Reference the information provided within this handbook or visit [VA.gov](https://va.gov) or scan the QR code





Acronyms

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Module 2

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Appendix A

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Appendix C



Module 2



Understanding VA Health Care

VA Organization

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) consists of three administrations that work to meet different needs for women Veterans.

Learn more about the three VA administrations and VA benefits by visiting [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov).

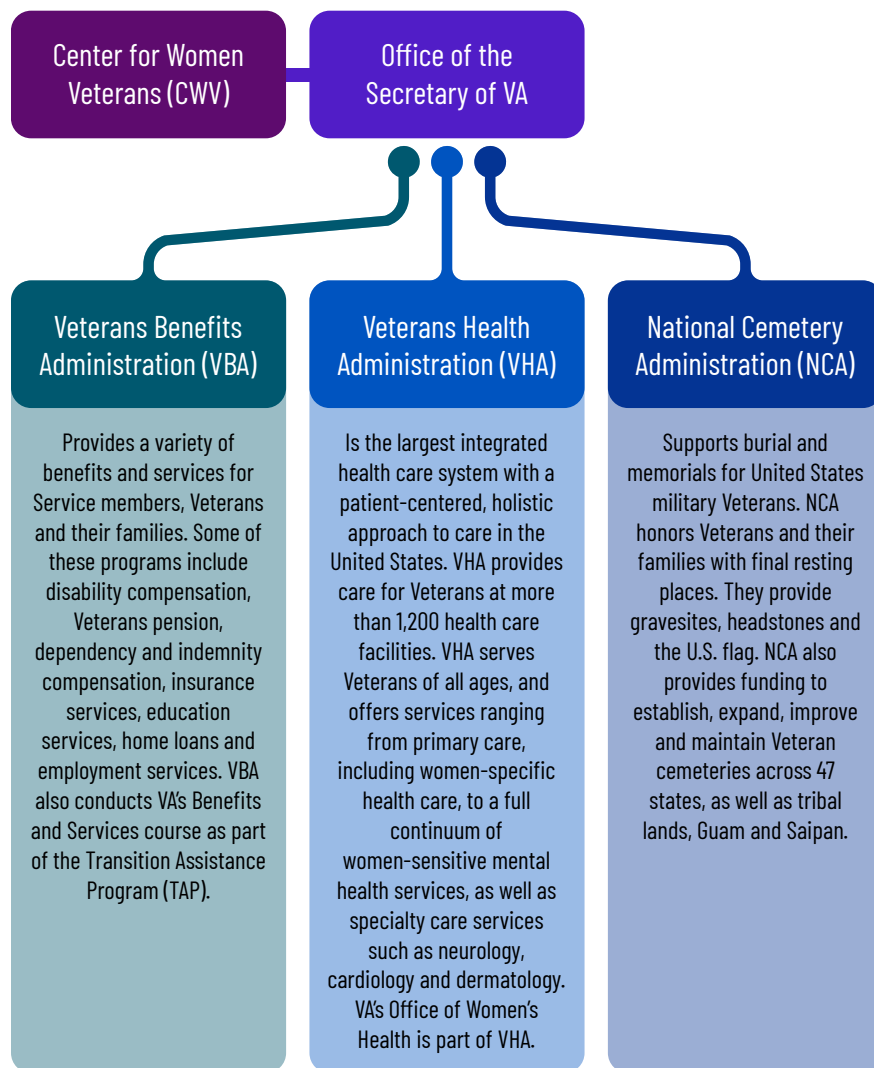


Figure 1: VA Administrations

Module 2 Learning Objective

Upon completion of Module 2, the participant will be able to:

Identify the structure of VA health care and VA women's health services.

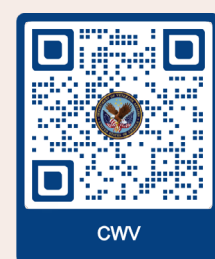
Did you know?

VA has a dedicated office, the Center for Women Veterans (CWV), to lead women's initiatives and drive cultural change within VA. The CWV's mission is to monitor and coordinate VA's administration of health care, benefits, services and programs for women Veterans.

The CWV serves as an advocate for cultural transformation and raises awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.

For More Information

Visit [Center for Women Veterans](https://www.cwv.va.gov) or scan the QR code



Women Driving VA Transformation

Women Veterans are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. Veteran population.

Analysts expect the number of women Veterans to increase at an average rate of about 18,000 women per year for the next eight years. That is an average expected increase from 2 million in 2016 to 2.2 million in 2026. VA established women's health research as a priority beginning in the early 1990s in response to demographic changes in the Veteran population and the health care needs of women. Since then, VA has transformed its facilities and services to meet the needs of women Veterans.

In 2023, VA celebrated 100 years of providing health care for women Veterans. Today, more than 2 million Veterans live in America, and more than 600,000 women Veterans receive health care at VA each year. As more women Veterans enroll in VA health care, VA will continue to expand its offerings and infrastructure. When a woman Veteran uses VA health care services, they directly drive change.

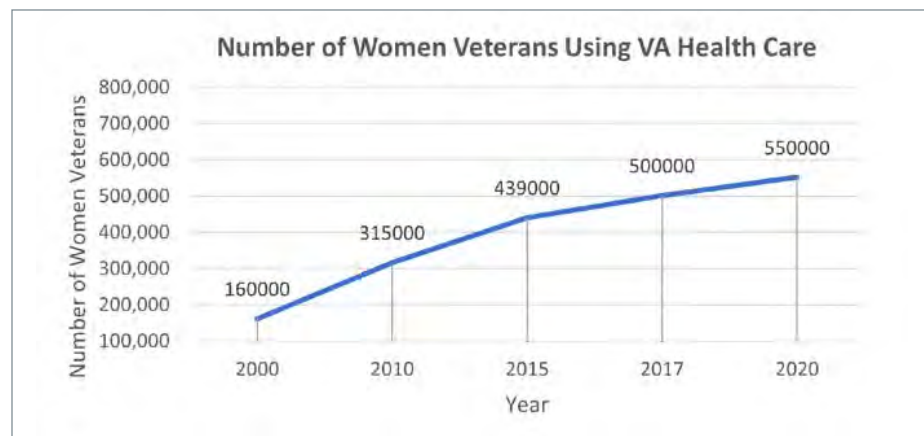


Figure 2: Women Veterans Using VA Health Care

* [Women Veterans Health Care: Publications and Reports](#)
Washington DL, Farmer MM, Mor SS, Canning M, Yano EM. Assessment of the Healthcare Needs and Barriers to VA Use Experienced by Women Veterans. *Journal of Medical Care*, 53: S23-31, April 2015.
[VA Women Health Care: About Us](#)

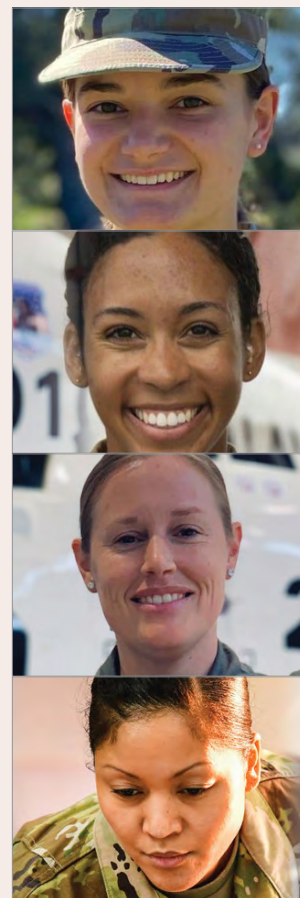
Did you know?

All Veterans are welcome at VA.

Women currently comprise:

- » 17.5 % of the active-duty force
- » 21.6% of the Reserves

Source: [2022 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#)



Women-Specific Care

Research Shows

VA continuously develops, executes and improves evidence-based programs that enhance women's health care experiences. Over the last 20 years, VA has tracked health data and supplemented findings with published research on military and women Veteran populations. Studies have shown that women may confront or react to military experiences differently than men during and after military service, potentially affecting their health.

Health data and research also revealed the following:

- Women Veterans have higher rates of depression and suicide than non-Veteran women.
- When their VA health care provider screened them, about 1 in 3 women reported having experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST).
- More than 40% of women Veterans who use VA have been diagnosed with at least one mental health condition.
- Women Veterans have higher rates of pain and chronic conditions than male Veterans and civilian counterparts.
- Women reported they were not comfortable seeking women-specific care in a male-dominated health care system.

VA Is Here to Help

In response to these findings, VA ensures that its health care providers receive specific training in caring for women Veterans. Through programs such as the "Women's Health Mini-Residency training," VA continues to improve the expertise of primary care and emergency care providers to address the full range of women's needs. Over 6,000 providers have completed the residency to achieve the designation of a Women's Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP). These programs ensure women Veterans receive the high-quality health care they deserve.

Many of the efforts to transform VA services and facilities to meet the needs of women come from women Veterans' feedback. VA is dedicated to understanding the unique needs of a woman Veteran and takes action to serve them better, no matter where they are on their health journey.



Veteran Signals

The Veteran Signals program is VHA's outpatient customer feedback survey. Since its inception in 2017, more than 4 million Veterans' surveys have been received.

Recently released survey results show Veteran's trust in VA has increased, with 89.9% of Veterans' responses indicating that they trust VA health care as of December 2023.

For More Information

To view this report, visit [FY23Q3 VA Trust Report](#)



Community Care: MISSION Act

The MISSION Act streamlines and improves VA's community care programs by providing Veterans with better customer service when receiving community care.

VA's goal is to provide women Veterans who are eligible for VA health care with the care they need in a VA facility. VA will refer eligible Veterans to a community provider through VA's Community Care Program if services are not available within a VA facility or other government medical facility. VA must provide prior authorization before scheduling with a community provider.

In June 2019, the MISSION Act replaced the Choice Program. If a Veteran is already enrolled in VA, the MISSION Act allows them to receive health care within the community.

A Veteran may be eligible for community care if:

- They need a service that is not available at a VA medical facility.
- They live in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility.
- They qualify under the "Grandfather" provision related to distance eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program.
- VA cannot furnish care within certain designated access standards, such as average drive time and appointment wait time.
 - Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility includes:
 - 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and non-institutional extended care services (including adult day health care)
 - 60-minute average drive time for specialty care

NOTE: VA calculates average drive times with geo-mapping software that uses inputs, such as traffic.

- Average appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility includes:
 - 20 days for primary care, mental health care and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider
 - 28 days for specialty care from the date of request unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider
- It is in the Veteran's best medical interest.
- A VA medical service line does not meet certain quality standards.

Did you know?

Eligible Veterans can receive urgent care from an urgent care provider that is part of VA's contracted network of community providers without prior authorization from VA.

NOTE: A Veteran will need to confirm whether the location will accept VA benefits before receiving services.



For More Information

Visit [Community Care](#) or [Choose VA](#) or scan the QR code



VA Health Care Structure

VA's health care system is America's largest integrated health care system. It provides health care to over 9 million Veterans, with a patient-centered, holistic approach to care.

VA divides its health care system into 18 Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs) pictured below.



Figure 3: VISN Map

Within each VISN, there are different types of health care facilities:

- **Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC):** VAMCs (hospitals) are the largest facility type within VA's system, and they offer the most services. They provide comprehensive health care for all Veterans.
- **Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC):** VA implemented CBOCs to make it easier for Veterans to access health care. These clinics provide the most common outpatient services—including health and wellness visits—without needing to visit a larger medical center.
- **Health Care Center (HCC):** HCCs are clinics operated at least five days per week providing primary care, mental health care and on-site specialty services. HCCs also perform ambulatory surgery or procedures that may require moderate sedation or general anesthesia.
- **Vet Center:** The goal of Vet Centers is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach and referral services to help Veterans transition to civilian life.

Within VA health care facilities, there are roles dedicated specifically to women's health care using a Whole Health approach that is all about you and what matters most to you regarding your health and well-being.

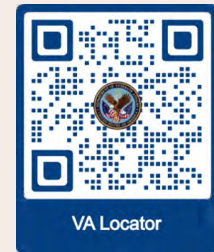
Available Where You Are

VA offers:

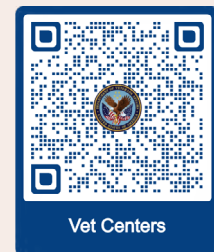
- » ~172 VAMC sites
- » ~1,138 CBOC sites
- » ~300 Vet Centers

For More Information

To find a local VA facility, visit [Find VA Locations](#) or scan the QR code



Visit [Vet Centers](#) to get connected with a Vet Center or scan the QR code



Women Veterans Health Clinic Models

Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) provide women's primary care in three VA clinic models.

The comprehensive primary care clinic models include the following:

Model 1: General Primary Care

Primary care clinics deliver comprehensive primary care to women Veterans. General primary clinics also offer mental health services for women through Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI). WH-PCPs provide referrals to specialty care, such as gynecological care.

Model 2: Separate but Shared Space

Women Veterans can receive comprehensive women's primary care in a separate space that may be located within or adjacent to primary care clinic areas.

The clinic may be open part-time or full-time. It may offer other women-specific services when they are not seeing women Veterans. This space also offers readily available gynecological care and mental health services.

Model 3: Comprehensive Women's Health Center (WHC)

Women Veterans can receive comprehensive women's primary care in an exclusive, separate space.

When possible, a WHC should have a:

- Separate entrance
- Separate waiting room

Services and sub-specialty services provided in the space often include:

- Specialty gynecological care
- Mental health
- Social work services
- Breast care
- Neurology
- Nutrition
- Pharmacy

| NOTE: All three primary care clinic models offer Telehealth options.

Did you know?

Women's Health Centers (WHCs) make sure women Veterans have access to the appropriate number of health care providers they need for primary care, as well as appropriate support staffing for specialty services.



VA Women's Health Team

VA's women's health clinics partner with women Veterans every step of the way to provide intentional, patient-centric health care.

VA has established a unique women's care team structure to ensure that women Veterans receive care specifically designed for them. A Women's Health Medical Director (WHMD) and a Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) lead a team of providers.

Women's Health Medical Director (WHMD)

The WHMD works closely with the WVPM to form the foundation and subject matter expertise of the women's health program at their VA Medical Center (VAMC). The WHMD works to develop clinical leadership (including quality improvement and educational initiatives), determine appropriate and available models of care and ensure that women Veterans receive an assigned Women's Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP). Each VAMC has a WHMD or a Women's Health Clinical Champion responsible for clinical oversight of the women's health program.

Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM)

All VAMCs have a designated WVPM to help women Veterans access VA benefits and health care services. The WVPM advocates for women Veterans by establishing, coordinating and integrating accessible high-quality health care services with multiple disciplines within VA medical facilities. Usually, the WVPM is a practitioner with a health care background and often has experience in women's health care service delivery, with at least three years of experience and expertise in program administration.


The WVPM:

- Leads the administrative priorities of the women's health program at their facility.
- Assists women Veterans with enrolling in VA health care.
- Promotes practices that enhance women Veterans' satisfaction with their care.
- Connects women Veterans with other women Veteran peers.
- Identifies gaps in health care services.
- Ensures each VA facility environment addresses the privacy and quality needs of women.

Did you know?

VA women's health care is culturally competent. That means the VA employees serving women Veterans understand how the military may have affected their health.



- 
- Supports improvement activities to continually enhance women Veterans' experiences.
 - Develops and provides education for staff to enhance their awareness around the unique needs of women Veterans, so the staff is well-equipped and knowledgeable about providing high-quality care.
 - Develops new programs and services that align with the needs of women Veterans and empowers them to take charge of their health and well-being.

Each VA facility has a designated WVPM that can answer questions about health services, enrollment and general health system navigation.



Health Care Providers

When a woman Veteran receives health care at VA, they will typically see a health care provider that is part of primary care, specialty care or community care.

The VA Health Care Team

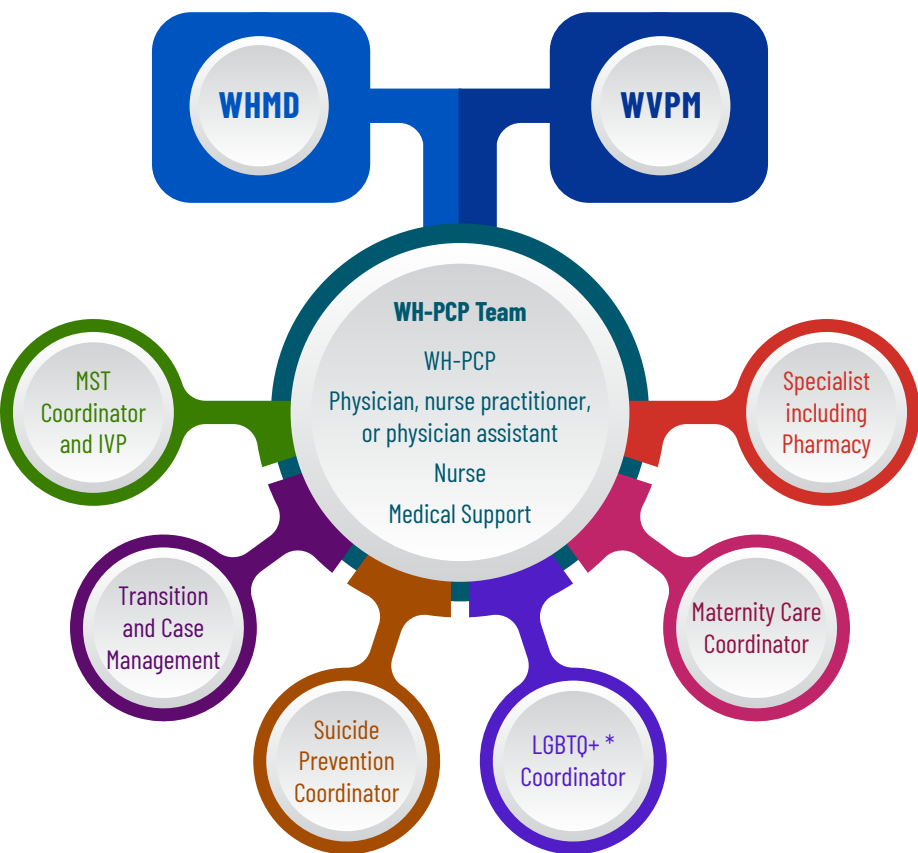


Figure 4: Patient Aligned Care

Women’s Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP)

Once enrolled in VA services, women Veterans will receive a WH-PCP. They may request a WH-PCP with the gender of their choice, as staffing allows, at their preferred facility. VA women’s health care providers receive training on how to care for women’s health and conditions that connect with women-specific military experiences.

* T stands for Trans-identifying

Did you know?

When women Veterans receive health care at VA, they will typically see one of three health care providers:

Primary Care

Primary care is the foundation of health care at VA. Women Veterans will work with a Women’s Health Primary Care Provider (WH-PCP) as part of their Patient Aligned Care Team.

Specialty Care


VA offers many types of specialty care services. VA providers are extensively trained in Veteran needs and provide care tailored to their service experience.

Community Care

Community care providers are private health care providers. They are “in network” with VA and contracted to provide care for Veterans enrolled in VA health care.

Remember

A referral is needed from a Veteran’s WH-PCP to see specialty care and community care providers.



The role of the WH-PCP is to provide comprehensive primary care services, including general primary care and sex-specific care for women Veterans enrolled in VA. WH-PCPs will:

- Provide a long-term patient-provider relationship
- Be a woman Veteran's first point of contact with the VA health care system
- Serve as the foundation for a woman Veteran's VA health care experience
- Provide referrals for mental health, specialty care, integrative health and wellness programs, community care (if allowable) and other services

NOTE: VA can conduct primary care appointments over the phone or through a virtual video appointment platform, making VA care more convenient.



Patient Aligned Care Team

The Patient Aligned Care Team puts women Veterans at the center of their care.

The Patient Aligned Care Team is a patient-driven, team-based approach that uses primary care to address women Veterans' medical, behavioral and psychosocial needs. The Patient Aligned Care Team collaborates with other VA health services and community resources.

- A Patient Aligned Care Team is a **partnership between the Veteran and their health care team** to ensure they receive whole-person care (Whole Health). The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips and treats Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being and live their life to the fullest. Whole Health encourages Veterans to develop a personal health plan, set goals based on what is important to them and work toward those goals with their health team. Many plans include well-being approaches, such as yoga, mindfulness meditation, acupuncture or creative writing classes. The aim is to use their strengths and equip them with what they need to reach their goals.
- A Patient Aligned Care Team **offers many ways to access health care**. In addition to personal visits with a WH-PCP, Veterans may schedule visits with other team members, attend group clinics and educational seminars and access information on the web through My HealtheVet.



Care Teams and Members

The Patient Aligned Care Team will:

- » Take collective responsibility for Veteran care.
- » Engage with Veterans to provide personalized high-quality, continuous care.
- » Arrange for appropriate care with other specialties.

WH-PCP team:

- » Provider (WH-PCP)
- » RN Care Manager
- » Nurse or Health Technician
- » Chaperone
- » Administrative Associate

Specialist examples:

- » Mental Health
- » Clinical Pharmacy Specialist
- » Social Work
- » Nutrition
- » Specialty Care Coordinators
- » Whole Care Coach

- A Patient Aligned Care Team **achieves coordinated care through collaboration**. All of the team members have clearly defined roles. They meet often to talk with the Veteran and with each other about their progress toward achieving individual health goals. The focus is on building trusted, personal relationships to coordinate all aspects of the Veteran's health care.
- A Patient Aligned Care Team **uses a team-based approach**. The Veteran is the center of the care team, which also includes their family members, caregivers and health care professionals. When they need additional services to meet their health goals, other care team members may join to support their personal health plan.

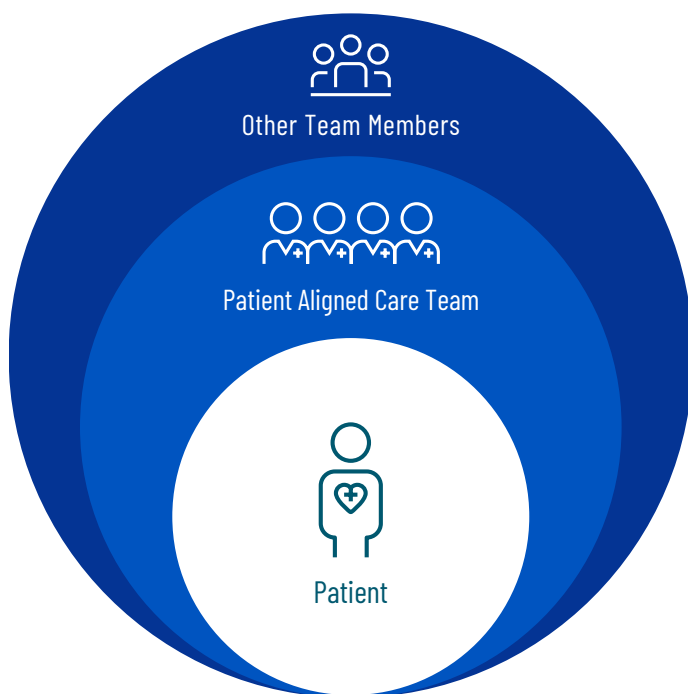
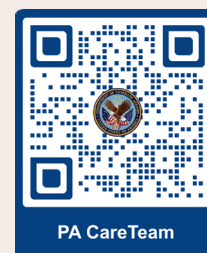


Figure 5: Patient Aligned Care Team

For More Information

Visit [Patient Care Services](#).

Visit [Patient Aligned Care Team](#) or scan the QR code



The New VA Facility Locator

VA designed the VA Facility Locator for ease of use, with facility information for more than 1,900 facilities.

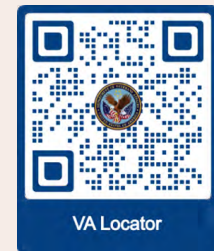
Women Veterans can use the VA Facility Locator to browse by state and administration and view an interactive map of the United States by Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN).

A Veteran may find several facility options in their local area and can choose which facility works best for them. To find a local facility, they may visit [Find VA Locations](#).

This website will ask for the Veteran's address, preferred facility type and preferred distance. After inputting this information, they will receive a list of nearby facilities. They will then select the hyperlink for their facility, and it will direct them to that facility's webpage, where they can learn more about specific operational details and service offerings.

For More Information

Visit [Find VA Locations](#) or scan the QR code



[Home](#) › [Find Locations](#)

Find VA locations

Find a VA location or in-network community care provider. For same-day care for minor illnesses or injuries, select Urgent care for facility type.

City, state or postal code (*Required) [Use my location](#)

Facility type (*Required) Service type

VA health All VA health services [Search](#)

Figure 6: Find VA Locations

Locate a VA Health Center

Step 1:

1. Visit [Find VA Locations](#).
2. Input an address or zip code.
3. Filter "Facility type" by **VA Health**.
4. Filter "Service type" by **All VA health services**.
5. Select **Search**.

Step 2: Browse nearby facilities

Step 3: Record the following facility information:

Facility address _____

Contact information _____

Hours of operation _____

Website _____

General facility services and program information _____

Women's Health New Patient wait times _____

Women's Health Existing Patient wait times _____

Women Veteran Program Manager Contact information _____

NOTE: Women Veterans can obtain local Women Veteran Program Manager (WVPM) information by contacting their local Women's Health Center (WHC).





Acronyms

Module 1

Module 2

Module 3

Module 4

Module 5

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C



Module 3

Version 3.0
Revised May 2025 for release May 2025

Women's Health Transition Training Participant Handbook
Module 3: Available Women's Health Services

27



Available Women's Health Services

VA Health Care Quality

VA is a national health care system that prioritizes patient safety, quality of care and improvement.

The health care women Veterans receive at VA is equal to any private health system. Women Veterans can trust that VA is delivering high-quality care.

VA Delivers High-Quality, Safe Care

- The Joint Commission (JC) provides accreditation to VA facilities. It is the largest and oldest accrediting body in the United States.
- JC accreditation “confers recognition that health care organizations meet certain standards of quality and safety but also confers deemed compliance with the health care quality standards of payors, both public and commercial.”
- JC accreditation is a nationally recognized validation. Receiving accreditation validates that an organization has systems and processes in place to provide safe and quality-oriented health care.

VA Care Is Equivalent to Private Sector Care

- Research studies have been conducted and published to compare care delivered at VA to the private sector.
- A study in the Journal of Surgical Research found that “VAMCs match or outperform neighboring non-VAs in surgical quality metrics and patient satisfaction ratings. Veterans receiving surgical care at VAMCs may receive equivalent or better care than at non-VAs.”
- A study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine found that “The VA system performed similarly or better than the non-VA system on most of the nationally recognized measures of inpatient and outpatient care quality.”

Module 3 Learning Objective

Upon completion of Module 3, the participant will be able to:

Identify VA women's health care resources and services to support women Veterans' Whole Health.



VA Publicly Reports Care Metrics

- VA publishes data on its facilities. Veterans can view health care quality and safety data at their facility on [VA Facility Quality Data](#).
- The data is for standardized metrics. Data can also be found on the Center for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) Hospital Compare Tool.



VA Values Research

VA actively follows and collects information on the most common medical conditions seen among women Veterans using the VA health care system.

The VA health care system assures women Veterans that their medical provider will acknowledge military service as a part of their life, understand their past experiences and appropriately screen, diagnose and treat their needs.

VA uses research to develop evidence-based strategies to improve care and tailor programs and services to better serve women Veterans through a personalized, holistic approach to care.

Women Veterans can sign up to receive highlights via email regarding VA's research on women's health. They may visit [VHA's Email Updates sign-up](#) to subscribe.

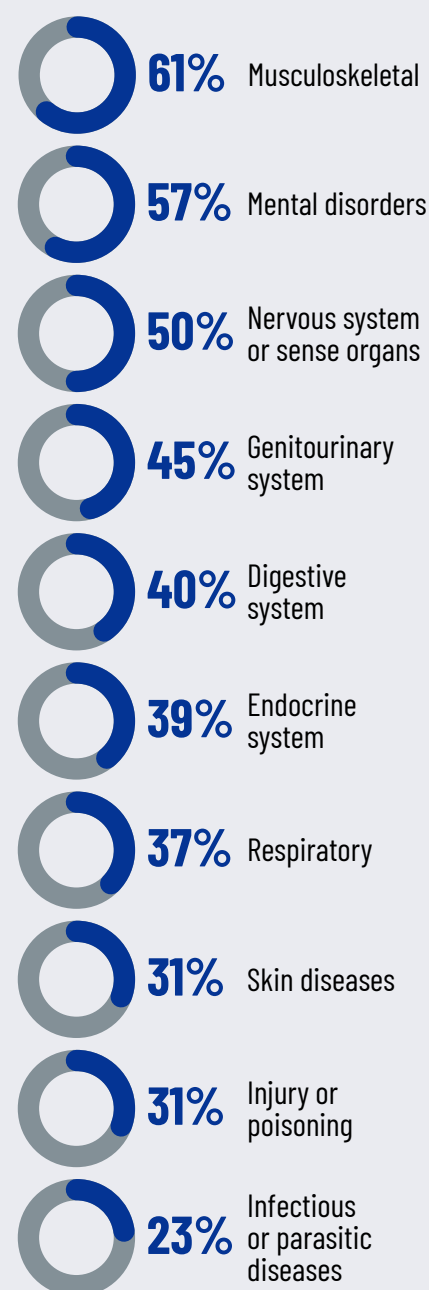
Table 4: Research Results

Research* has shown...	Leading to...
Women Veterans assigned to Women's Health—Primary Care Providers (WH-PCPs) have higher satisfaction and quality of care.	Policy for Comprehensive Women's Health, as well as lower patient attrition.
Pregnant women Veterans with mental health conditions can have more complications and risks during pregnancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Policy for Maternity Care Coordination at VA.♦ Development of the National VA Women's Reproductive Mental Health Consultation Program.
Women Veterans have high rates of chronic pain and musculoskeletal conditions.	Development of specialized training for VA and DOD primary care providers on how to recognize and treat pain and musculoskeletal conditions.

* Research results reflect women Veterans utilizing VA services

Did you know?

Common post-deployment medical and mental health diagnoses in Servicewomen who came to VA 2002–2015:



VA Whole Health

Overview

Whole Health is VA's cutting-edge approach to health care that empowers and enables women Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being.

- It is comprehensive and centers around what matters **to** the woman Veteran, not what's the matter **with** them.
- It empowers women Veterans to work with their health care team to develop a personalized health plan based on their values, needs and goals.
- Includes all the necessary inpatient hospital care and outpatient services to promote, preserve or restore their health.



Figure 7: VA Whole Health

Women Veterans will work with their Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) to create a personal health plan based on their values, needs and goals. WH-PCPs will ask questions from the Personalized Health Inventory (PHI) as the first step in the process of developing a personal health plan. It can be helpful to complete the PHI before the first appointment.

Example questions include:

- What brings you a sense of joy and happiness?
- What REALLY matters to you in your life?
- What is your vision of your best possible health?

The Components of Proactive Health and Well-being is a tool the health care team will use to help women Veterans focus on areas of their lives that impact their health and well-being. They will identify strengths and opportunities where they can make healthy changes. They can create goals, and their health care team will help provide them with education, resources or tools to reach those goals!

For More Information

Veterans can create their PHI online at [Whole Health Plan at Build Your Own Plan](#) or scan the Whole Health PHI QR code.



For additional resources about VA's Whole Health program, visit

- » [VA Whole Health](#)
- » [VAntage: Live Whole Health blog](#)
- » [Whole Health Mobile Apps and Online Tools](#)
- » [Live Whole Health app](#)



To explore an interactive version of the Circle of Health and each of its components, visit [Circle of Health](#).

A woman Veteran's personalized health plan may have a combination of clinical care, health coaching and well-being programs. Personal health plans may also include complementary and integrative health services to treat some conditions.

These treatments include but are not limited to:

- Acupuncture (including battlefield acupuncture)
- Biofeedback
- Chiropractic care
- Guided imagery
- Clinical hypnosis
- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Tai chi or i gong
- Yoga
- Massage

This integrated approach to care is to help a Veteran achieve the best version of themselves. A Veteran's WH-PCP can tell them about the 2-hour Introduction to Whole Health groups and Taking Charge of My Life and Health, which a Veteran peer will often lead, to start them on their health and well-being journey.

Eligibility

Women Veterans must enroll in VA care. Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- WH-PCPs should be able to answer any questions about available services and help set up an appointment.
- Referrals are often a requirement for complementary and integrative health services.

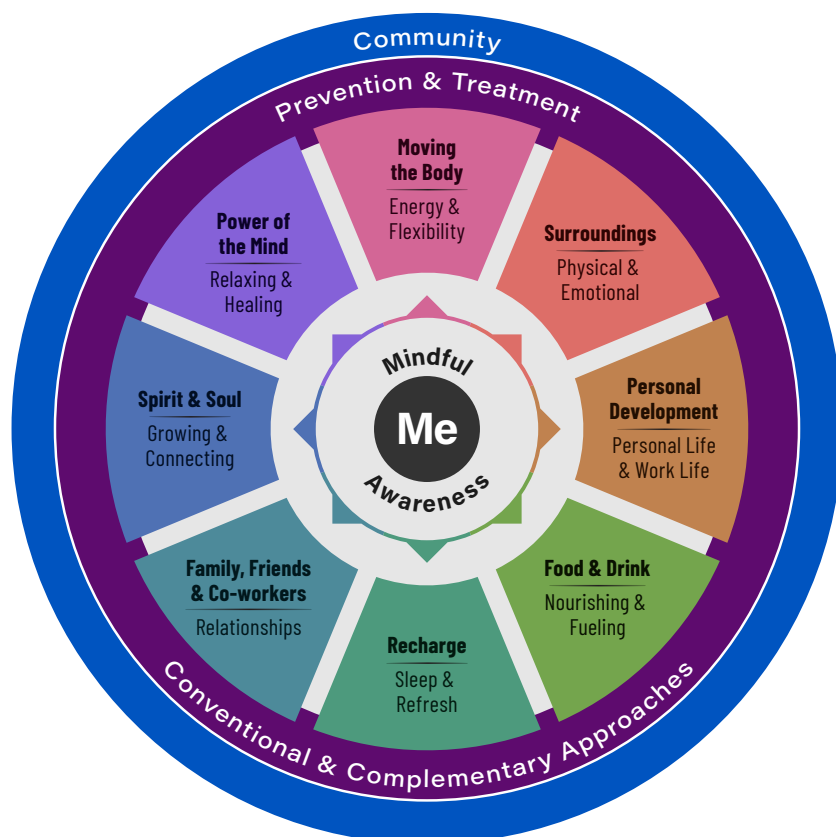


Figure 8: Mindful Awareness

VA Women's Health Care

Comprehensive Primary Care

- Cancer Screening
- Cardiovascular Risk Assessment and Prevention
- Musculoskeletal treatments
- Physical Therapy
- Immunizations
- Preventive Care

Gynecological and Reproductive Health

- Gynecology Services
- Contraception
- Abortion
- Pre-conception Planning
- Maternity Care
- Newborn Care
- Infertility
- Incontinence Treatment and Surgeries
- Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy
- Menopause

Mental Health

- Mental Health Care Services
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatments
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Suicide Prevention and Resources

Care Related to Interpersonal Trauma

- Military Sexual Trauma-Related Care
- Intimate Partner Violence

Medical and Specialty Care

- Women-Specific Prosthetics and Sensory Aids
- Nutrition and Weight Management
- Other Medical Subspecialties

Comprehensive Primary Care

Cancer Screening

Overview

VA uses the latest evidence-based practices for cancer screening. However, each person's screening timing differs based on their specific situation and potential risk factors. Since 2008, one of VA's major initiatives has been to enhance preventive screening services, specifically for breast and cervical cancer. All women Veterans are eligible for screening mammography either on-site or in the community. VA has expanded access to on-site mammograms by 62% since 2010. Additionally, some facilities offer mammograms for walk-in patients and same-day ultrasounds.

Services

Through VA, women Veterans can expect services including, but not limited to:

- **Cervical cancer screenings**, which include:
 - Pap smears to look for precancerous changes on the cervix that might evolve into cervical cancer if not treated appropriately.
 - Human papillomavirus (HPV) tests to detect HPV. High-risk strains of the HPV virus can cause cancer cell changes. Screening recommendation: Every 3–5 years based on age and risk factors.
- **Breast cancer screening**, which looks for:
 - Changes in breast tissue to detect cancer.
 - Mammography is currently available on-site at 62 VAMCs.
 - VA also covers screening at mammography centers in the community. Screening recommendation: Annually for ages 45–54 and biannually after age 55.
 - The **SERVICE Act** expands mammography screenings for women Veterans exposed to burn pits in designated locations.
- **Lung cancer screenings**, which detect:
 - Cell abnormalities in the lungs. Screening recommendation: Adults aged 55–80 with a history of smoking.
- **Colorectal cancer screenings**, which detect:
 - Cancerous colon cells through colonoscopy procedures. Screening recommendation: Starting at age 45–75; frequency depends on the type of test done and the results.

Did you know?

VA adopted the American Cancer Society guidelines for breast cancer screening. Women Veterans should be able to start screenings as early as age 40 if desired. Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP about what is right for them.

For More Information

Visit [The Service Act](#).

The Preventive Care Recommendations Chart is in **Appendix A**. Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP about their individual screening risks.

Eligibility

- All women Veterans who enroll in VA health care are eligible for cancer screenings, which include cervical and breast cancer screenings.
- Some VA facilities have on-site mammography, while others refer women Veterans to a mammography center in the community.

Access

Women’s Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCPs) will place an order for a mammogram. Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP about any screening questions and needs.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening

Data Drives Quality

VA analyzed data on breast and cervical cancer screening rates across three different health systems: VA, the private sector and Medicaid.* VA ranked highest for administering two specific women’s health cancer screenings, outperforming the private sector and Medicaid.

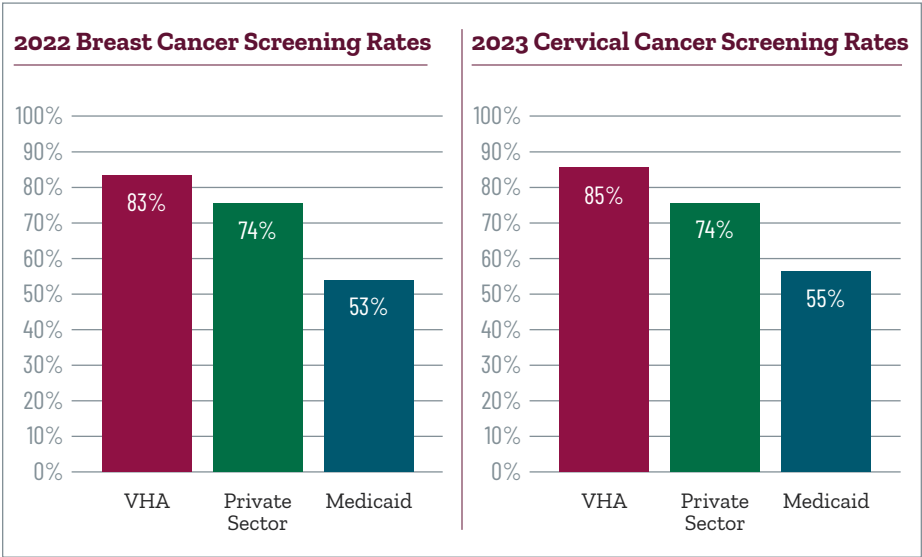


Figure 9: Cancer Screening Rates

* This data reflects information from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

* The Medicaid health screening data reflects information from the VHA Service Support Center (VSSC) and the National Committee for the Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Did you know?

Understanding the importance of data to drive health system reform, VA has prioritized data collection and research for women’s health.

Professional teams at VA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. provide oversight to constantly monitor and evaluate health care quality and health disparities.



Cardiovascular Risk Assessment and Prevention

Overview

The purpose of cardiac services for Veterans is to reduce the risk of developing heart disease or heart attack, as well as diagnose and treat cardiovascular diseases. Over the past two decades, researchers have noticed that there is an increase in women's risk for cardiovascular diseases after being separated from the military for 2-5 years. This includes even the youngest age group. Women are more likely to have additional risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, such as depression, certain autoimmune conditions and pregnancy-related cardiovascular disease diagnoses (for example, gestational diabetes), compared with their male counterparts.

Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCPs) will assess women Veterans' risks and help them get started with any necessary cardiovascular prevention strategies they should include in their personal health plan. A personal health plan might include more exercise, changes in nutrition, weight loss, smoking cessation or medications.

Preventive Measures

According to the American Heart Association, education and action can prevent 80% of cardiac events. To prevent cardiovascular challenges, recommended efforts include:

- Maintaining a healthy, balanced diet
- Striving for a healthy weight
- Completing around 3 hours of exercise per week
- Keeping conditions like diabetes and hypertension well-controlled
- Managing stress levels
- Aiming to get 7–8 hours of sleep every night
- Avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol intake

Symptoms

Additionally, heart attacks may present differently for women. While women can experience classic chest pain, they also often experience the following symptoms:

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

Did you know?

The risk of heart disease and health outcomes differ by race and ethnicity.



If a woman Veteran has any symptoms of cardiovascular disease, their provider may recommend further testing. Tests may include electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG), stress tests, cardiac catheterization or cardiac MRI. For Veterans needing cardiovascular treatment, their WH-PCP will coordinate their appointments and services. VA covers all medically necessary prescriptions for cardiovascular treatment.

Risk Factors

Research from the American College of Cardiology shows that Black and Hispanic adults have higher rates of risk factors like obesity, hypertension and diabetes. Care with Primary Care Providers (PCP) can reverse these risk factors.

Social Determinants of Health

The American College of Cardiology research also shows that disparities in factors such as access to care, physical environment and employment status affect cardiovascular health.

The VA Office of Health Equity supports efforts across VA to reduce health disparities by creating programs for Veteran groups at higher risk for poor health outcomes. For example, VA has launched a home-based cardiac rehabilitation program with the goal of increasing access to cardiac care for Black and rural Veterans.

VA providers can now access DOD records to support a smooth transition into VA care. Veteran patients with a high cardiovascular risk category receive a closer hand-off.

Musculoskeletal Injuries and Treatment

Overview

Musculoskeletal conditions and injuries are the number one reason that women, as well as men, visit VA health care facilities. High-impact activities or heavy combat gear can be causes for these conditions and injuries.

Musculoskeletal injuries affect the human body's movement or musculoskeletal system (including muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs and blood vessels). Early enrollment in treatment and physical therapy or rehabilitation can help prevent the development of chronic pain, additional injuries, limited muscle function and negative mood or motivation.

VA provides treatment, including primary care, rheumatology, orthopedics, physiatry referrals and surgery, if needed.

Did you know?

By enrolling in VA health care and attending their first VA appointment, Veterans can ensure their musculoskeletal injury treatment continues from the Military Health System (MHS) to VA.



Services

Veterans are also eligible for the following services to treat musculoskeletal injuries:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Recreational therapy
- Chiropractic
- Pain management
- Steroid injections
- Complementary and integrative health services
 - Including yoga and tai chi

All VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) offer fundamental musculoskeletal services and provide specialists for musculoskeletal treatment. Trained WH-PCPs can address musculoskeletal concerns for women Veterans.

Eligibility

All Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible to receive musculoskeletal treatment that their WH-PCP determines medically necessary.

Access

- Veterans should talk to their WH-PCP about screening and treatment for musculoskeletal injuries.
- WH-PCPs can take care of many musculoskeletal problems and will refer Veterans to other services as needed.

Physical Therapy

Overview

VA offers physical therapy as part of the treatment for specific conditions and injuries. The number of sessions depends on the condition and initial needs assessment.

Physical therapy may treat conditions such as musculoskeletal pain, which is pain in muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones and joints. Women Veterans are more likely to experience musculoskeletal pain.

WH-PCPs can discuss physical therapy and determine if it might be a good option. If referred, a Physical Therapist (PT) will examine and work with a woman Veteran to develop a customized treatment plan. Goals of physical therapy might include reducing pain, improving function, decreasing disability, promoting well-being and improving quality of life.

If a woman Veteran separates from active duty based on medical orders, they can work with a VA Coordinator, as well as their WH-PCP, to get physical therapy at VA.

Did you know?

Many VA facilities can provide physical therapy via telehealth. A Veteran may talk to their care team to determine if virtual physical therapy is an option for them.



Services

A woman Veteran's specific conditions and needs determine the approach to physical therapy treatment. Their provider will recommend the best services for them. Options may include:

- Tailored muscle strengthening mobility and flexibility exercises
- Gentle stretching
- Vibration therapy

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- WH-PCPs will provide a referral for physical therapy if it is part of the treatment plan.
- The number of sessions depends on the Veteran's condition and individual needs.

Pain Management

Overview

Pain management service offerings through VA include both online resources and in-house treatment. Some of these services include:

- Interventional pain treatment (for example, injections, blocks)
- Botox for headaches
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Chiropractic care
- Acupuncture
- Yoga
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Massage Therapy

A provider may also consider medication. Available medications for treating pain vary greatly. Each medication has its risks and benefits, so it is important for women Veterans to have open and honest conversations with their providers to determine the options that will work best for them.

For More Information

Visit [Pain Management](#) for an overview of available treatments, self-management courses and home practice exercises.



Suggestions to Decrease Pain

To decrease pain, women Veterans should:

- Pace themselves and take breaks.
- Practice relaxation and stress reduction.
- Incorporate daily motion.
- Spend time on activities they enjoy.
- Work with physical therapy.
- Share how they are feeling.
- Make healthy lifestyle choices, such as improving sleep habits.

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP to explore the pain management strategies that are best for them.
- There is no limit to the quantity of services for eligible Veterans, but referrals are usually required.

Immunizations

Overview

Immunizations protect patients from the seasonal flu and other vaccine-preventable diseases. VA offers vaccinations against a range of infectious agents, including:

- Hepatitis A and B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV): to prevent cancers of the cervix, throat, vagina and anus
- Pneumococcus
- Influenza
- COVID-19
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
- Shingles
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

For More Information

Visit [Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations for Women](#) or see the Preventive Care Recommendations chart in

Appendix A.





Access

- Women Veterans should work with their WH-PCP to determine which vaccines and immunizations are right for them, discuss any possible side-effects and schedule an appointment.
- Currently, no-cost flu vaccines are available for eligible Veterans at more than 70,000 in-network community providers nationwide.

Additional Preventive Care

Overview

Women Veterans' health benefits include important preventive care services, such as:

- Periodic medical exams (including women-specific exams)
- Health education, including nutrition education
- Immunization against infectious diseases
- Counseling on the inheritance of genetically determined diseases
- HIV prevention medications
- Geriatric care services
- Mammograms

Services

VA offers many preventive screening tests such as screenings for:

- Cholesterol
- Cancer
- Blood pressure
- HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The Preventive Care Recommendations chart in **Appendix A** contains a full list of preventive screening services. It is also online at [National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](https://www.nccdp.org/).

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

Women Veterans should work with their WH-PCP to determine which preventive screening tests are most appropriate for their care.

Gynecological Care and Reproductive Health

Routine Women's Health Care

Overview

VA provides women Veterans with a wide range of gynecology services, both routine and specialty, throughout their lives. A WH-PCP provides routine women's health care and refers any gynecologic specialty needs to a gynecologist.

Services

Routine women's health care includes:

- Cervical cancer screening (Pap smear):
 - WH-PCPs can conduct a Pap smear.
 - Women Veterans will only be referred to a gynecologist if there are abnormalities.
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) prevention and treatment, including HIV prevention medications
- Pelvic exams
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine
 - The HPV vaccine can be available up to age 45. However, it is important to get this vaccine earlier in life, ideally before age 26.
 - The vaccine becomes less effective as the patient gets older due to the chances they have already had exposure to HPV through sexual activity.

If a woman Veteran is unsure when they last received these routine gynecological screenings, they can talk to their Military Health System (MHS) provider and get them before they separate. WH-PCPs will ask when they last received exams, or they can perform exams again if the woman Veteran is unsure. Women Veterans should visit VA annually for their well-woman exam and talk to their provider about their concerns and desired path forward.

Gynecology

If a woman Veteran needs services beyond what their WH-PCP can provide, the WH-PCP may refer the woman Veteran to specialty gynecology. Gynecologists provide services such as management of abnormal cervical screening tests, abnormal uterine bleeding, pelvic pain, complex contraceptive management, including intrauterine device (IUD) placement, complex menopause management and gynecologic surgery.

Did you know?

WH-PCPs will be able to provide all primary care and women-specific health services, including well-woman exams. All additional services can be performed by a specialist.



For women who find pelvic exams and gynecology procedures particularly stressful (for example, after having experienced sexual trauma), VA offers specialized mental health services to help reduce and manage this stress. If a woman Veteran anticipates stress associated with these procedures, they should talk to their WH-PCP, who can plan an appropriate referral.

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- Women Veterans should coordinate with their WH-PCP for necessary assessments and referrals.
- VA requires referrals for all specialty services. Their provider determines screening timelines individually.
- In all VA health care settings, Veterans have the right to request a chaperone during a sensitive or near-sensitive examination, procedure or treatment. VA will utilize trauma-informed care (TIC) concepts.

Sexual Health and Contraception

Overview

Sexual health and well-being are important areas of overall well-being. A woman Veteran's team will ask them about their sexual health and functioning in an open and nonjudgmental way to support their overall health. If a woman Veteran has any concerns in this area, VA may have available services. Additional information on family-building services relating to pre-conception and fertility can be found in Reproductive Health: Pre-Conception Planning in this handbook.

Services

VA provides comprehensive contraception care services and offers a wide range of birth control options for women Veterans. Once enrolled at VA, women Veterans are eligible for the following contraception services:

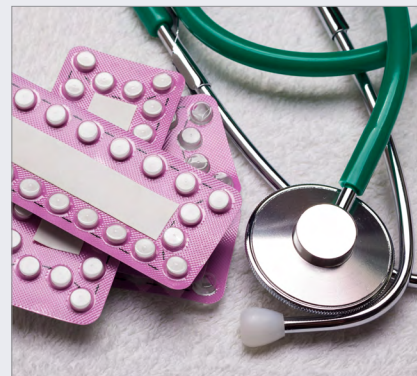
- Contraception counseling
- Birth control prescriptions
- Insertion of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs)

Veterans can access the following types of birth control:

- **LARCs:** implant, intrauterine device (IUD), depo-injection
 - Some WH-PCPs at VAMCs can perform the procedure. Otherwise, a gynecologist will perform the insertion.

Did you know?

Through VA's Pharmacy, Veterans can get prescription medications, including birth control, for minimal or zero copay.



- **Hormones:** pill, patch, ring
- **Barrier methods:** condoms, sponges, cervical caps, spermicides
- **Emergency Contraception:** Plan B, Ella or IUD
 - Emergency Contraception may require an order from a WH-PCP. Veterans can pick up medication at their VA pharmacy. They can also get this medication in advance with a prescription during a WH-PCP appointment if needed.
- **Sterilization:** tubal ligation, bilateral salpingectomy (removal of both tubes)
- **Sexual health:** STI screening, HIV prevention medications, sexual health counseling, medications to manage genitourinary symptoms of menopause

Some birth control options may require an order from a provider. An advanced provision could be available if needed. A Veteran may obtain many options at their VA pharmacy. Copays may apply. VA now offers a 12-month dispensing of prescription contraception.

NOTE: WH-PCPs will provide women-specific health care, such as Pap smears and contraception prescriptions. WH-PCPs will also refer patients to a gynecologist for any additional gynecology services, including invasive procedures and some LARC insertions or surgery.

Eligibility

- All women Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible to receive contraception care services and medications.
- VA fully covers contraception for many women Veterans, but their priority group rating will ultimately determine their cost of care and medication copays.
- Birth control prescriptions are available and have the same guidelines as all prescriptions.
- Women Veterans with greater than 50% service disability never pay for any medications.

Access

- Women Veterans should schedule an appointment with their WH-PCP to talk about their contraceptive needs.
- Women Veterans should bring their last refill or prescription with them to VA so they can continue their Military Health System (MHS) prescription.
- VA's pharmacy can provide prescribed medications on-site or by mail order.
- Most types of contraception found in the community are also available at VA.
- VA offers pregnancy options counseling, including abortion counseling, to all enrolled and eligible Veterans and Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) beneficiaries. VA may provide abortion when the life or health of the pregnant person would be endangered if the pregnancy was carried to term or in cases of pregnancy that is the result of rape and incest.

Abortion Counseling and Services

Overview

VA now offers abortion counseling and—in specific cases—abortion services to pregnant Veterans regardless of a state's local regulations. VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) across the country offer these services as part of VA's reproductive health offerings.



Services

VA Abortion Counseling

VA family-building services offer abortion counseling to all pregnant Veterans enrolled in VA health care. VA provides women Veterans with counseling that corresponds to their unique health needs and situations as they apply to the Veterans seeking care.

Available Abortion Services

VA offers abortion services to pregnant Veterans in the following situations:

- When the life or health of the pregnant Veteran is in danger because of the pregnancy
- When the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest

Veterans can talk to their VA health care provider to determine if these services are available and clinically appropriate for them.

Determining Eligibility

To receive these services, the Veteran must enroll in VA health care. VA provides this care based on an appropriate health care professional's determination that it is needed to promote, preserve or restore the health of the Veteran in accordance with generally accepted medical practice standards. VA will determine the clinical necessity of the procedure on a case-by-case basis after consultation between the provider and the Veteran they serve.

Pre-conception Planning

Overview

Pre-conception planning promotes acting now for a healthier pregnancy in the future. VA provides a full range of pre-conception planning services. During a visit, WH-PCPs will talk to women Veterans about their pre-pregnancy health. These conversations can include the following topics:

- Reproductive history and life plan
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Smoking history
- Drug or alcohol use
- Healthy weight and general nutrition
- Healthy environment
- Mental health
- Safety of currently prescribed medications during pregnancy
- Genetic counseling and screening
- Infections and immunization

VA Care and Local Laws

VA recognizes that some Veterans may live in states with more restrictions. However:

- » VA provides services to protect the health and life of Veterans.
- » VA employees working within the scope of their federal employment may provide authorized services.

For More Information

Visit [Reproductive Health](#) and select **Abortion Services**.

VA Community Care Program and Abortion Services

- » Any VA service must be authorized under the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP) to be covered in the local community by VA.
- » If necessary, community providers who meet VA criteria and have VCCP authorization may provide abortion services.
- » Veterans can find more information in the Community Care section in Module 2 of this handbook.



- Management of chronic diseases, such as hypertension and diabetes

Additional areas covered can include vitamin supplementation, psychological and behavioral risks, pregnancy complications, partner's health and family history.

Veterans can find a detailed overview of VA Maternity Care services in the Maternity and Newborn Care section of this handbook. If a woman Veteran voluntarily separates from active duty while pregnant, they may apply for medical coverage under the Continued Health Care Benefit Program within 60 days after losing Military Health System (MHS) or TRICARE eligibility.

- VA's Teratogenic Drugs (T-Drugs) program is a medical record system for prescription drug management for pregnant women.
- To avoid exposure to agents that could harm the development of an embryo or a fetus, VA's T-Drugs program ensures pregnant Veterans receive safe medications and alerts providers of unsafe medications.

Eligibility

- All enrolled women Veterans of reproductive age are eligible for pre-conception planning, as it is part of routine primary care.
- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care. Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.
- If a Veteran is pregnant when they enroll at VA, they may ask their PCPs to refer them to a Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC).
- VA may require a maternity care consult to the community.

Access

- Veterans should schedule an appointment with a WH-PCP.
- Referrals are not required. Typically, a primary care visit includes a discussion about pre-conception planning.
- Veterans can complete pre-conception planning in one visit.
- If a Veteran is on medication for a mental health condition, such as anxiety or depression, their WH-PCP can access a reproductive mental health consultation. The goal is to help them make a plan to keep them and their baby as healthy as possible during pregnancy.



Maternity and Newborn Care

Overview

Since 1999 VA's medical benefits package has included maternity benefits. Generally speaking, maternity benefits begin with confirmation of pregnancy, during the first trimester, if possible. Then maternity benefits continue through the postpartum visit, usually one full year after delivery or when VA medically releases the woman Veteran from obstetric care.

Non-VA (community care) providers offer maternity care in non-VA facilities. Women can continue to receive care for other conditions at VA during this time. Each Veteran will receive a Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC) to help arrange maternity care.

Services

Approved maternity services include:

- Comprehensive assessment
- Prenatal care and delivery with authorization
- Standard and special laboratory tests
- Prenatal screening for genetic disorders
- Gestational dating ultrasounds
- New specialty consultations, including lactation consultants
- Coordination with other VA care
- Screening for and treatment of mental health conditions, such as depression
- Postpartum care and contraception
- Newborn care (for seven days, including the day of birth)
- Pharmacy prescriptions
- Pregnancy-related education, including lactation support
- Non-emergent maternity-related care
- National Cemetery Administration (NCA) services for infant loss

If a Veteran or their spouse is pregnant at the time of their transition from the military, they may be eligible to extend in-service health care benefits through one year following delivery. The Veteran may also choose to enroll in VA health care. Be sure to enroll as soon as possible after separating from the military.

VHA Handbook 1330.03 provides more information. VA and DOD Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Pregnancy—Patient Summary is available online: [VA and DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Pregnancy](#).

The Purple Book is a complete guide to pregnancy in VA and DOD.

Access the guide online: [Pregnancy & Children: A Goal Oriented Guide to Prenatal Care](#).

For More Information

Call 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636), visit [Maternity Care](#) or scan the QR code



Eligibility

- All confirmed pregnant Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care are eligible to receive Maternity Care Coordination.
- When Servicewomen are transitioning from health care coverage under Military Health System (MHS), continued coverage is not automatic. Arrangements with the current coverage provider may be needed.
- Prenatal care and deliveries typically occur in community facilities but are covered by VA.

Access

- Each VA Medical Center (VAMC) has a Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC) that will reach out to the Veteran as soon as they are confirmed pregnant by a referral from their WH-PCP.
- Veterans should work with their MCC and PCP team to meet their health care needs throughout pregnancy.
- MCCs should be able to answer any questions a Veteran may have during pregnancy about available services and coverage.

Lactation Bras, Breast Pumps, Maternity Belts and Other Supplies

Veterans may contact their Maternity Care Coordinator (MCC) to obtain lactation bras, lactation pads, lanolin, breast pumps and maternity belts at least two weeks before their estimated delivery date. Eligible Veterans can obtain related supplies through the VA pharmacy, such as breast pads, breast milk storage bags and nipple cream.

VA provides newborn health care services for up to seven days, including the date of birth. This benefit includes all appropriate post-delivery services. While VA will pay for up to seven days of newborn care, the community facility will perform the services, not a VA health care facility. Veterans can also access free health and safety information about their infant's development. Learn more at [Infant Care and Infant Health Resources](#).

Eligibility

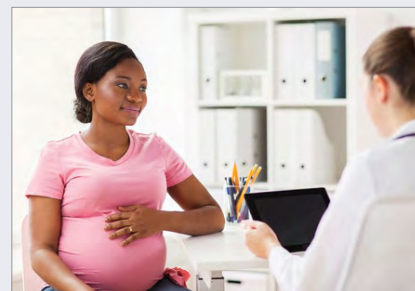
- Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- Veterans should work with their MCC or WH-PCP team to get a referral.
- Veterans can talk to their MCC at their preferred VA health care facility. The MCC, Social Work Office and Office of Community Care will work together to provide support around newborn care.

For More Information

Visit [Pregnant Veterans Health Care Breast/Chest Feeding](#).



Fertility and Family-Building Services

Overview

Infertility is a disease, condition or status characterized by any of the following: The inability to achieve a successful pregnancy based on a patient's medical, sexual and reproductive history, age, physical findings, diagnostic testing or any combination of those factors. The need for medical intervention for infertility includes but is not limited to, the use of donor gametes or donor embryos in order to achieve a successful pregnancy either as an individual or with a partner.

For eligible Veterans, VA has a range of infertility assessment and counseling services, which largely align with the infertility services available at DOD. All enrolled Veterans may receive comprehensive health counseling, evaluation management and select treatment for infertility conditions regardless of service connection.

Services

Family planning services include:

- Genetic counseling, screening and diagnostic testing
- Laboratory blood testing
- Pelvic or transvaginal ultrasound
- Surgical correction of structural pathology
- Reversal of tubal ligation
- Medication (for example, hormonal therapy, oral or injectable)
- Mental health counseling
- Oocyte cryopreservation (egg freezing) for medical indications
- Intrauterine insemination for medically indicated conditions (maximum of 6 cycles per pregnancy)

Eligibility also includes:

- In vitro fertilization (IVF) for Veterans with a service-connected condition that results in infertility.
- The Veteran is legally married, has an intact uterus, has at least one functioning ovary and has a male spouse who can produce sperm or cryopreserved sperm.
- Donor eggs, donor sperm, donor embryos and surrogacy are not covered services.
- Adoption costs up to \$2,000 for Veterans with a service-connected condition that results in infertility. For more information, visit [VAntage Adoption Reimbursement](#).
- Other diagnostic studies, treatments or procedures.

For More Information

Download the [VHA Directive 1332 PDF](#) from the VA publications page to learn more about VA's infertility treatment policies.





Eligibility

- All Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible to receive infertility treatment.
- Not all enrolled Veterans are eligible for assisted reproductive technology or in vitro fertilization (ART/IVF).
- Benefit is limited to married Veterans with a service- connected condition resulting in infertility.
- VA does not cover donor eggs, donor sperm, donor embryos or surrogacy.

Access

- Veterans should talk to their WH-PCP about infertility evaluation and treatment services.
- Veterans need a referral from their WH-PCP to receive infertility services.
- Veterans should check with the Eligibility Office at the time of their separation for details.

Incontinence

Overview

Urinary incontinence is fairly common in women, but it can be embarrassing and difficult to talk about. A woman can have incontinence at any age. Providers at VA are available to help.

Incontinence is the loss of bladder control, leading to the unintentional passing of urine. Risk factors for incontinence include repetitive heavy lifting, childbearing and chronic cough.

Symptoms for incontinence include:

- Involuntary release of urine
- Leaking a small to moderate amount of urine
- Frequent and sudden uncontrollable need to urinate

Services

For incontinence, VA provides a variety of support services, ranging from basic primary care evaluation to referral to and treatment from a urologist or urogynecologist who specializes in the treatment of incontinence.

Women Veterans are eligible to receive a spectrum of incontinence services as needed, including:

- Medications
- Referral to urology or urogynecology, where available, for incontinence evaluation
- Surgery
- Pads from pharmacies
- Pelvic floor physical therapy (PFPT), which can involve:
 - Pelvic floor strengthening for improved muscle tone and bladder control, which may include biofeedback
 - Relieving abdominal, lower back or pelvic discomfort
 - Relieving chronic pain in the coccyx (the bone at the base of the spine or tailbone), vaginal or rectal areas
 - Help alleviate urinary or bowel incontinence and sexual dysfunction

Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP to start the evaluation and treatment. They do not have to suffer in silence.



Eligibility

All Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible to receive incontinence treatment and support services as determined medically necessary.

Access

- Women Veterans should talk to their WH-PCP about incontinence services and treatment.
- If a woman Veteran needs specialty care such as PFPT or surgery, WH-PCPs will provide a referral.

Menopause

Overview

Menopause is a normal change in a woman's life when her menstrual period stops. During menopause, women experience irregular menstrual periods and wide fluctuations in hormone levels.

Menopause is a gradual process—often taking 3–5 years. In general, menopause starts between ages 45–55, but it could range from ages 40–60. Experts consider menopause beginning prior to age 40 as premature and requires evaluation.

Checking hormone levels in blood can help determine if a woman is in menopause. Often, menopause will start for a woman around the same age that it started for her mother.

Menopause happens in three stages:

1. Perimenopause

- a. People will start to experience symptoms that indicate menopause is coming as hormone levels begin to fluctuate widely. Menstrual periods become irregular. Women may experience hot flashes, night sweats, sleep challenges or mood swings.
- b. Be careful to consistently use contraception during this stage, as pregnancy can still occur.
- c. Not all women will experience the same signs or symptoms of menopause. These represent examples of what they may experience.

2. Menopause

- a. Menopause is the permanent ending of menstrual periods. A woman has reached menopause when they have not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months.

Did you know?

Though the average age of menopause is 51, symptoms related to menopause can start as early as 30. A Veteran can be evaluated and treated for these symptoms, if necessary, regardless of age.



3. Postmenopause

- a. Postmenopause is the period of time after menopause. During this time, a woman's body makes only a very small amount of estrogen. A woman's risk of heart disease and osteoporosis (weaker bones) increases.

WH-PCP support services can include hormone replacement therapy, non-hormonal treatments for symptom management, vaginal estrogen and medication to protect bones.

Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- A woman Veteran may request an appointment with their WH-PCP. WH-PCPs can provide routine menopause management.
- If needed, they can refer a Veteran to a gynecologist.



Mental Health

Overview

VA mental health providers are available to help. Providers tailor care to address individual needs and preferences, including women-specific mental health concerns, using a patient-centered, Whole Health approach to mental health. All VA providers have access to specialized training in women's mental health, and they have the skills and expertise to address women Veterans' mental health concerns.

At every VA Medical Center (VAMC), there are **Women's Mental Health Champions** who are mental health clinicians with a specific interest and specialized training in women-specific mental health care. More than half of VA's mental health providers are women. All of VA's providers have access to specialized training in women's mental health, including reproductive mental health conditions, such as perinatal depression and mood changes during the perimenopause transition.

Services


VA offers a full continuum of gender-sensitive, evidence-informed mental health services for women Veterans based on their unique needs:

- Therapy (individual, group, and family) using evidence-based methods such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)
- General outpatient care (including assessment, psychiatric medications and individual, group and family therapy)
- Treatments that address specific types of traumas:
 - Military Sexual Trauma (MST) services
 - Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) services
- PTSD screening and treatment
- Reproductive mental health services
- Eating disorders treatment
- Residential (mixed-sex and women-only) and inpatient treatment options
- Tele-mental health and mobile application services

For More Information

Visit [VA Mental Health](#) or scan the QR code





Primary Care-Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI) clinics also offer mental health care. With PC-MHI, mental health experts work directly with the WH-PCP team to develop a coordinated treatment plan that is best for the Veteran.

VAMCs, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and Vet Centers offer mental health care. In addition to face-to-face appointments, women Veterans may receive care from mental health specialists at other VA facilities through telemedicine technology.

Eligibility

- VA can help Veterans connect with mental health support regardless of discharge status, service history or eligibility for VA health care.
- Former Service members with an OTH discharge may receive support for a mental health emergency for an initial period of 90 days from discharge, which can include outpatient, residential or inpatient care.

Access

- With VA primary care, Veterans can schedule an appointment with a WH-PCP to discuss mental health concerns and treatment options.
- Veterans should check with their facility about available local mental health services. Available on-site services vary depending on location.
- At some facilities, Veterans are able to self-refer for mental health services. Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP or the WVPM at their local facility.



Substance Use Disorder and Treatments

Overview

Many Americans, including women Veterans, have concerns about their relationships with alcohol and drugs. They might wonder if they are drinking or using too much, or concerned loved ones might be giving them feedback about their use. Help is available at VA.

For some, the use of alcohol and drugs can be a slippery slope—particularly for those facing other challenges, including life stressors, anxiety, depression, other mental health concerns and chronic pain. Despite the temporary relief a substance may provide, increased substance use can lead to long-term consequences. Women are especially at risk of developing long-term physical health challenges related to substance use, and many women find that substance use worsens their mental health concerns.

Often referred to as “addiction,” substance use disorder (SUD) is a disease that causes people to have difficulty controlling their use of alcohol and drugs, including prescription drugs. Untreated, SUD can influence many aspects of life.

Signs and Symptoms of SUD include:

- Increased urge to drink or to use drugs
- Inability to stop drinking or using drugs despite negative consequences
- Changes in relationships due to drinking or drug use
- Feeling depressed, anxious, guilty or ashamed about substance use
- Feeling sick and experiencing withdrawal symptoms when drinking or drug use stops
- Increased tolerance refers to the need over time for more alcohol or drugs to achieve the desired effect

SUD and Women Veterans

Overall, female Veterans are less likely than male Veterans to experience SUD. However, currently, female Veterans are more likely than male Veterans to use tobacco products. Younger women Veterans are also much more likely than older women Veterans to drink alcohol at unsafe levels (more than three drinks in a day). NIAAA recommends no more than one drink a day for women. Binge drinking for women is four drinks in a two-hour period. Heavy Use is four or more on any day or eight or more per week.

Younger women Veterans are also at a higher risk than older women Veterans for the misuse of prescription drugs, including opioid medications, such as Oxycontin and Percocet. Misuse of prescription medicine can include taking more medicine than prescribed at a time, taking medicine more often than prescribed or taking someone else’s medicine.

For More Information

Learn how to take the next step at [VA Mental Health Take the Next Step](#).


Learn more about the VA treatments available at [VA Mental Health Substance Use Treatment](#).

Visit [Substance Use](#).



Find a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program [Location](#).





Women Veterans experiencing SUD are likely to have experienced trauma, including childhood abuse, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and domestic violence. For many, trauma results in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression or anxiety.

It is very common for women to experience SUD and mental health conditions at the same time. Studies show that it is important that both sets of concerns receive attention in treatment. Fortunately, there are many ways to recover from substance use disorders. Please consider taking the next step by learning about the many VA treatments available.

How Providers Support Veterans

Sometimes, Veterans find that all they need is clear advice from their provider and that their health would benefit from changes made to their drinking or drug use.

Veterans enrolled in VA are asked at least once a year about their drinking habits. These screenings are an opportunity to learn whether one's drinking may be getting to a point that warrants shared decision-making discussion with their provider.

VA also routinely screens Veterans regarding tobacco use. Veterans are also encouraged to raise any concerns they might have about their use of drugs like cannabis (marijuana), cocaine, other stimulants and opioids (prescription or otherwise).

Treatment

More than half of the women Veterans in VA's SUD treatment programs receive treatment for alcohol disorder. And more than one-fifth of them receive treatment for cocaine use disorder. Women also receive treatment for opioids, cannabis and other drugs. Options include therapy—either individually or in a group—and prescription medications.

For those who need to address SUD, treatment programs may include medicine, counseling and attending support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) Recovery. Treatment does not only focus on alcohol or drug use disorders; it can also help Veterans manage challenges in their daily life.

These programs offer evening and weekend hours to help make sure that Veterans can attend VA's treatment programs.


Services

Evidence-based SUD treatments are available in a continuum of care that includes:

- Focused counseling in pain clinics and the primary clinic
- Dedicated specialized substance use counseling from mental health and PTSD specialists
- Specialty SUD treatment programs, including standard outpatient, Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOPs), Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) and residential programs (including some women only residential programs)
- Harm reduction services, such as medication to prevent opioid overdose and clean needles

SUD treatment programs also provide a continuum of care. Treatments range from outpatient group and individual treatments to intensive services, including withdrawal management, psychotherapy and medications for SUD.

Treatments that VA provides are evidence-based (treatments that have undergone scientific testing for effectiveness). Care can include psychosocial or behavioral talk therapies, as well as medication therapies.



Treatment programs and services may include medicine, counseling and attending support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

A Veteran may need withdrawal management before they start treatment if they are physically dependent on alcohol or certain drugs. Withdrawal management can occur in an inpatient unit or outpatient clinic, depending on their medical risks and preferences.

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** helps Veterans with SUD develop more balanced and helpful thoughts about themselves, others and the future. It can help Veterans develop the behavioral skills they need to manage the urge to drink or use drugs, refuse opportunities to use substances, and use a problem-solving approach to deal with substance use and achieve personal goals.
- **Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)** combines assessment and feedback with motivational interviewing. This therapy helps Veterans with SUD by evoking and strengthening their personal motivations and abilities for change.
- **Contingency Management (CM)** helps Veterans by using incentives to immediately reward behaviors that support their recovery.
- **Evidence-Based Medication Therapy** helps Veterans by providing proven options for managing alcohol and some drug use disorders. Just like diabetes or hypertension, SUD is a chronic disease, and medications are available to treat SUD. Medicines for SUD can reduce cravings, prevent relapse and reduce the risk of death from SUD.

Eligibility

- If a Veteran does not qualify for VA health care, they are able to get certain health care services.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- Women Veterans should talk with their WH-PCP to discuss concerns and treatment options. WH-PCPs will help women Veterans coordinate their care.
- Programs may offer evening and weekend hours, and treatment may also be available via telehealth to help make sure that Veterans can attend VA treatment services.
- Treatment decisions are made collaboratively between Veterans and their VA providers.

VA Offers Women-Only Treatment Options

- VA recognizes that many women with SUD have trauma histories that may make it difficult to be in treatment groups with men. As a result, many larger VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) have women-only group treatment options for women Veterans with SUD concerns.
- Virtually all VA facilities also offer individual counseling or case management.

VA is Ready to Support Women Veterans

As an integrated health care system, VA is uniquely able to address the needs of women Veterans diagnosed with SUD. VA can provide support to address co-occurring medical, mental health and psychosocial needs (e.g., housing, employment).

Women's Residential Programs

Overview

VA provides Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs for women Veterans who might benefit from a 24/7 therapeutic setting. Care includes using both professional and peer support. Treatment will focus on the Veteran's needs, abilities, strengths and preferences.

Women-only residential treatment is available to provide time-limited, intensive treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance use disorders and other mental health concerns, as well as treatment for psychosocial needs, including homelessness and unemployment. At the residential treatment unit, women receive 24-hour supervision, daily professional treatment and comprehensive care. Residential services with VA may be offered in mixed-sex and women-only settings.

Screening tools are easily available to self-assess mental health needs for PTSD, depression, substance use and alcohol abuse.

Eligibility

- Even if you do not qualify for VA health care generally, you may still be able to get certain health care services. Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.
- VA can help Veterans connect with mental health support regardless of their discharge status, service history or eligibility for VA health care.
- As a result of the **COMPACT Act**, Veterans in suicidal crises can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost—including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. This benefit is available to those who meet the definition of Veteran according to 38 US Code 5303A, regardless of enrollment status in the VA system.

Access

Women Veterans should speak with their WH-PCP or VA mental health provider or call 1-855-VA-WOMEN to get access to these services.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Overview

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident or sexual assault. It is normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge or have trouble sleeping after this type of event. If symptoms last more than a month, it may be PTSD. The good news is that there are effective treatments.

For More Information

Visit [Residential Rehab for Veterans: Drug & Alcohol Addiction—Mental Health](#) to learn more.

Visit [My HealtheVet: Screening Tools](#) or scan the QR code



Learn more about mental health services and emergency medical care under the **COMPACT Act** in **Appendix B** of this handbook.



Trauma is common in women. Five out of ten women experience a traumatic event. Women tend to experience different traumas than men. VA health care providers can give referrals to PTSD specialists or therapy or prescribe certain medications.

Services

- **Mental health assessment and screening**
- **Therapy:** Trauma-focused psychotherapies are highly effective treatments for PTSD. “Trauma-focused” means focusing on the memory of the trauma. This may include:
 - Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
 - Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy
 - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- **Medications:** Some types of antidepressant medications can help PTSD by putting brain chemicals back in balance.
- **Peer Specialists:** Peer specialists are Veterans who have experienced and recovered from a mental health condition. As members of a Veteran’s treatment team, peer specialists help them design their own recovery plan, using tools such as personal goal setting and targeted coping skills training. They can also connect a Veteran with VA and local resources to help them find meaningful roles and activities in their community. Veterans can request a referral from their VA health care provider to work with a peer specialist.

Eligibility

- If a Veteran does not qualify for VA health care, they may still be able to get certain health care services.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.*

Access

Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP or their VA mental health provider to get a referral for PTSD care or call the Military and Veteran Crisis Line. We encourage all Veterans and Service members to connect with the Military and Veteran Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1.

* VA can help Veterans connect with mental health support regardless of discharge status, service history or eligibility for VA health care. Also, as a result of the COMPACT Act, Veterans in suicidal crises can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost—including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. This benefit is available to those who meet the definition of Veteran according to 38 US Code 5303A, regardless of enrollment status in the VA system.

For More Information

Visit the [National Center for PTSD](#) for resources or scan the QR code



Traumatic Brain Injury

Overview

VA's Polytrauma System of Care (PSC) provides a full range of rehabilitation services, including inpatient and outpatient care (for both Veterans and Service members covered by TRICARE authorization) who have sustained polytrauma, TBI or other acquired brain injuries.

TBI refers to an invisible wound, but it can have a significant impact on a Veteran. Among Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) / Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans, 12–20% experience TBI. Women present with more severe symptoms, and 5% of TBI cases are women.

Symptoms of TBI include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Challenges with memory
- Headache
- Balance challenges
- Dizziness
- Sleep concerns
- Fatigue
- Irritability

Services

An interdisciplinary team treats TBIs. The team includes:

- Psychiatry
- Psychology
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Neurology

Eligibility

If a woman Veteran does not qualify for VA health care, they may still be able to get certain health care services.

Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.*

Access

Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP or VA mental health provider to get a referral to neurology or other mental health specialists for TBI screening and treatment.

For More Information

Visit [Polytrauma/TBI System of Care](#) and resources.



* VA can help Veterans connect with mental health support regardless of discharge status, service history or eligibility for VA health care. Also, as a result of the COMPACT Act, Veterans in suicidal crises can go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost—including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. This benefit is available to those who meet the definition of Veteran according to 38 US Code 5303A, regardless of enrollment status in the VA system.



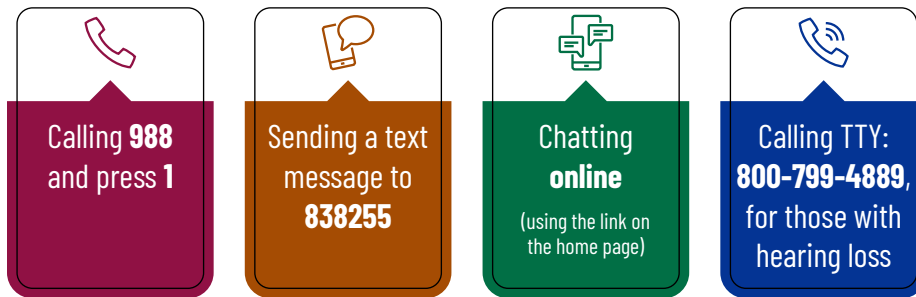
Suicide Prevention

Overview

According to the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, for all Veterans, the period of transition from active duty to civilian life is a high-risk period for suicide. VA provides multiple outlets to help Veterans prevent suicide. VA offers 24-hour confidential crisis lines, chat lines and mental health specialists who can develop personalized safety plans and support groups. VA is available to help Veterans recognize warning signs and understand when emotional challenges reach a crisis point.

The rate of suicide among women Veterans is about double that of non-Veteran women. Women Veterans have a greater likelihood of using firearms, which are highly lethal. This may explain some of the differences in suicide rates between Veteran and civilian women. Some mental health challenges and life events can also increase women Veterans' suicide risks, such as mental health and substance use disorders, traumatic experiences like sexual trauma and intimate partner violence and difficulty managing strong emotions under stress.

You can contact the crisis line by:



Remember, you can also:

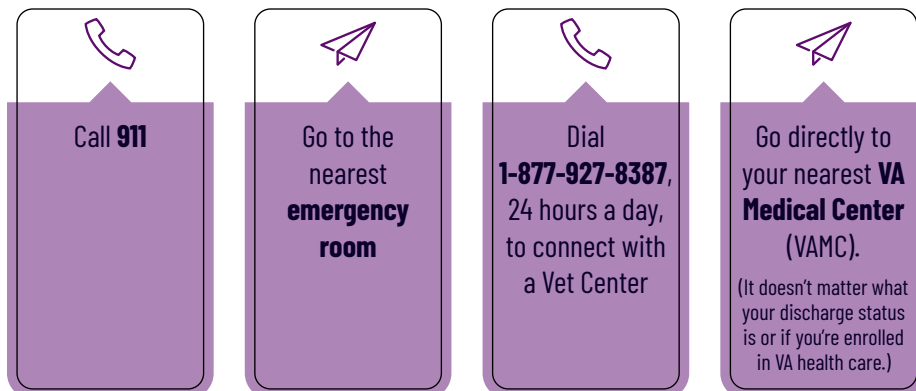
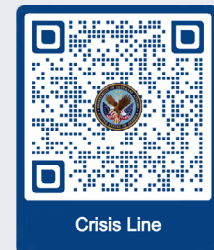


Figure 11: Crisis Options

For More Information

To connect with the **Military and Veteran Crisis Line** call **988** and press **1**, or Text **838255**, or start a confidential online chat at the [Military and Veteran Crisis Line](#) or scan the QR code:



Did you know?

VA launched the S.A.V.E. online suicide prevention training video in collaboration with PsychArmor Institute, a national nonprofit providing online education and support for those who work with, live with or care for Service members, Veterans and military and Veteran families.

S.A.V.E.—which stands for “Signs,” “Ask,” “Validate” and “Encourage/ Expedite”—offers simple steps that anyone can take when talking with Veterans who are at risk for suicide. Visit [PsychArmor S.A.V.E.](#) to view the training video.

No matter what a Veteran is experiencing, there are resources and support systems to help. Whether they are looking for clinical care, counseling, assistance with benefits or something else, VA is here. Veterans may visit [Military and Veteran Crisis Line](#) to find local resources and assistance near them, including specially-trained Suicide Prevention Coordinators or teams who are available at all VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) across the country.

We encourage all Veterans and Service members to connect with the Military and Veteran Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1. The crisis line offers confidential help, suicide prevention and support services 24/7, 365 days a year, connecting you to qualified and caring VA representatives with special training and experience.

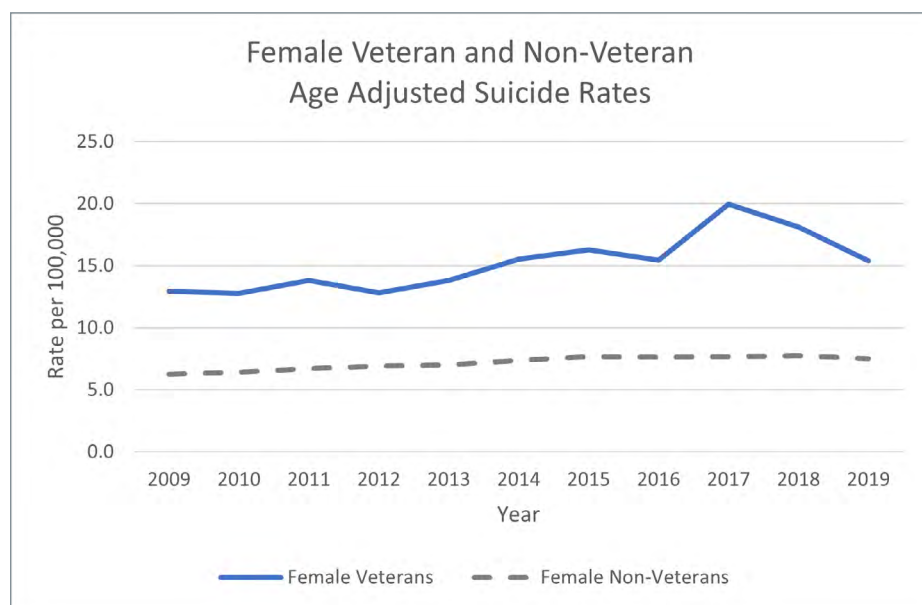


Figure 12: Suicide Rates Among Veterans and Non-Veteran U.S. Adults*

* Source: [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention 2022 Annual Report](#)

Data from the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report indicates that using VA health care services may have a protective effect for women Veterans. The rate of suicide among women Veterans who have recently used VA services is lower than the rate of suicide among women Veterans who have not recently used VA services.


In fact, among women Veterans who used VA services, there was a slight decrease in the age-adjusted suicide rate and a decrease in the number of suicide deaths from 2017 to 2019. While women who use VA services tend to experience more known risk factors for suicide than non-VA users, they have about the same actual risk as non-VA users.

For More Information

Visit

- » [VA Mental Health](#)
- » [Military and Veteran Crisis Line](#)
- » [Make the Connection](#)
- » [Reach Out](#)
- » [Firearm Suicide Prevention & Lethal Means Safety](#)
- » [Coaching Into Care](#)
- » [Whole Health](#)
- » [Suicide Prevention](#) or scan the QR code for more information and resources.





VA is a national leader in suicide prevention, including advances in universal suicide risk screening, primary care mental health integration (PC-MHI), same-day mental health care services and 24/7 Military and Veteran Crisis Line service availability with live professionals. We encourage all Veterans and Service members to connect with the Military and Veteran Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1.

Services

Some available services include:

- Outpatient mental health services
- Residential treatment programs
- Inpatient mental health care
- Evidence-based psychotherapies and interventions for suicide prevention
- Specialty treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Free treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- Women's Mental Health Champions
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Coordinators
- [VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators](#)

Eligibility

- All Veterans enrolled in VA can access suicide prevention services.
- Some suicide prevention services are available for all Veterans, including those who do not enroll in VA health care.

VA can help Veterans connect with mental health support regardless of discharge status, service history or eligibility for VA health care.

Access

Veterans may go to any VA Medical Center (VAMC). Each VAMC has a Suicide Prevention Coordinator to connect them with the counseling and services needed.

Take a Free Self-Check

VA and its partners have developed a quiz to help Veterans learn if stress and depression might be affecting them. The Self-Check Quiz is a safe, easy and confidential resource. Veterans can take the Self-Check Quiz at [Veterans Self-Check Quiz](#).



Care Related to Interpersonal Trauma

Military Sexual Trauma-Related Care

Overview

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term that VA uses to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service. MST can occur at any time or place during military service, such as while on or off duty or on or off base. It can affect your physical and mental health, even years after the event occurred. The perpetrator(s) may or may not be someone they know, and they may be fellow Service members or civilians.

MST includes:

- Being pressured into sexual activities, such as with threats or with implied better treatment in exchange for sex
- Sexual activities when they could not consent, such as when asleep or intoxicated
- Being overpowered or physically forced to have sex
- Being sexually touched or grabbed in a way that made them uncomfortable, including during hazing experiences
- Comments about their body or sexual activities that they found threatening
- Unwanted sexual advances that they found threatening
- Any other sexual activity where their involvement was against their will, or they were unable to say “no”

When screened by their VA provider, about 1 in 3 women report having experienced MST.

Services

MST can impact health and well-being, even many years later. That is why VA provides a full range of treatment services, including:


- **Free counseling and treatment** for mental and physical health conditions related to MST
- Outpatient, inpatient and residential treatment options at VA medical facilities
- An **MST Coordinator** at every VA Medical Center who can help you access treatment
- In addition, MST-related counseling services at VA’s community-based **Vet Centers**

For More Information

Visit [Mental Health: Military Sexual Trauma](#), or scan the QR code



Veterans can also call the DOD SAFE Helpline at **1-877-995-5247** for support and DOD-specific information.



Current Service members can receive these Vet Center services without a referral from the Department of Defense. Information about any MST-related services current Service members receive at Vet Centers is confidential. Vet Centers will not release the information to the Department of Defense (DOD).

All VA medical facilities can assist Veterans in obtaining a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) to collect evidence and provide any acute treatment needed after sexual assault.

Eligibility

- VA's MST-related treatment services are available for individuals with Veteran status and most former Service members with an Other Than Honorable (OTH) or uncharacterized discharge.
- There are no length of service or income requirements, and they may be able to receive MST-related treatment even if they are not eligible for other VA health care.
- Current Service members can also receive services related to MST. However, they might need a referral from the Department of Defense for some types of services.
- To receive MST-related treatment, they do not need to have reported an incident at the time it occurred or have other documentation that it occurred.
- They do not need to initiate MST-related treatment within a certain time period after an incident or separation from service.
- Service connection (VA disability compensation) is not required.

Access

Women Veterans should contact their WH-PCP or the MST Coordinator at their local VA health care system or their local Vet Center.

Intimate Partner Violence

Overview

VA defines Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as any **abuse that occurs between current or former intimate partners**. IPV does not require sexual intimacy or cohabitation. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Physical abuse: hitting, pushing, slapping, biting, kicking, choking, restraining
- Emotional abuse: humiliating, insulting, isolating, name-calling
- Psychological abuse: controlling, coercion, stalking, gas-lighting, instilling fear
- Sexual abuse: any unwanted sexual activity, including rape, molestation or reproductive coercion

Women are more likely than men to experience multiple forms of IPV or suffer psychological and physical consequences. Women Veterans may be twice as likely to experience IPV than non-Veteran women. In fact, 18.5% of women receiving VA primary care reported IPV. Some Veteran-centric risk factors include:

- Posttraumatic stress
- Loss of trust or moral distress
- Military family life stress
- Separation and isolation
- Mental health concerns
- Alcohol or drug use
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Increased anger
- Decreased frustration tolerance

- Pregnancy increases the risk of IPV and is often a reason that IPV may become worse (for example, emotional to physical abuse)

Services

WH-PCPs will screen for IPV. All VA medical facilities offer a comprehensive array of services for those who experience or use IPV, including:

- Healthy Relationship Support
- Awareness Campaigns
- Prevention Efforts
- Screening and Assessment
- Safety Planning
- Referrals

Eligibility

- Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Screening for IPV is available to all women enrolled in VA care.
- Universal education, screening, resources and referrals are available for Veterans' intimate partners, regardless of partners' Veteran status.

Access

All VA facilities have an IPV Assistance Program Coordinator available to assist. Veterans can locate their IPV coordinator at VA IPV Assistance Program.



Figure 10: IPVAP Support Services

For More Information

Veterans can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** for 24-hour confidential support.

The National Domestic Violence
HOTLINE
1.800.799.SAFE (7233) • 1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.

Did you know?

- » Women Veterans who report IPV are three times more likely to have housing insecurity.
- » 72% of all murder-suicides involve an intimate partner.
- » Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) can begin in 5–10 seconds, and death in only 62–152 seconds during strangulation.



Medical and Specialty Care

Overview

Specialty Care services available at VA, including:

- Women-specific prosthetics and sensory aids
- Nutrition and weight management
- Other medical subspecialties not already covered

Services

VA offers:

- Comprehensive and advanced prosthetic devices, sensory aids and associated services
- VA TeleNutrition
- MOVE! Weight Management Program

Women-Specific Prosthetics

Overview

VA's Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS), Center for Women Veterans and Office of Women's Health collaborate closely to address the unique needs of women Veterans. VA is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices, sensory aids and associated services in the world.

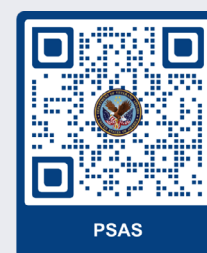
Services

Women-specific PSAS items include, but are not limited to:

- Lactation bras and breast pumps
- Pelvic floor physical therapy devices
- Post-mastectomy items
- Wigs for alopecia after chemotherapy
- Long-acting reversible contraceptives (for example, intrauterine devices)
- Maternity support belt items
- Vaginal dilators
- Mastectomy bathing suits

To Learn More

Women Veterans can visit [Prosthetic and sensory Aids Service for Women Veterans](#) or scan the QR code



PSAS provides a wide range of comprehensive services, including orthotic and prosthetic services, mobility aids, hearing aids, eyeglasses, communication and assistive devices, home respiratory therapy, recreational or rehabilitative equipment, surgical implants and durable medical equipment.

Eligibility

- Generally, Veterans are eligible for prosthetic services or items if both of the following are true:
 - Enrolled in the VA health care system
 - Have a medical need for a prosthetic service or item
- For certain programs, additional eligibility criteria may apply

Access

Women Veterans need a referral to receive any prosthetics, including women-specific prosthetics. Veterans should work with their WH-PCP to get a referral.

Hearing Loss

Overview

Audiologists will use comprehensive diagnostic tests to assess hearing. If a Veteran has hearing loss, their audiologist will discuss the best treatment options. VA Audiology has access to the most current, state-of-the-art technologies including hearing aids, personal amplifiers, assistive technologies and cochlear implants.

Services

VA audiologists provide comprehensive hearing health care services, including:

- Disability audiology exams
- Assessment, evaluation, treatment and management of hearing loss
- Tinnitus
- Balance disorders
- Fitting and programming of assistive listening devices
- Post-surgical rehabilitation
- Hearing screening services

Women Veterans can talk to their provider about how to order accessories (such as batteries) for their hearing aids or other assistive listening devices.

For More Information

For assistance with home hearing aid and accessory maintenance, visit [Audiology](#).



Eligibility

- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

Setting up an appointment with an audiologist differs by facility. Some facilities allow patients to self-refer, while other facilities require a referral. Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP for details.

Nutrition and Weight Management

Overview

VA Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) develops and provides comprehensive, evidenced-based nutrition guidance. These services include access to registered dietitian consultations and cooking classes at some facilities. Learn more about healthy cooking skills through the [VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen](#).

Veterans can access this service via TeleNutrition if a VA facility is not easily accessible. There is also a wide range of online resources at [VA Nutrition and Food Services](#).

Services

The MOVE! Weight Management Program is a weight management and health promotion program designed to improve Veterans' lifestyles. MOVE! encourages healthy eating behaviors, increased physical activity and weight loss. MOVE! is based on the latest research in nutrition science. To learn more, visit [MOVE! Weight Management Program](#).

There are many other wellness programs available at VA. These programs vary by facility but may include yoga, tai chi, meditation, mindful awareness and adaptive sports. Additional program information is online at [VA Whole Health](#).

Eligibility

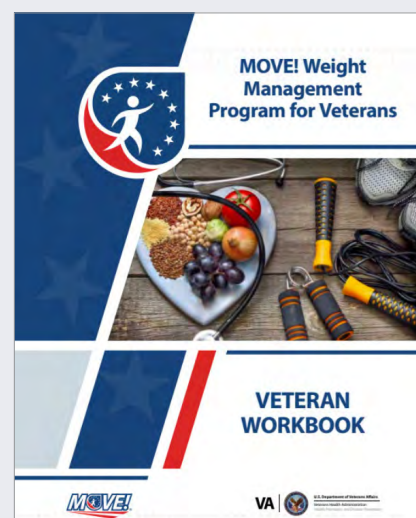
- Women Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.
- All Veterans, regardless of enrollment status, can use the MOVE! Coach mobile app and the MOVE! Veteran workbook.

Access

- Women Veterans should work with their WH-PCP to determine how NFS can best support their nutrition goals. They may need a referral for nutritional services.

For More Information

- » The **MOVE! Veteran Workbook** is available for all Veterans, regardless of enrollment. The workbook guides participants through learning and activities to support healthy lifestyle changes. Download the MOVE! The Veteran Workbook and supporting materials are on [MOVE! Veteran Workbook](#).



- » The **MOVE! Coach app** is a self-guided program to manage weight and achieve individual goals. Download the app at [MOVE! Coach App](#).



- Women Veterans can talk to their WH-PCP or their local MOVE! Coordinator to learn how to get involved in the MOVE! Weight Management Program.
- Veterans may complete the [MOVE! Getting Started Questionnaire](#) and bring the results to their VA provider.

Other Subspecialties

Overview

VA also offers many subspecialty services that Veterans may need in addition to primary care. The list below is not exhaustive. Medical subspecialties include, but are not limited to, consultations, diagnoses, treatments and services for the following:

- **Gastroenterology:** includes treatments for digestive diseases, such as acid reflux disease, peptic ulcers, Crohn's disease and Hepatitis C.
- **Dermatology:** includes diagnoses and treatments of diseases of the skin, hair and nails, including growths, rashes, discolorations, cysts, burns, injuries, infections and other disorders.
- **Allergy:** includes diagnostic evaluations and comprehensive treatments for asthma, allergic diseases and non-HIV immune deficiencies.
- **Neurology:** includes treatments of disorders of the peripheral and central nervous system such as neuropathies, strokes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and epilepsy.
- **Endocrinology:** includes services for diabetes and other endocrine disorders, such as thyroid, pituitary and other related illnesses.
- **Hearing loss or audiology:** includes comprehensive hearing examinations, hearing aid fittings and repairs and cochlear implant management.
- **Orthopedics:** includes, but is not limited to, diagnoses and treatments of tendinitis, fractures, sprains, strains, tears and post-operative joint replacement.
- **Cardiology:** includes consultations for chest pain, electrophysiology or arrhythmias, valvular disease and heart failure; diagnoses and procedures, such as exercise stress testing, echocardiograms and cardiac catheterization.
- **Optometry:** includes comprehensive eye care, including eye exams.
- **Urology:** includes women's urologic care and in-office procedures, such as cystoscopy and care for urinary incontinence, kidney stones, bladder cancer and other urological conditions.
- **Infectious Diseases:** includes care of people living with HIV, hepatitis C treatment and treatment of other infections.

Did you know?

Veterans have effective and timely access to all types of medical subspecialties. Almost all health services available in the general community are also available at VA facilities. If not, a Veteran can receive the care in the community.





Eligibility

- Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care.
- Any treatment (including medication and counseling) must be medically necessary.

Access

- Veterans should coordinate with their WH-PCP for necessary assessments and referrals. Specialty services require a referral.
- This is a great opportunity for Service members to recheck their vision and hearing when they are transitioning into the VA system.





Acronyms

Module 1

Module 2

Module 3

Module 4

Module 5

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C



Module 4



Enrolling and Accessing VA Health Care

Common Guidelines

Overview

These high-level pointers will assist with women Veterans' understanding of the services they can receive:

- The disability claim process is separate from VA health care enrollment.
- When enrolling, Veterans can state their sex preference for WH-PCPs.
- At some sites, Veterans are auto-assigned to a WH-PCP. These clinical providers received training in primary care and women-specific health care.

NOTE: Veterans can request treatment in general primary care. If they are not automatically assigned, they may request a WH-PCP.

- Once enrolled, Veterans are eligible for most VA health services. Service eligibility and affiliated copays depend on their assigned Priority Group.
- Comprehensive women's health is a model of care that provides primary care, women-specific care and care coordination by one provider at one site.
- Primary care serves as the first point of contact for Veterans enrolled in VA. Veterans can schedule appointments in person, via phone or online through My Health^eVet. WH-PCPs will coordinate all specialty appointments.
- Medication is free for Veterans who have service-connected conditions. Veterans who have greater than 50% service-connected disability never pay for medication.
- Availability of services varies by facility. VA facilities offer many services, but otherwise, WH-PCPs can refer Veterans to services in the community.

Module 4 Learning Objective

Upon completion of Module 4, the participant will be able to:

Recall the tools to apply and enroll in VA women's health care.

Did you know?

Even if a Veteran does not think they are eligible for VA health care, Veterans can talk to their enrollment coordinator, as they might be eligible* for certain services.

For More Information

To learn more about My Health^eVet consider scanning the My Health^eVet QR code



* With comprehensive women's care, Veterans can expect a variety of services, including treatment for acute and chronic illnesses, sex-specific primary care, preventive services, mental health services and coordination of care.



Eligibility for VA Health Care

Am I eligible for VA health care?

If a Veteran served on active duty, did not receive a dishonorable discharge and served for 24 consecutive months, they are eligible for VA health care starting when they separate.

However, there are exceptions to coverage levels, as VA assesses each individual's circumstances. For example, Veterans qualify to receive VA health care if they are recognized as having service-connected disabilities, even if they did not serve 24 consecutive months on active duty (such as Reservists with rated service-connected disabilities or other circumstances).

Also, individuals do not need to have served on active duty for 24 continuous months to receive care related to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service, also known as Military Sexual Trauma (MST). You may be able to get MST-related treatment even if you are not eligible for other VA health care.

- Once a Veteran enrolls in VA health care, and when they receive their final compensation and pension (C&P) exam results, they will be able to determine what care they can receive without cost and what care will require a copay.
- If a Veteran is eligible for VA health care, they are eligible to receive all medically necessary health care services.
- Once a Veteran is eligible for VA health care, they will always be eligible.
- If a Veteran has TRICARE or private insurance, they are still eligible for VA services.

For More Information

If a Veteran has any questions regarding VA eligibility, they should do one or more of the following:

- » Call the Health Eligibility Center (HEC) at **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**.
- » Contact their VAMC and ask for the Eligibility Specialist
- » Visit [VA Health Care Eligibility](#) for additional information on eligibility for VA health care.
- » Call or text the **Women Veterans Call Center** at 855-829-6636
- » For more information about the **PACT Act**, visit [PACT Act](#) or scan the QR code



Remember

Each Veteran's situation is different, and this information should be used as a resource to help them navigate the process.

The PACT Act

The **PACT Act** is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans – and their survivors – with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.

The PACT Act (1) expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era and Post-9/11 era, and (2) expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.

VA announced that all Veterans exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military will be eligible to enroll directly in VA health care beginning March 5, 2024. Veterans who have never been deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty will also be eligible to enroll. The expansion of VA health care eliminates the phased-in approach called for by the PACT Act, meaning that millions of Veterans are becoming eligible for VA health care up to eight years earlier than written into law.

What are the key components of the PACT Act?

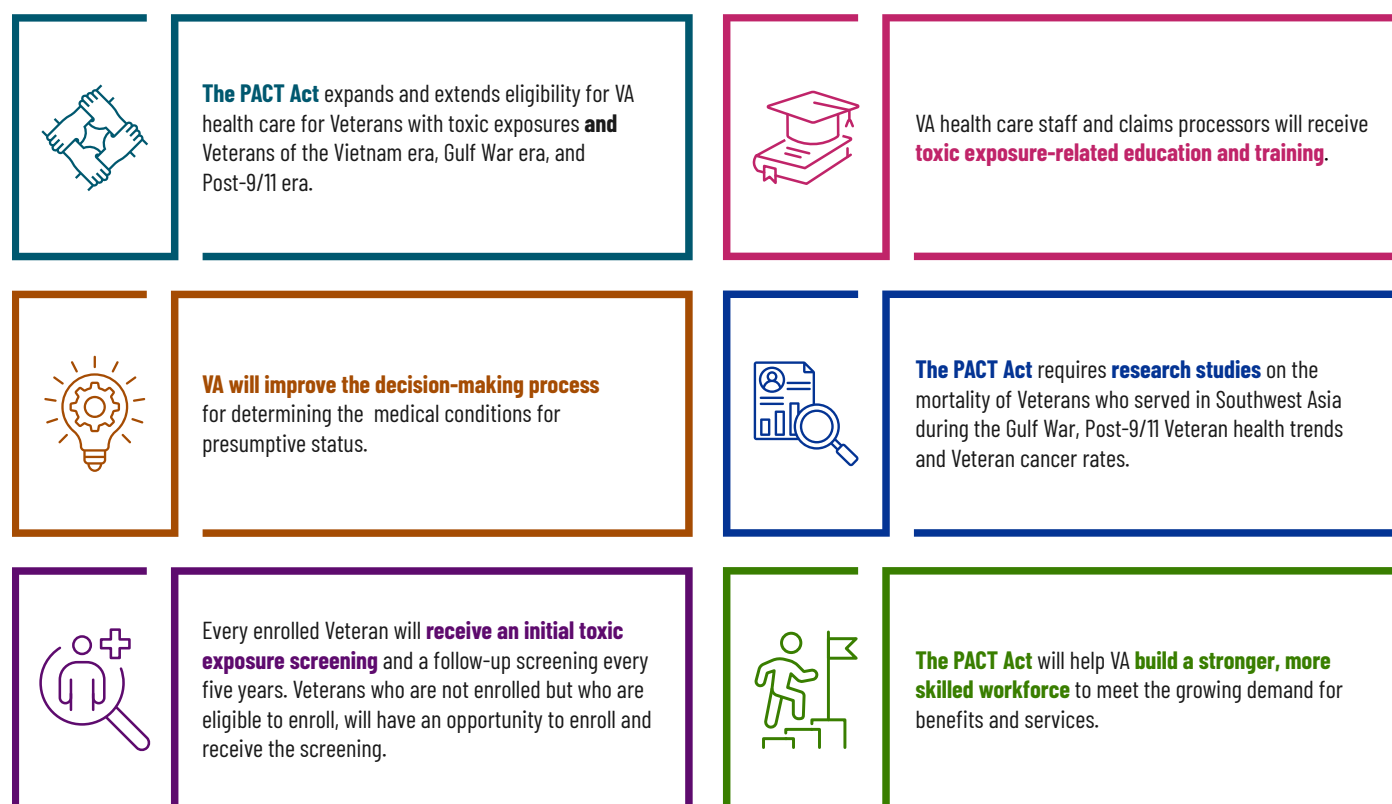


Figure 13: PACT Act

Eligibility for Reserve Components

There are two ways that National Guard and Reserve members can qualify for VA health care. To be eligible, a Veteran must have separated under any condition other than dishonorable.

1. Veteran Status

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a Veteran as “a person who served in the active military, naval or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.”

Once a Service member obtains Veteran status, they must meet one of the minimum active-duty service requirements defined in **Title 38 U.S.C. § 5303A** to qualify for VA health care. This includes one of the following:

- **Title 10:** active duty defined as full-time duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, such as unit deployment during war, including travel to and from such duty; this does not include active duty for training.
- **Title 32:** full-time National Guard duty, defined as duty performed for which you are entitled to receive pay from the Federal Government, such as responding to a national emergency.

These orders do not have to be a certain length. The requirement is that they serve for the full-time frame in which they were called to active duty.

2. VA Adjudicated Service-Connected Disability

If a Service member has a **VA-adjudicated service-connected disability**, they would automatically gain Veteran status, regardless of how long they served on active duty. This disability must have been incurred or aggravated during active duty or active duty for training. For inactive-duty training, the disability must have resulted from injury, heart attack or stroke. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) determines service-connected disability ratings.

There are several other key points to highlight for National Guard or Reserve members enrolling in VA health care.

Did you know?

It is possible to have served in the National Guard or Reserves and not be eligible for VA health care. Veterans should work with the Eligibility Office to determine their eligibility.

For More Information

To learn more about Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharge, consider enrolling in the MLC module Other Than Honorable by scanning the OTH MLC QR code



Remember

When a Veteran enrolls in VA health care, they should bring all of their military discharge papers (such as the NGB Form 22 or other separation documents).

National Guard and Reserves Disability Claims

While the process is similar to that of active duty members, National Guard and Reserve members should keep in mind the following items when enrolling in VA health care.

- Examinations:
 - Complete a separation physical after each deployment. It is important for Veterans to keep a running list of existing issues.
 - After a Veteran submits their disability claim, the compensation and pension (C&P) exams will be the same for them as for other Veterans. If they have been activated multiple times, they can complete multiple claims.
- Medical records:
 - A Veteran will need to request their medical records from each active duty location where they have served.
 - Unlike active duty, a Veteran's medical records are not consolidated and do not travel with them.
 - Veterans should double-check their medical records to ensure they are complete and accurate.

Military Drill Pay Versus Disability Compensation Pay

Veterans are not able to receive VA compensation at the same time they are receiving military (drill) pay. They will be required to waive either their military pay or their VA compensation.

Most Veterans choose to receive drill pay instead of disability compensation or pension, because drill pay is typically the greater benefit. These Veterans must waive their VA compensation for the same number of days they received drill pay.

Veterans will need to elect which type of pay they would like to receive. For more information, download and refer to Section C. Adjusting VA Benefits Based on a Veteran's Receipt of Active Service Pay. Veterans will need to fill out VA Form 21-8951.

Reserves Eligibility

If a Service member is leaving active duty to go into the National Guard or the Reserves, the following information will be pertinent to their enrollment:

- When in the National Guard or Reserves, they are no longer qualified to stay on TRICARE.
- They can supplement their VA benefits with TRICARE Reserve Select instead.

For More Information

For more information on Reserve Component Dual Payment, visit [Reserve Component Dual Payments MLC](#) or scan the QR code



Visit [TRICARE](#) for more information on TRICARE Reserve Select and to find a specific enrollment service portal or scan the QR code



- Their priority group will determine their VA benefits and copays; it is the same determination process for other Veterans.
- TRICARE Reserve Select is the plan to keep members of the National Guard and Reserves medically qualified for service and deployment.
- If separating from the military, they would need to stay in the National Guard or Reserves to maintain enrollment in TRICARE Reserve Select:
 - If they are a federal employee, they do not qualify for TRICARE Reserve Select.
 - If they are activated, they will be unenrolled from TRICARE Reserve Select; once they return to Reserve status, their TRICARE Reserve Select eligibility will be reinstated.

Returning Service Member (Combat Veteran) Eligibility

If a Veteran served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, they are eligible for an extended period of free VA health care benefits for service-connected conditions. This includes those who served in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND) and Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS).

Separating Service members who served in OEF/OIF/OND/OFS are eligible for 10 years of free post-separation health care benefits for any medical condition, including mental health, related to an in-theater combat deployment. Each VA Medical Center has a care management team in place dedicated to Service members with this status.

These combat Veterans are eligible for health care services and community living care for conditions possibly related to their military service. They are not required to disclose their income information unless they would like consideration for a higher priority status, beneficiary travel benefits or exemption of copays for care unrelated to their military service.



For More Information

For more information on The Reserve National Guard, visit [Reserve National Guard MLC](#) or scan the QR Code:



VA Enrollment Timeline

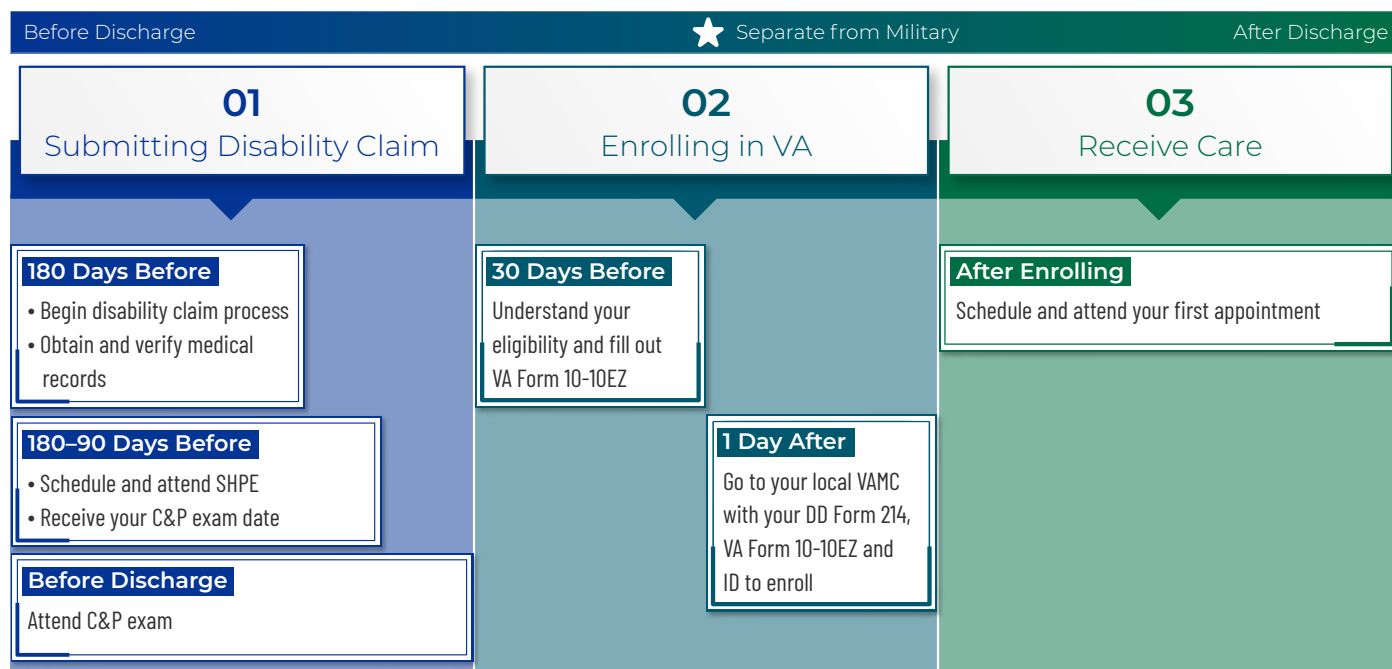


Figure 14: Enrollment Timeline

The above timeline illustrates the key steps that Servicewomen who are transitioning from active duty to civilian life should take to enroll in VA health care. The VA enrollment timeline has three high-level steps:

1. **Submitting a disability claim (if needed)**

Veterans may submit a disability claim to VBA. Active-duty Service members should begin this process 180 days before separating or retiring.

2. **Enroll in VA Health Care**

VA health care enrollment will not be final until a Service member separates or retires and receives their final DD214. The DD214 is their ticket into VA health care.

3. **Schedule the first appointment**

Veterans should call a VA facility or use the VA Online Scheduling Tool on My HealtheVet.

Each person's individual situation will likely be unique, and Veterans should talk to their Eligibility Office to discuss their specific situation.

Some individuals will need to submit a disability claim to start the enrollment process, but this may not be needed in all cases. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) has great resources to help Veterans. To learn more, visit [VA TAP](#).

Disability Claims and Exams

Submitting a disability claim is an important first step.

Why is the Disability Claims Process Important?

The disability claims process is how VBA determines a Veteran's service-connected status, which ultimately affects their VA priority group and what services they receive at no cost.

Disability Claims Process

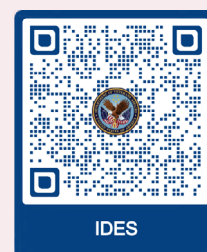
The recommended way to file claims for disability compensation is 180 days prior to separation or retirement. Servicewomen who are transitioning from active duty to civilian life can do this through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program. Claims processing times tend to be much shorter. Applying for a claim will not automatically enroll a Veteran in VA health care.

The disability claims process involves submitting an application with documentation about a Veteran's military service and medical history. The following five steps are a high-level recommendation to get started, but each Veteran's situation is unique.

1. Complete the Separation Health Exam
 - Separation Health Assessment (SHA)
 - Timing: 180–90 days before separation.
 - For more information, visit [Separation Health Assessment](#) or scan the QR code in the sidebar.
 - Separation History and Physical Exam (SHPE)
 - Timing: at least 89 days before separation or starting terminal leave.
 - For more information, visit [Separation History and Physical Examination](#).
 - Compensation and Pension Exam (C&P)
 - May be required for disability claims submitted after separation.
 - For more information, visit [VA Claim Exam](#).
2. Obtain DD214 or other separation documents.
3. Obtain service treatment (medical) records.
4. Submit the Disability Application [VA Form 21-526EZ](#).
 - [Online](#)

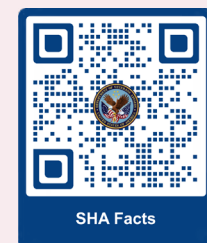
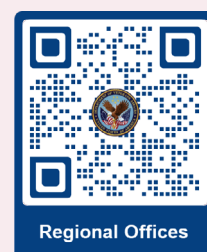
For More Information

Refer to the [IDES Fact Sheet](#) or scan the QR code



For assistance with the application, Veterans may:

- » Call the VA benefits hotline at 800-827-1000
- » Contact VA online through the [Ask VA portal](#).
- » To find a nearby VA Regional Office visit [Find a VA Regional Office](#) or scan the QR code



- In-person
 - [Find a VA Regional Office near you](#)
 Mail the form to:
 Department of Veterans Affairs
 Claims Intake Center
 PO Box 4444
 Janesville, WI 53547-4444

5. Receive a rating from VA.

How is Disability Rating Determined?

To determine a Veteran's Combined Disability Rating, VBA uses a concept called the **Whole Person Theory**.

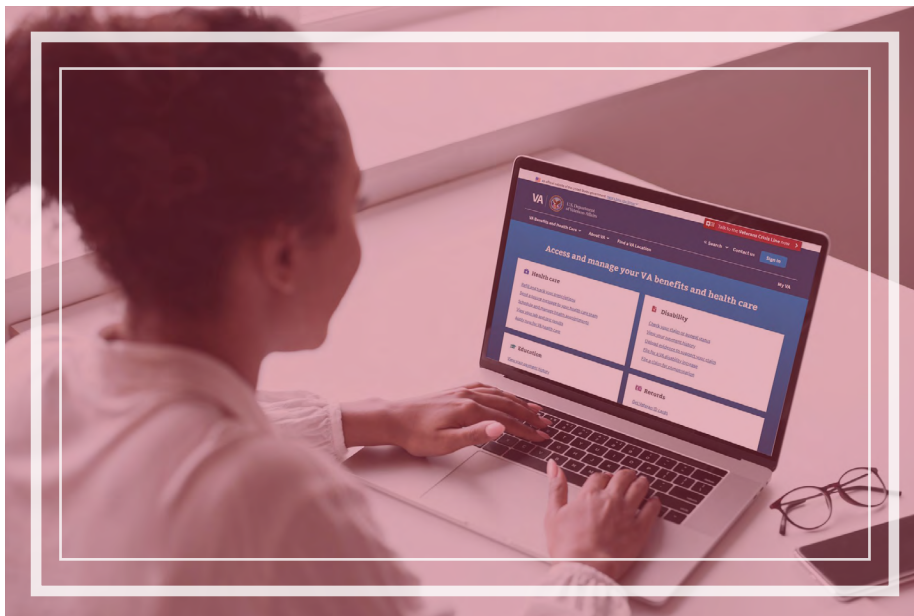
A disability rating can never be greater than 100 since a person can never be more than 100% able-bodied.

VBA decides the severity of a disability based on the evidence submitted as part of a claim that VBA obtains from military records.

You must document all medical challenges for an accurate rating.

Some Servicewomen who are transitioning from active duty to civilian life go through a different process when transitioning out of the military. **Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)** is a joint DOD and VA disability evaluation.

For ill or injured Service members, determinations are made regarding fitness for continued military service. If appropriate, the Servicewoman receives both a disability rating and disability benefits.

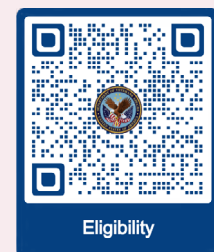
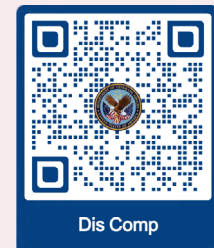


For More Information

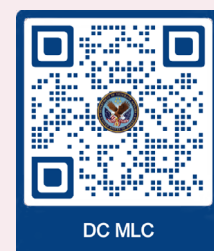
To begin receiving VA benefits, a Veteran should enroll and fill out [VA Form 10-10EZ Application for Health Benefits](#) as soon as possible.



For more information on the disability claims process and eligibility, visit [VA Disability Compensation](#) or scan the QR codes:



To learn more about disability compensation, consider enrolling in the Disability Compensation MLC by scanning the DC MLC QR code:



Enrolling in VA

Preparing to Apply

Necessary Documents

There are three documents that Veterans need to enroll in VA health care:

- **Finalized DD214:** Their finalized DD214 provides details on their military experience that will help inform their eligibility and priority group at VA.
- **VA Form 10-10EZ Application for Health Benefits:** This form can be completed online or in person. For more information and to download the form, visit [VA Form 10-10EZ](#).
- **Government-Issued ID:** Veterans will need to bring a government-issued ID with them when applying. Government-issued ID options include a state-issued driver's license, a state DMV-issued ID card and a U.S. passport. Their finalized DD214 serves as a second form of ID.

Health Benefits Application Information

To apply for health benefits through VA, a Veteran will need the following categories of information:

- **Finalized DD214**
 - Discharge or separation status
 - Codes
- **Personal Information**
 - Name
 - Address
 - Marital status
 - Phone number
 - Preferred VAMC
- **Spouse and Dependent Information**
 - Name(s)
 - Social Security number(s)
 - Birth date(s)
- **Military Service Information**
 - Date of discharge
 - Type of discharge
 - Military history
- **Insurance Information**
 - Insurance details
 - Eligibility for Medicaid or Medicare
- **Gross Annual Income**
 - Income (for the Veteran, and if applicable, for their spouse and dependent children)
 - Deductible expenses

Did you know?

Service members can start the enrollment process before leaving active duty. However, enrollment is not final until they submit their DD214.

How to Apply

Using this information, a Veteran can follow the steps below to apply for VA health care. If they apply for VA health care in person, they can also get their ID verified for a Premium My HealtheVet account.

How to Apply for VA Health Care

1. Receive DD214 when leaving the military.
2. Apply for VA health care immediately:
 - Online at [Apply for VA health care](#)
 - In-person at a local VAMC
 - By Mailing the completed VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits, to:
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647
 - By Phone by calling **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**
3. Choose a preferred facility.

NOTE: If a Veteran moves, they can transfer to a new preferred facility.

4. Receive priority group assignment within 1-2 weeks.

NOTE: If a Veteran apply in person, they can receive a priority group rating immediately.

5. Enroll in My HealtheVet (recommended).
6. Call VA to start making appointments or schedule appointments online through My HealtheVet.

NOTE: If a Veteran applies in person, they can make appointments on the same day.

Women Veterans can call the Women Veterans Call Center if they have any questions or if they want to understand the women's health offerings available at their facility.

Recommendations for Applying Online

When applying for VA health care online, women Veterans should keep a few things in mind:

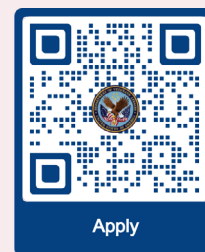
- They must be within one year before their separation date.
- Before starting the Health Care application, they must sign-on to VA.gov using their DS Logon* My HealtheVet or ID.me account to save time and their work in progress.
- They can sign-in later by selecting Sign-In at the top of any page.

* VA will discontinue the use of DS Logon in late 2025 for gaining access to VA.gov. Login.gov is now the VA's preferred method of gaining access to VA.gov and is used for access to many other secure, governmental websites.

How to Apply

Online

Visit the [VA Health Care Application](#) or scan the QR code



In Person

Complete [VA Form 10-10EZ Application](#) for Health Benefits and drop it off at a local VAMC.



For More Information

Visit [VA Health Care](#) or scan the QR code



- If they need to finish the application later, they may sign-in to VA.gov and complete steps 1–4 on the next page to go to the application already in progress.
- They have 60 days from the date they start or update the application to submit it. VA will save their information for 60 days. After 60 days, they will need to start over.

Service-Connected

Overview

VA may determine that a Veteran has a **disability resulting from an injury or illness that occurred during or became worse due to their active military service**. These disabilities are considered service-connected. To be eligible for benefits related to a service-connected disability, a Veteran must have been separated or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

A compensation and pension (C&P) exam will determine their level of service-connected disability. This service-connected status will help determine their priority group; their status and resulting priority group can change if their conditions worsen.

Watch the video: What is Service Connection? VBA created this video to provide more information about service-connected status.

Service-Connected Status and Copays

A Veteran's Service-connected status will help place them in their priority group. Then, based on their priority group, a copay might be applicable. As of 2022, if a Veteran has a service-connected **disability rating of 10% or higher, they will not have copay costs** for outpatient and inpatient care.

Many Veterans qualify for free health care services based on a VA compensable service-connected condition or other special eligibilities. However, **most Veterans are required to complete a financial assessment** (based on IRS data) at the time of enrollment to determine if they qualify for free health care services.

Veterans whose income exceeds VA income limits and those who choose not to complete the financial assessment at the time of enrollment, **must agree to pay required copays** to become eligible for VA health care services. For more information, including copay amounts, refer to: [VA health care copay rates](#).

Services that do not require a copay

Women Veterans will not need to pay a copay for any of the services listed below, no matter what their disability rating is or what priority group they are in:

- Readjustment counseling and related mental health services.

Did you know?

As of 2015, 37% of women Veterans enrolled in VA health care did not have any service-connected disabilities.

These women qualified for VA health care by meeting other requirements, and other Servicewomen may be able to as well.

It is not required to have a service-connected disability rating to apply for VA health care. However, VBA considers disability ratings when assigning a Veteran to a priority group. Their priority group determines if they are required to pay copays for VA health care. Every Veteran's situation is unique, and it is best that they speak with an enrollment coordinator to understand what is best for them.



Remember

Veterans should make sure to document all of their health care needs now. Even if a Veteran does not think it is relevant today, it might become relevant later.

- Treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to Military Sexual Trauma (MST).
- Exams to determine the risk of health challenges linked to military service.
- Care that may be related to combat service for Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998.
- VA claim exams (compensation and pension exams).
- Care related to a VA-rated service-connected disability.
- Care for cancer of the head or neck caused by nose or throat radium treatments received while in the military.
- Individual or group programs to help a Veteran quit smoking or lose weight.
- Laboratory (lab) tests.
- Electrocardiograms (EKGs or ECGs) to check for heart disease or other heart conditions.

VHA Priority Groups

|| Priority groups dictate what services a Veteran is entitled to receive at VA.

Overall, Veterans are entitled to receive more benefits if they are in a lower priority group number (For example, priority group number 1 receives the most benefits).

Overview

- Eight VA priority groups identify which no-cost services Veterans are entitled to receive at VA.
- The Enrollment Coordinator will work with them to review their DD214 to make sure they are in the appropriate VA priority group. Their priority group may change over time due to evolving medical conditions or income changes.

Table 5: Priority Groups

Group	Definition
Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 50% or more disabling. ◆ Veterans determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions. ◆ Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor (MOH).
Group 2	Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities 30% or 40% disabling.

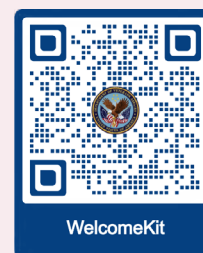
For More Information

To view an example Welcome Packet, visit [Veterans Health Benefits Handbook](#).

Group	Definition
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Veterans who are former Prisoners of War (POWs). ♦ Veterans awarded a Purple Heart medal. ♦ Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. ♦ Veterans with VA-rated service-connected disabilities, 10% or 20% disabling. ♦ Veterans awarded special eligibility classification pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation."
Group 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits from VA. ♦ Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled.
Group 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Non-service-connected Veterans and non-compensable service-connected Veterans rated 0% disabled by VA, with annual income below VA and geographically-adjusted income limits (based on their residential ZIP code). ♦ Veterans receiving VA pension benefits. ♦ Veterans eligible for Medicaid programs.
Group 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Compensable 0% service-connected Veterans. ♦ Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. ♦ Project 112/SHAD participants. ♦ Veterans who served in World War II between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946. ♦ Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, Veterans of the Persian Gulf War who served between August 2, 1990, and November 11, 1998. ♦ Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987. ♦ Currently: enrolled Veterans and new enrollees who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998. Those who were discharged from active duty less than 10 years ago are eligible for the enhanced benefits for 10 years following discharge.

Did you know?

A personalized Welcome Kit explains these services, which will detail VA health benefits and provide important information concerning VA access. To access the full welcome kit visit [VA Welcome Kit](#) or scan the QR code



Group	Definition
Group 7	Veterans with gross household income below the geographically-adjusted income limit for their resident location and who agree to pay copays.
Group 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Veterans with gross household income above VA and geographically-adjusted income limits for their resident location and who agree to pay copays. ♦ Veterans eligible for enrollment who are non-compensable 0% service-connected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Subpriority A: Enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and have remained enrolled since that date or placed in this sub-priority due to changed eligibility status. ♦ Subpriority B: Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009, whose income exceeds the current VA or geographic income limits by 10% or less. ♦ Veterans eligible for enrollment who are non-service-connected and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Subpriority C: Enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and have remained enrolled since that date or placed in this sub-priority due to changed eligibility status. ♦ Subpriority D: Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009, whose income exceeds the current VA or geographic income limits by 10% or less. ♦ Veterans not eligible for enrollment: Veterans not meeting the criteria above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Subpriority E: Non-compensable 0% service-connected (eligible for care of their service-connected condition only). ♦ Subpriority G: Non-service-connected.



Transferring Medical Records to VA

How to Transfer Medical Records

Veterans may follow these five steps to transfer their medical records to VA:

1. Request, gather and make at least two digital copies of all active duty and civilian (if referred out) medical records.
2. Work with VA or a local accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to review their medical records.
3. Fill out VA Form 21-526EZ: Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits.
4. Submit their VA Form and medical records to a local VA facility or by mail to:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444
5. Create a VA.gov account so they can always add to their claim and receive the results of their disability rating electronically. They will also receive their results by mail.

Did you know?

A VSO should never charge Veterans to review their medical records and submit the disability claim. This medical record review is a free service provided to Veterans as part of their military service.

For More Information

Visit

- » [VA Compensation](#)
- » [Compensation 101: What is Disability Compensation?](#)
- » [Compensation 101: How Did I Get This Rating?](#)

VA Connected Care Programs

Overview

The Office of Connected Care brings VA digital technology to Veterans and health care professionals, extending access to care beyond traditional office visits. Through virtual technology, VA can deliver care to patients where and when they need it. After a Veteran enrolls in VA, several resources are available to help them manage their health care and ask any questions.



Figure 15: My HealtheVet Logo

My HealtheVet is VA's award-winning Personal Health Record. When a Veteran uses the tools on My HealtheVet, they become a more active partner with their health care team.

Available features include:

- Secure messaging with health care providers.
- Access to medical records.
- Ability to schedule appointments online.
- Lab test results.
- Pharmacy access and refill requests.
- Tools to help transfer DOD medical records into the VA system.

VA strongly encourages Veterans to sign up for a My HealtheVet Premium account. Doing so will give them access to the patient portal, where they can securely message their providers, refill prescriptions and schedule and view appointments. They can also use the My HealtheVet Premium account to access any other VA applications that require them to sign-on.



Figure 16: VA Telehealth Logo

VA Telehealth Services leads the way in telehealth innovation to make sure Veterans can access care when and where they need it.

Did you know?

Veteran information is safe. Any VA App that connects with VA's electronic health record (EHR) requires an ID.me or Login.gov account for security.

For More Information

Visit [VA Connected Care](#).

Visit [My HealtheVet](#) or scan the QR code to access My HealtheVet.



Visit [VA Mobile Apps](#) or scan the QR code to access the VA Mobile Apps.



Using VA Telehealth Services, Veterans can connect with their VA care team to access high-quality VA care from their home, a clinic, a hospital or anywhere else.



Figure 17: VA Mobile Logo

VA Mobile develops mobile solutions, such as the VA App Store and mobile health apps, which offer safe and secure access to Veterans' patient data wherever they are.

VA Telehealth Services

As the national leader in telehealth care services, VA is committed to providing all enrolled women Veterans access to high-quality VA care. Using transformative virtual health technologies and devices, VA Telehealth Services gives women Veterans access to the care they need, when and where they need it. From their home, a clinic, a hospital or anywhere else, VA telehealth technologies make it easier for them to connect with their VA care team.

Telehealth connects women Veterans with VA care teams and specialists through:

- Real-time, interactive video visits.
- Secure messaging.
- In-home and mobile health remote monitoring.

Women Veterans may even have access to technology to read their vital signs and health measurements directly from their home or another location. Telehealth availability is facility-dependent. There are three different ways that VA facilities can arrange for telehealth services:

1. **Intrafacility:** Between two facilities in the same VISN and local health care system.
2. **Interfacility:** Between two facilities in the same VISN but in different local health care systems.
3. **VA Video Connect (VVC):** Connects a provider with a patient in their home or another location, via a computer or mobile device with a web-camera.

Available Telehealth Services

- **Tele Primary Care:** Including comprehensive primary care services from the WH-PCP Team.
- **Tele Pain Management:** Including chronic pain syndromes, chronic pelvic pain, joint pain, facial pain, fibromyalgia, headaches, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), physical therapy, chronic pain

Did you know?

In 2021, over 2 million Veterans received care through VA Telehealth. Benefits of Telehealth include:

- » Reduced time away from competing responsibilities, such as work, childcare and other commitments.
- » Reduced or removed travel time to and from facilities.
- » The ability to attend appointments from a safe, secure and private space of their choosing.

Eligibility

Any Veteran who qualifies to receive VA health care, and lives in one of the 50 U.S. states or a U.S. territory, is eligible to use VA health care. Telehealth availability is facility-dependent.

For More Information



Visit [VA Telehealth](#) or consult with a WH-PCP.

- education classes, musculoskeletal pains and vulvodynia.
- **Tele Mental Health:** Including MST-related counseling and readjustment counseling.
 - **Tele Care Coordination:** Including breast and cervical cancer screening coordination and maternity care coordination.
 - **Tele Well-being:** Including whole health coaching, group exercise, nutrition counseling, stress reduction and relaxation.
 - **Tele Gynecology:** Including contraceptive counseling, pre- and post-op visits, prenatal visits and reproductive endocrinology consultation.
 - **Tele Pharmacy:** Including chronic disease management, pregnancy and lactation medication review, teratogenic counseling and medication management.

VA Mobile

To help women Veterans be active participants in their health, VA has developed a suite of virtual care tools, including a patient portal and personal health record, as well as a number of applications (apps). All of these virtual care tools are free, and many allow Veterans to receive care and services without needing to visit a VA facility. Additionally, there is no copay for any virtual care provided using tools, such as VA Video Connect. Below, is a sampling of some of the tools other Veterans have found useful. Veterans can browse all of these tools on VA's mobile app store at [VA Mobile](#).

Table 6: VA Mobile Apps

Logo	Application
	Annie is a text messaging service that sends automated health-related notifications, reminders or motivational messages to help Veterans with their self-care and empowers Veterans to play an active role in their care.
	VA Online Scheduling allows Veterans to schedule VA appointments online if they have a My Health eVet Premium Account or DS Logon* Premium Account.

* VA will discontinue the use of DS Logon in late 2025 for gaining access to VA.gov. Login.gov is now the VA's preferred method of gaining access to VA.gov and is used for access to many other secure, governmental websites.

For More Information

Visit [VA Mobile Carrier Programs](#).



Logo	Application
	MOVE! Coach allows Veterans to monitor, track and receive feedback on progress with exercise, diet and weight loss goals.
	PTSD Coach provides users with education about PTSD, information about professional care, self-assessment for PTSD, opportunities to find support and tools to help users manage daily stress.
	Beyond MST is a self-help tool for people healing from military sexual trauma (MST), which is sexual assault or harassment during military service.
	Rx Refill allows Veterans to request refills of their refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries and view VA prescription history.
	VA Video Connect allows Veterans and their caregivers to meet with VA health care providers through live video on any computer, tablet or mobile device with an internet connection.
	Preconception Care offers provider-centric resources to guide the care and counseling of women Veterans of childbearing age. Patients can also access this app.

For More Information

Visit

- » [VA Video Connect](#)
- » [VA Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations \(ATLAS\) Program](#)
- » [Lifeline Support](#)
- » [Affordable Connectivity Program \(ACP\)](#)

Bridging the Digital Divide

Overview

VA is helping Veterans get the internet access and technology they need for telehealth care. For Veterans who do not have internet service or an internet-connected device in their home or community, accessing telehealth can be difficult. VA is working to bridge this digital divide to ensure that all Veterans can access VA care where they are.

VA telehealth offers many benefits that can help women Veterans get connected, including:



Digital Divide Consult

If a Veteran would benefit from video telehealth services but does not have internet access or a video-capable device, their VA care team can help through the Digital Divide Consult. With the **Digital Divide Consult**, their VA provider can refer them to a VA social worker. The social worker can determine whether they are eligible for programs that can help them get the internet service or technology needed for VA telehealth.



VA Internet-Connected Devices

If a Veteran does not have a device with internet access, VA can lend them an internet-connected tablet so they can reach their VA care team through telehealth. The Digital Divide Consult can help determine if a Veteran is eligible.



Mobile Connectivity Support for Telehealth

AT&T, SafeLink by TracFone, T-Mobile and Verizon help Veteran subscribers avoid data charges when using VA Video Connect on their networks. This enables Veterans to access their VA care teams through telehealth with fewer worries about data fees.



ATLAS Program

Through **ATLAS** (Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations), VA is bringing telehealth care into Veterans' communities. ATLAS sites are comfortable, private spaces for Veterans to have video appointments with their VA providers. VA has teamed up with public and private organizations, including The American Legion, Philips North America, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Walmart to create ATLAS sites in some locations in the U.S.



Internet and Phone Service Discounts

A Veteran may be eligible to receive a discount on their home internet or phone service through two Federal Communications Commission (FCC) programs: **Lifeline** and the **Affordable Connectivity Program** (ACP). The Digital Divide Consult can help determine their eligibility for both FCC programs.

For More Information

For more information about the Digital Divide Consult, women Veterans can talk with their VA provider and visit [VA Telehealth: Bridging the Digital Divide](#).

Figure 18: Digital Benefits

Prepare for the First Appointment

Women Veterans may call their VA facility or use the VA Online Scheduling Tool on My Health eVet to schedule a VA appointment for either acute or routine health visits after enrolling in VA health care,

What to Bring to the First Appointment

- List of regular appointments and appointment frequency
- List of out-of-network providers and referrals
- List of current medications
- Last Pap and mammogram results
- Any recent x-rays or lab results
- Veterans can bring a CD-ROM or hard copies (ask the medical facility for a tabbed CD)
- Copy of their completed Personal Health Inventory.

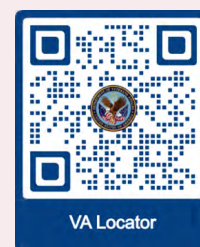
Managing DOD Specialty Care Referrals at VA

- Women Veterans may enroll in VA health care and schedule their first appointment with a WH-PCP.
- At their first appointment, they will talk to their WH-PCP about their current specialty care providers. If possible, women Veterans should bring a list.
- The WH-PCP will review all of their providers and work with them to develop a care plan, potentially incorporating VA and community providers.
- The MISSION Act is available if they need to see physicians in the community.

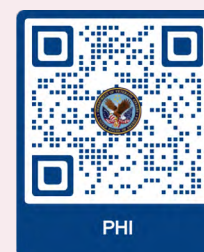


Did you know?

VA facility numbers can be found by calling **1-855-VA-WOMEN**, or using the [Facility Locator](#) or scan the QR code



See [Whole Health: Build Your Personal Health Plan](#) to obtain a copy or scan the QR code



Innovative Post-Deployment VA Health Care

Providers understand how military service and deployment can impact health.

Standard practice includes taking military histories and administering appropriate screenings during medical visits. In addition to medical, gynecological, mental or psychosocial and family histories, providers may also conduct a number of post-deployment evaluation screens, including:

- Gastrointestinal (GI)
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Skin rashes
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Embedded fragments
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Depression
- Military Sexual Trauma (MST) (sexual harassment or assault)
- Alcohol use
- Tobacco use

Military service can result in many potential health impacts. All wars have similar post-combat health outcomes, such as:

- Physical injuries with residual pain
- Mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression and PTSD
- Unexplained symptoms with general health decline
- Psychosocial distress resulting in disruptions in relationships, work and social life

Post-Deployment Medical History Checklists

Military History

When and where did you serve?
What were your duties?
Were you exposed to chemicals, fumes or blasts?
Were you deployed? If so, where?

Military Follow Up

Did you see combat, enemy fire or casualties?
Were you or a colleague injured or hospitalized?
Did you become ill during service?
Were you a Prisoner of War (POW)?
Ask about symptoms of PTSD, depression or experiences of MST.



Acronyms

Module 1

Module 2

Module 3

Module 4

Module 5

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Module 5



Assistance Transitioning from Active Duty

Support Groups for Women Veterans

Social support is incredibly important during the time when Servicewomen move from active duty to Veteran status. There are countless nonprofits focused on connecting and empowering women Veterans. Some of the available opportunities are listed below. For more information about VA's Office of Community Engagement (OCE) and VA's community partnerships, visit [National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships](#). Additionally, there are 150 Community Veteran Engagement Boards (CVEBs) focused on providing access to local resources for Veterans and their families. Visit [Veterans Experience Office](#) for more information and an interactive map to find a CVEB.

Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs)

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) that provides a lifetime of support for Veterans and their families. For more information, visit [DAV](#).



Figure 19: Disabled American Veterans Logo

Module 5 Learning Objective

Upon completion of Module 5, the participant will be able to:

Recognize some of the women Veteran focused support resources, organizations and programs.

Did you know?

Local Women Veterans programs, support groups and social events are available through Women's Health Programs at many VAMCs.

These are just a few of the great resources available to help with transition from active duty to civilian life.

For More Information

To learn more about women Veteran specific support groups and programs, visit

- » [WoVeN](#)
- » [Women Veterans of America National](#)
- » [AmericaServes](#)
- » [The Mission Continues](#)



Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is a VSO focused on serving our Veterans, the military and our communities, as well as advocating for Veterans. For more information, visit [VFW](#).



Figure 20: Veterans of Foreign Wars Logo

American Legion is a VSO devoted to mutual helpfulness and volunteerism for Veterans and their communities. For more information, visit [American Legion](#).



Figure 21: American Legion Logo

American Veterans (AMVETS) is a VSO focused on enhancing and safeguarding the entitlements and quality of life of all American Veterans. For more information, visit [AMVETS](#).



Figure 22: American Veterans Logo

Paralyzed Veterans of America serves paralyzed Veterans by advocating for quality health care, research, education, benefits, civil rights and opportunities. For more information, visit [Paralyzed Veterans of America](#).



Figure 23: Paralyzed Veterans of America Logo

For More Information

For more information on accredited VSOs, please scan the QR code



Vietnam Veterans of America promotes and supports all issues important for Vietnam Veterans, creating a new identity for this generation of Veterans and changing public perception of Vietnam Veterans. For more information, visit [Vietnam Veterans of America](https://www.vvva.org/).



Figure 24: Vietnam Veterans of America Logo



Resources and Professional Support for Women Veterans

The National Resource Directory (NRD)

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is another government-owned search tool that provides access to vetted resources. NRD connects women Veterans with resources and services that support all Service members, wounded and injured Veterans, family members and caregivers including, but not limited to:

- Financial planning
- Education, training and employment
- Health care
- Housing
- Daycare

NRD connects women Veterans with resources and services that come from:

- Federal, state and local government agencies
- VSOs and Military Service Organizations
- Nonprofit and community-based organizations
- Academic institutions and professional associations

Additional VA Transition Assistance Resources

Every VA Medical Center has a Transition and Case Management (TCM) team ready to welcome Post-9/11 Veterans and help coordinate their care. VA Liaisons for health care and TCM case managers, who are either nurses or social workers, are embedded at 21 military installations. VA Liaisons and TCM case managers help coordinate patient care activities, as well as help patients navigate their way through the VA system. To locate a VA Liaison to assist with health care transition, please visit [VA Liaisons for Healthcare](#).

The Transition Patient Advocate (TPA) can also be a personal support as women Veterans learn to navigate VA. To contact the TCM team, women Veterans may check their local VA Medical Center website.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identifying, Queer, plus Veteran Care Coordinators (LGBTQ+* VCC) help ensure consistent and timely access to culturally competent care for LGBTQ+* Veterans. To locate an LGBTQ+* Veteran Care Coordinator, visit [VA Facilities with LGBTQ+* VCC](#).

* T stands for Trans-identifying

For More Information

Hotlines:

- » Military and Veteran Crisis Line
Call 988 and press 1.
- » Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)
- » Women Veterans Call Center
1-855-VA-WOMEN
- » Caregiver Support
855-260-3274
- » Chat at [Women's Health](#)

To learn more about NRD, visit the [National Resource Directory](#) or scan the QR code



Transition and Case Management (TCM) Programs

Transition and Case Management (TCM) ensures that Transitioning Service members and Veterans receive the care and support they need as they transition from military to civilian life. TCM staff serve as expert navigators to help Service members and Veterans connect to VA and community resources and case management services when needed.



Women Veterans Call Center

Overview

The Women Veterans Call Center staff provides women Veterans, their families and caregivers with information and assistance about VA services and resources. Call Center representatives can provide direct referrals for VA services and help connect women Veterans with their Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM). They can also help answer questions about disability claims and VA eligibility. If they cannot answer a question, they can connect women Veterans to someone who can.

The Call Center is entirely staffed by women, and a woman Veteran does not have to be enrolled to use the Call Center.

VA now offers a new text feature for the Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC). The text feature provides women Veterans, their families and caregivers with another avenue to ask questions about VA benefits, health care and available resources for women Veterans.

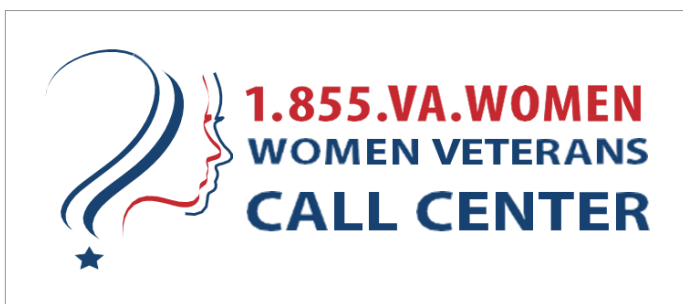


Figure 25: Women Veterans Call Center Logo

For More Information

To learn more about the Caregivers Support, visit [Caregivers Support](#) or scan the QR code



Housing Insecurity

VA has a variety of resources to help Veterans who are struggling with housing insecurity or experiencing homelessness.

VA's specialized programs for homeless Veterans serve hundreds of thousands of homeless and at-risk Veterans each year, independently and in collaboration with Federal and community partners.

Housing insecurity can impact Veterans of all backgrounds and genders. Women Veterans experiencing homelessness are in communities across the country.

- Women make up 10% of Veterans experiencing homelessness. However, statistics underestimate the prevalence of homelessness among women Veterans.
- Women Veterans have a four times higher risk of experiencing homelessness than civilian women.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing vouchers and VA's homelessness programs have helped over 360,000 Veterans and their family members since 2010.
- In 2017, roughly 40,000 Veterans were experiencing homelessness, and 15,000 were unsheltered or on the street.
- The HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) indicated that 37,085 Veterans were experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2019, of whom 61% were staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs.

Resources Available

Some resources available include:

- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (877-424-3838)
- Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing
- Transitional and permanent supportive housing
- Residential treatment
- Financial and employment support
- Veterans justice programs
- Treatment and outreach

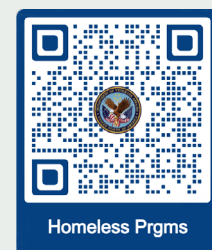
For More Information

Contact the National Call Center

- » Veterans who are at-risk or experiencing housing insecurity—and their family members, friends and supporters—can call or chat online with the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, where trained counselors are ready to talk confidentially 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-877-4AID VET (877-424-3838)



- » Program eligibility varies. Veterans should work with their VA representative to determine their eligibility for specific programs.
- » For more information about these programs, Veterans may talk to the Homeless Coordinator at a local VAMC or visit [VA Programs to End Homelessness Among Women Veterans](#), or scan the QR code



Patient Rights

Overview

VA employees must respect and support women Veterans' rights as a patient. If a woman Veteran would like more information about their rights as a patient, they may talk with their VA treatment team members or, if necessary, a Patient Advocate.

VA posts Patient Rights and Responsibilities in outpatient and inpatient areas. If a woman Veteran has not received a copy of their Rights and Responsibilities, they may contact the Patient Advocate, who can provide them with a copy, or they may download a copy from the [VHA Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Patient Responsibilities

Women Veterans also need to take an active role in their health care. They should communicate with their providers about all current health information and make sure their records are up to date. This includes, but is not limited to, health conditions, medications and over-the-counter supplements, personal information and emergency contacts. Before leaving active duty, a woman Veteran should ensure that their records are accurate and update any information as needed.

Women Veterans can obtain instructions for changing or correcting their military service record or changing their discharge status by visiting: [Veterans' Service Records: Correcting Military Service Records](#).

If their military service record requires a change or correction, they will need to submit DD149, Application for Correction of Military Records, to the relevant service branch. The form provides branch addresses. To obtain this form, visit [DD149](#).

If a woman Veteran needs to change their discharge status, they will generally need to submit DD293, Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States, to the relevant service branch. The form provides branch addresses. To obtain this form, visit [DD293](#).

Nondiscrimination and Respect

Veterans will not be subject to discrimination for any reason, including for reasons of age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status or sex. All Veterans will be treated with dignity, compassion and respect as individuals.

Privacy

VA will protect all Veterans' privacy, and their health records will be kept confidential. VA will not release information without authorization unless permitted by law.

Partnering in Care

Veterans, and any person(s) they choose, will be involved in all decisions about their care. Providers will give information that Veterans can understand about the benefits and risks of treatment.



Concerns or Complaints

Veterans should work with their care team or a patient advocate. Any concerns or complaints can be shared verbally or in writing, without fear of retaliation.

All outpatient and inpatient areas will post the full Patient Rights and Responsibilities document.



VA's Commitment To Care

VA's Anti-Harassment and Anti-Sexual Assault Policy

VA is committed to a harassment-free environment for everyone and will not tolerate harassment. VA staff are committed to creating a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all Veterans.



Figure 26: White Ribbon VA Logo

White Ribbon VA

White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence across the Department of Veterans Affairs by promoting a positive change in culture so that the actions outlined in the pledge become the organizational norm.

White Ribbon VA Pledge

VA employees pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence against others.

"I, (your name), pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence against others."

Report It!

If you experience or witness harassment or sexual assault at a VA facility, contact:

VA Medical Center or Clinic

- » VA Police
- » Patient Advocate

VA National Cemetery

- » District Harassment Prevention Coordinator
- » Cemetery Director

Vet Center

- » Local Law Enforcement
- » Vet Center Director

Inspector General (OIG)

Hotline 1-800-488-8244

For More Information

Scan the White Ribbon VA QR code or visit [White Ribbon VA Pledge](#) to learn more.





Acronyms

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Appendix A

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Appendix A



Appendix A

Recommendations for Preventive Care

VA aims to help women Veterans stay healthy. The table below lists the preventive health services (screening tests, medications, health counseling and vaccines) that VA recommends for their patients to follow. Screening tests are used to look for health conditions before there are symptoms. **These recommendations apply only to adult women of average risk.** A woman is considered of average risk if they have no personal or family history, and no symptoms, of the conditions listed below. If a woman Veteran is having symptoms of a condition, they should talk with their provider. The table below provides recommendations. For more information, visit the [National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: Get Recommended Vaccines and Screening Tests](#).

Green: Recommended
Yellow: Recommended for some women – talk with your provider
Red: Not recommended (NR)

Figure 27: Color Key

HEALTH CONDITIONS	18–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–69 years	70–79 years	80 years and older
Breast Cancer	Not recommended (age 18–39)		Recommended annually (45–54) Recommend biennial (55 and older or have opportunity to continue annually) Have opportunity to begin annual screening (40–44)			Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 75 and older)	
Cervical Cancer	Every 3 years (age 21–29)	Recommended. Every 3 or 5 years, depending on tests chosen (age 30–65)				Not recommended (age 66 and older)	
Colon Cancer	Not recommended (age 18–44)		Recommended. Frequency varies by test chosen (age 45–75)				Talk with your provider (age 76–85) NR (age 86 and older)
Depression	Recommended every year						
Hepatitis B Infection	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 18 and older)						
Hepatitis C Infection	Recommended in adults aged 18–79 years, and in all pregnant women, during each pregnancy						
High Blood Pressure	Recommended every year (age 18 and older)						
HIV Infection	Recommended once (age 18 and older); in all pregnant Veterans; annually in Veterans with ongoing risk factors						
Lung Cancer	Not recommended (age 18–49)			Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 50–80)			Not recommended (age 81 and older)
Osteoporosis	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 18–64)					Recommended once (age 65 and older)	
Overweight & Obesity	Recommended every year (age 18 and older)						
Sexually Transmitted Infections	Recommended. Test for gonorrhea and chlamydia every year (age 18–24). Talk with your provider about syphilis testing.	Talk with your provider about testing for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis (age 25 and older)					
		Early screening for syphilis infection is recommended for all pregnant Veterans, regardless of age.					

Figure 28: Screening Tests for Average-Risk Women Veterans



HEALTH CONDITIONS	18–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–69 years	70–79 years	80 years and older
Folic Acid for Pregnancy Planning	Recommended. Daily folic acid supplement for any woman who may become pregnant (age 18-55)				Not recommended after child-bearing age (age 55 and older)		
Aspirin to Prevent Cardiovascular Disease	Not recommended (age 18–49)			Talk with your provider (age 50–69)		Not recommended (age 70 and older)	
PrEP to Prevent HIV Infection	Talk with your provider (age 19 and older)						
Statin to Prevent Cardiovascular Disease	Not recommended (age 19–40)		Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 40 and older)				

Figure 29: Medication

HEALTH CONDITIONS	18–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–69 years	70–79 years	80 years and older
Tobacco Use	Recommended every visit (if using tobacco) (age 18 and older)						
Alcohol Use	Talk with your provider about healthy alcohol use (age 18 and older)						
Healthy Diet and Physical Activity	Talk with your provider about a healthy diet and physical activity (age 18 and older)						

Figure 30: Health Counseling

HEALTH CONDITIONS	19–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–69 years	70–79 years	80 years and older
COVID-19	Recommended for all women – talk with your provider to make sure you stay up-to-date (https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/)						
Hepatitis A	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 19 and older)						
Hepatitis B	Recommended for all women who have not already had Hepatitis B vaccine (age 19–59)				Recommended for some women - talk with your provider (age 60 and older)		
Herpes Zoster (Shingles) RZV vaccine	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 19 and older)			Recommended 2 doses (age 50 and older), with second dose 2–6 months after first dose			
Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) HPV9 vaccine	2–3 doses (age 19–26) if series not completed	Talk with your provider (age 27–45)		Not recommended (age 46 and older)			
Influenza (Flu) Injectable, Inhaled	Recommended every year (age 19 and older)						
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 19 and older)						
Meningococcal Disease	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 19 and older)						
Pneumococcal Disease PCV20 vaccine, PCV15 vaccine, PPSV23 vaccine	Recommended for some women – talk with your provider (age 19–64)				Recommended - talk with your provider to make sure you are up-to-date (age 65 and older)		
Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis)	Recommend at least 1 dose. Get additional dose with every pregnancy (Or for wound management if > 5 years have passed since last tetanus toxoid-containing booster vaccine).						
Td (Tetanus and diphtheria)	Recommended. Booster every 10 years (age 19 and older) (Either Tdap or Td may be used) (Or for wound management if > 5 years have passed since last tetanus toxoid-containing booster vaccine).						
Varicella (Chickenpox)	Recommended for some women - talk with your provider (2 doses if born 1980 or later)						

Figure 31: Vaccines





Acronyms

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Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix B



Appendix B

Online Resource Guide

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) provides training, information and services to help Service members and their families transition from active duty to civilian life. The Women's Health Transition Training (WHTT) complements the TAP Benefits and Services course. WHTT describes functions and services specific to women Veterans who are separating from their roles in the Military. This Online Resource Guide provides the web links to important resources related to the course.

Key VA Resources

The VA.gov website offers current resources, tools and contact information for all VA benefits and services that may be available to Service members, Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

- [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov)
- [The Center for Women Veterans](#)
- [COVID-19 Information](#)
- [Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Choose VA](#)
- [TAP Interagency Website Guide](#)
- [VA TAP Course Catalog](#)
- VA benefits hotline: 1-800-827-1000
 - Hearing impaired (TTY): Dial 711, then 1-800-827-1000
 - Technical Issues: 1-800-983-0937

Women Veterans Call Center

- [Women Veterans Call Center](#)
 - Call or Text: 855-829-6639

VA Women's Health Care

- [VA Women Veterans Health Care](#)
- [Patient Care Services](#)
- [Sign up for VHA emails](#)
- [VHA White Ribbon Pledge](#)
- [VA Community Care](#)





VA Health Centers

- [Locate a VA Health Center](#)
- [VA Facility Quality Data](#)
- Inspector General Hotline: 1-800-488-8244

Comprehensive Primary Care

- [The VA Whole Health](#)
 - [The Whole Health live blog](#)
 - [VA Whole Health Apps and Online Tools Information](#)
 - [Live Whole Health app](#)
- [VHA Pain Management](#)
- [Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations for Women](#)
- [SERVICE Act Press Release](#)
- [SERVICE Act](#)

Reproductive Health

- [VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Pregnancy](#)
- [Pregnancy & Children: A Goal Oriented Guide to Prenatal Care](#)
- [Women Veterans Health Care: Breastfeeding and Lactation](#)
- [Infant Care and Infant Health Resources](#)
- [VA Adoption Reimbursement](#)
- [VA Directive 1332, Fertility Management](#)

Mental Health

- [Mental Health](#)
- [MyHealtheVet Screening tools](#)

Substance Use Resources

- [VA Substance Use](#)
- [Substance Use: Take the Next Step](#)
- [Substance Use: Treatment](#)

Suicide Prevention

- [Military and Veteran Crisis Line Resource](#)
- [Military and Veteran Crisis Line Online Chat](#)
- Military and Veteran Crisis Line: 988 then press 1 or text 838255
- [Psyche/Armor S.A.V.E.](#)
- [Make the Connection](#)
- [Reach Out](#)
- [Firearm Suicide Prevention & Lethal Means Safety](#)



- [Coaching Into Care](#)
- [Veterans Self-Check](#)
- [National Center for PTSD](#)
- [Polytrauma/TBI System of Care](#)
- [COMPACT Act](#)

Medical and Specialty Care

[VHA Audiology and Hearing Loss](#)

Nutrition

- [VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen](#)
- [VA Nutrition and Food Services](#)
- [MOVE! Weight Management Program](#)
- [MOVE! Questionnaire](#)
- [SmokeFree.gov for Veterans](#)
- [Smoke-Free Vet texting program](#)
- Veterans quit line: 1-855-QUIT-VET
- [VHA LGBTQ+ * Health Program](#)
- [LGBTQ+* Veteran Care Coordinator Locator](#)
- Women's Health Services Access hotline: 1-855-VA-WOMEN

Enrolling in and Accessing VA Health Care

- [VA Eligibility](#)
- Health Eligibility Center hotline: 1-877-222-8387
- [PACT Act](#)
- [VA List of Discharge Documents](#)
- [Information on Drill Pay versus Disability Compensation Pay](#)
- [Reserves TRICARE eligibility](#)
- [VA Disability Compensation](#)
 - [VA Separation Health Assessment](#)
 - [VA Claim Exam FAQ](#)
 - [Form 21-526EZ](#)
 - [Disability Compensation MLC](#)
- [Integrated Disability Evaluation System \(IDES\)](#)
- [VA Compensation 101](#)
 - [Compensation 101: What is Disability Compensation](#)
 - [Compensation 101: How did I get this rating?](#)
- [Form 10-10EZ Benefit Application form](#)
- [What is Service Connection?](#)
- [VA Health Care copay rates](#)

* *T stands for Trans-identifying*





Connected Care Programs

- [My HealtheVet](#)
- [VA Telehealth Services](#)
- [The VA Mobile app store](#)
- [Ask VA](#)
- [Veterans Health Benefits Handbook](#)
- [VA Health Administration Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Bridging the Digital Divide

- [VA Mobile Carrier Programs](#)
- [VA Video Connect](#)
- [The ATLAS](#)
- [Lifeline Support](#)
- [The Affordable Connectivity Program \(ACP\)](#)

Transition Assistance

[VA Transition Assistance Program](#)

Veterans Service Organizations

- [Disabled American Veterans \(DAV\)](#)
- [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)
- [American Legion \(AL\)](#)
- [American Veterans \(AMVETS\)](#)
- [Paralyzed Veterans of America \(PVA\)](#)
- [Vietnam Veterans of America \(VVA\)](#)

Resources and Professional Support for Women Veterans

- [The National Resource Directory \(NRD\)](#)
- National Call Center for Homeless Veterans: 1-877-4AID-VET (424-3838)
- [VA Programs to End Homelessness Among Women Veterans](#)
- Women Veterans Call Center: 1-855-VA-Women
- Caregiver Support: 1-855-260-3274
- [WoVen](#)
- [Women Veterans of America National](#)
- [AmericaServes](#)
- [The Mission Continues](#)





Additional Links

- [Correcting Military Service Records](#)
 - [DD149-Correction application](#)
 - [DD293-Discharge review](#)

Data Sources

- [2022 Demographics Profile of the Military Community](#)
- [Sourcebook, Volume 4: Longitudinal Trends in Sociodemographics, Utilization, Health Profile, and Geographic Distribution](#)
- [FY23Q3 VA Trust Report](#)
- [U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention 2023 Annual Report](#)





Acronyms

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Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

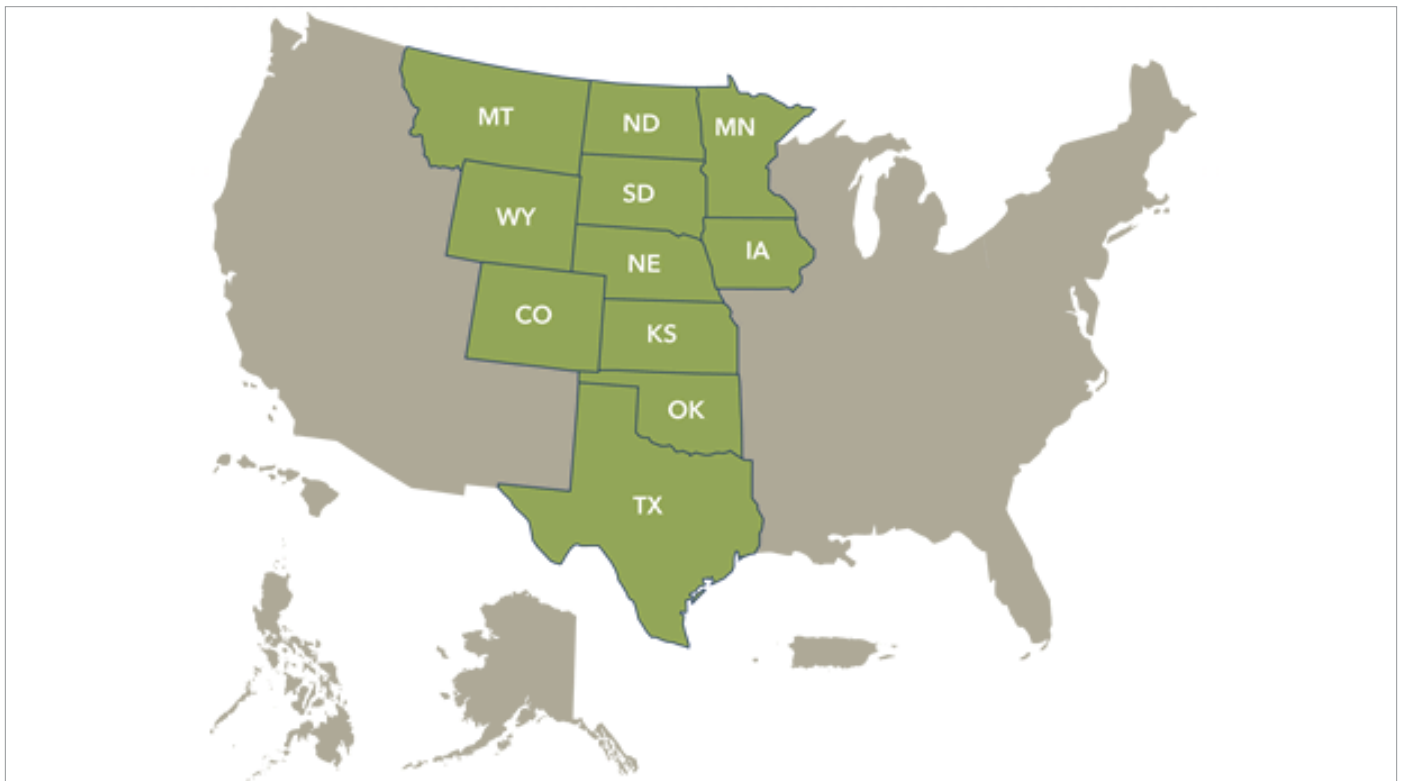
Appendix C



Appendix C

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices

Continental District



**Denver
Regional Office:**
155 Van Gordon St.
Lakewood, CO 80228

**Fort Harrison
Regional Office:**
3633 Veterans Dr.
Fort Harrison, MT 59636

**Houston
Regional Office:**
6900 Alameda Rd.
Houston, TX 77030

**Des Moines
Regional Office:**
210 Walnut St.
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Lincoln
Regional Office:**
3800 Village Dr.
Lincoln, NE 68516

**Waco
Regional Office:**
1 Veterans Plaza
701 Clay Ave.
Waco, TX 76799

**Wichita
Regional Office:**
5500 East Kellogg
Wichita, KS 67218

**Fargo
Regional Office:**
2101 Elm St.
Fargo, ND 58102

**Sioux Falls
Regional Office:**
2501 W. 22nd St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

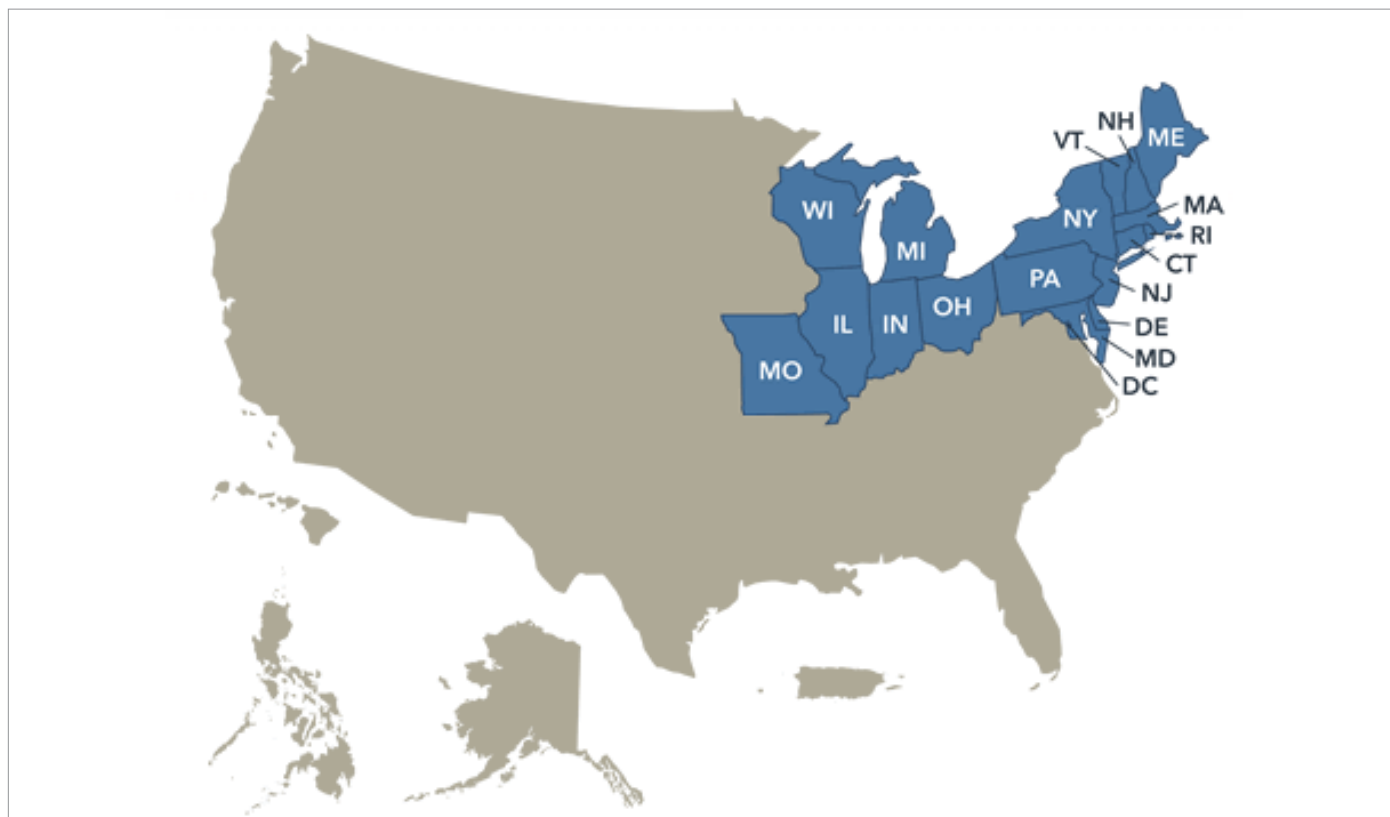
**St. Paul
Regional Office:**
1 Federal Dr.
Fort Snelling
St. Paul, MN 55111

**Muskogee
Regional Office:**
125 South Main St.
Muskogee, OK 74401

**Cheyenne
Regional Office:**
2360 East Pershing Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82001



Northeast District



**Hartford
Regional Office:**
555 Willard Ave.
Newington, CT 06111

**Indianapolis
Regional Office:**
575 North Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**Detroit
Regional Office:**
477 Michigan Ave.
Detroit, MI 48226

**Buffalo
Regional Office:**
130 South Elmwood Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14202

**Pittsburgh
Regional Office:**
1000 Liberty Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Wilmington
Regional Office:**
1601 Kirkwood Highway
Wilmington, DE 19805

**Togus
Regional Office:**
1 VA Center
Augusta, ME 04330

**St. Louis
Regional Office:**
Charles F. Prevedel
Federal Bldg
9700 Page Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63132

**New York
Regional Office:**
245 W. Houston St.
New York, NY 10014

**Providence
Regional Office:**
380 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

**National Capital
Regional Office:**
1722 I St. NW
Washington, DC 20421

**Baltimore
Regional Office:**
31 Hopkins Plaza
Baltimore, MD 21201

**Manchester
Regional Office:**
Norris Cotton Federal Bldg
275 Chestnut St.
Manchester, NH 03101

**Cleveland
Regional Office:**
1240 East Ninth St.
Cleveland, OH 44199

**White River Junction
Regional Office:**
163 Veterans Dr.
White River Junction, VT
05009

**Chicago
Regional Office:**
2122 West Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

**Boston
Regional Office:**
JFK Federal Bldg
15 New Sudbury St.
Boston, MA 02203

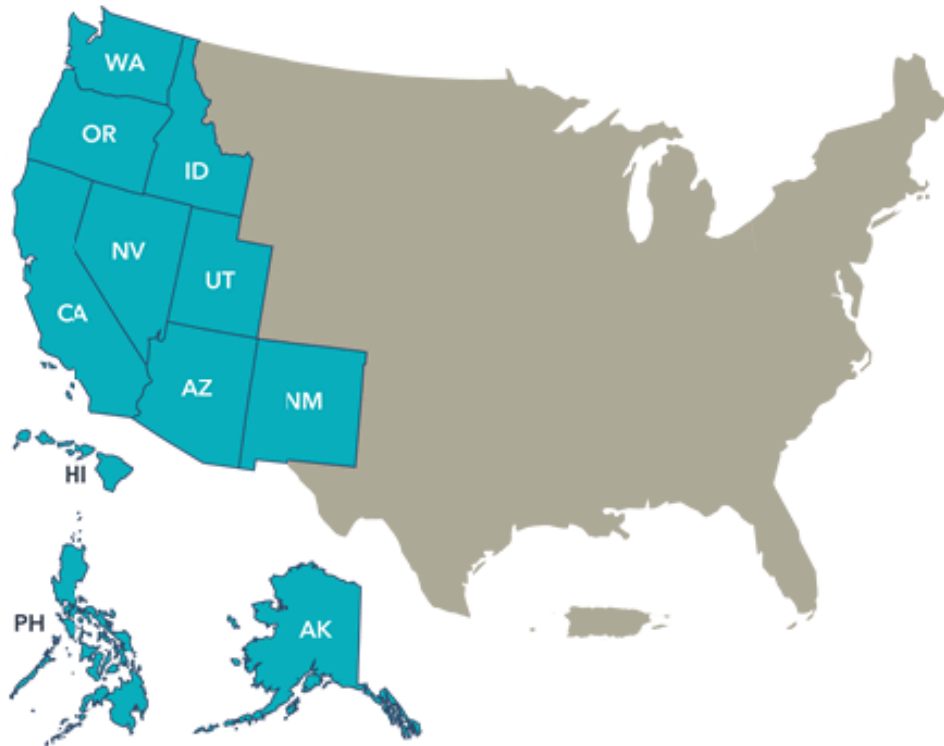
**Newark
Regional Office:**
20 Washington Place
Newark, NJ 07102

**Philadelphia
Regional Office:**
5000 Wissahickon Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19144

**Milwaukee
Regional Office:**
5400 West National Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53214



Pacific District



**Anchorage
Regional Office:**
1201 N. Muldoon Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99504

**San Diego
Regional Office:**
8810 Rio San Diego Dr.
San Diego, CA 92108

**Albuquerque
Regional Office:**
Dennis Chavez Federal Bldg.
500 Gold Ave., SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

**Seattle
Regional Office:**
Jackson Federal Bldg
915 2nd Ave.
Seattle, WA 98174

**Phoenix
Regional Office:**
3333 North Central Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85012

**Honolulu
Regional Office:**
459 Patterson Rd. E-Wing
Honolulu, HI 96819

**Portland
Regional Office:**
First and Main Bldg.
100 SW Main St.
Floor 2
Portland, OR 97204

**Los Angeles
Regional Office:**
11000 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90024

**Boise
Regional Office:**
444 W. Fort St.
Boise, ID 83702

**Manila
Regional Office:**
U.S. Embassy
1501 Roxas Blvd.
Pasay City, PI 1302

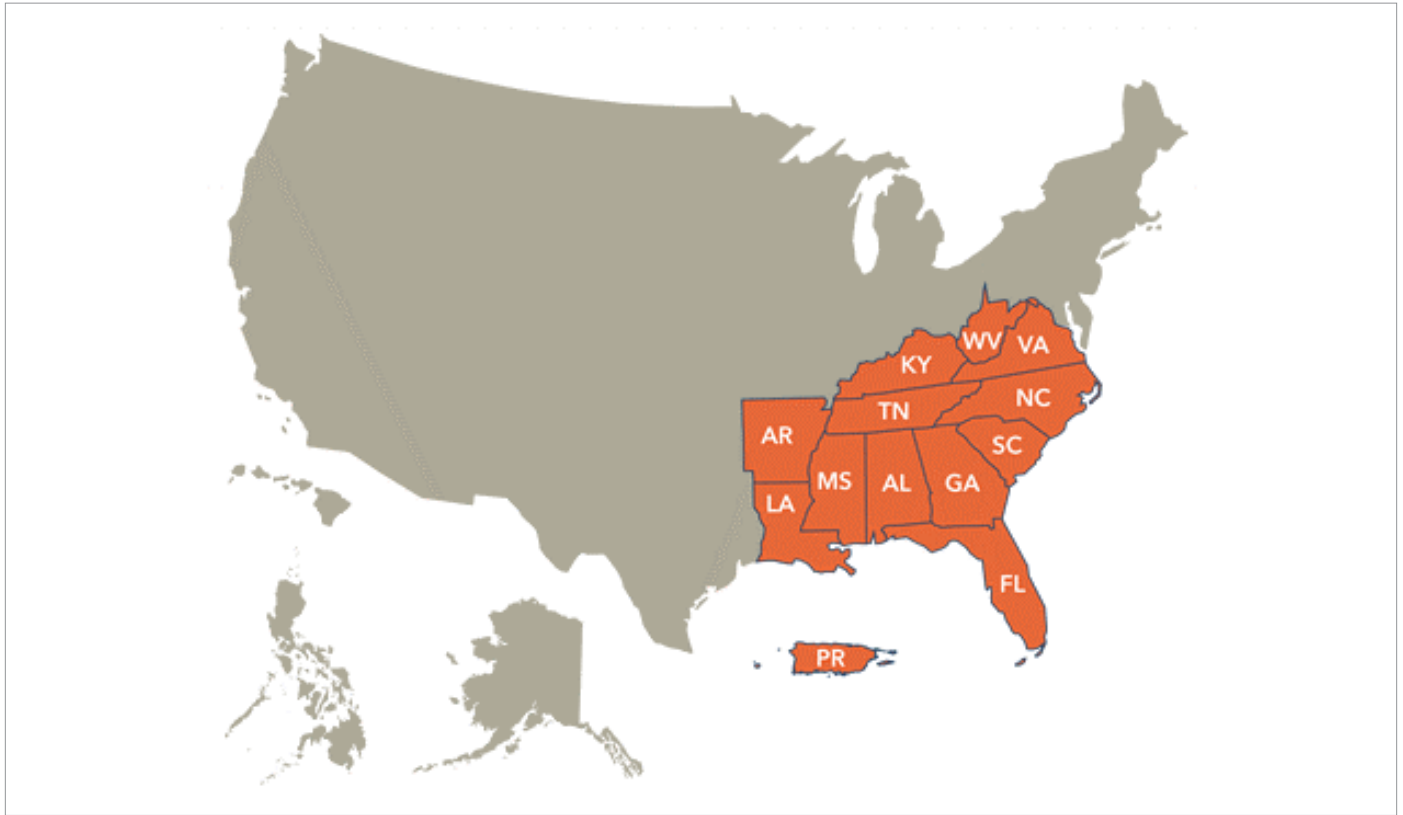
**Oakland
Regional Office:**
1301 Clay St. North Tower
Oakland, CA 94612

**Reno
Regional Office:**
5460 Reno Corporate Dr.
Reno, NV 89511

**Salt Lake City
Regional Office:**
550 Foothill Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84148



Southeast District



**Montgomery
Regional Office:**
345 Perry Hill Rd.
Montgomery, AL 36109

**Louisville
Regional Office:**
321 West Main St.
Suite 390
Louisville, KY 40202

**San Juan
Regional Office:**
50 Carr 165
Guaynabo, PR 00968-8024

**Huntington
Regional Office:**
640 Fourth Ave.
Huntington, WV 25701

**Little Rock
Regional Office:**
2200 Fort Roots Dr.
Building 65
North Little Rock, AR 72114

**New Orleans
Regional Office:**
1250 Poydras St. Suite 200
New Orleans, LA 70113

**Columbia
Regional Office:**
6437 Garners Ferry Rd.
Columbia, SC 29209

**St. Petersburg
Regional Office:**
9500 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744

**Jackson
Regional Office:**
1600 E. Woodrow
Wilson Ave.
Jackson, MS 39216

**Nashville
Regional Office:**
110 9th Ave.,
South Nashville, TN 37075

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Regional Office:**
1700 Clairmont Rd.
Decatur, GA 30033

**Winston-Salem
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251 N. Main St.
Winston-Salem, NC 27155

**Roanoke
Regional Office:**
210 Franklin Rd., SW
Roanoke, VA 24011



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