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# VA Creates Women Veterans Call Center

*Major Outreach Effort Launched*

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has embarked on a major initiative to reach out to women Veterans in order to solicit their input on ways to enhance the health care services VA provides to women Veterans.

"We are taking a proactive approach to enhancing VA health care for women Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We are seeking the input of women Veterans so that VA can continue to provide high quality health care to the growing numbers of women Veterans."

Representatives at VA's Health Resource Center (HRC) are placing calls to women Veterans nationwide, asking them to share their experiences with VA and suggest potential enhancements that will further VA's mission to provide the best care anywhere.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veteran population and 6 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates by 2020 women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population and 9.5 percent of VA patients. The HRC, which started placing calls on June 1, is contacting women Veterans who have enrolled, but have not begun using VA services.

"Through this contact center, we are placing friendly, conversational calls to women Veterans," said Patricia Hayes, chief consultant of the VA's Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group. "We want these Veterans and their caregivers to talk candidly about why they are not using VA, whether they are aware of the gender-specific services we offer, and what additional services they would like to see VA offer."

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The HRC representatives making the calls are also informing women Veterans about the services VA offers and quickly connecting them with appropriate departments if they are interested in trying VA health care. Veterans who have complaints about VA are connected to a patient advocate who helps resolve issues.

VA has trained professionals in all aspects of women's health, including general primary care, osteoporosis management, heart disease, mental health care, menopausal services and obesity-related issues, such as diabetes. Preventive screenings for breast and cervical cancer are also areas in which VA excels. Soon, all VA facilities will offer comprehensive primary care for women from a single provider.

The Women Veterans Health Care program has made significant changes in the last  ffew years to enhance the health care offered to eligible women Veterans. This progress includes:

- Adopting key policies to improve access and enhance services for women Veterans;
- Implementing comprehensive primary care for women Veterans;
- Conducting cutting-edge research on the effects of military service on women's lives;
- Improving communication and outreach to women Veterans; and
- Providing mental health, homelessness and other services designed to meet the unique needs of women Veterans

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: **www.va.gov/womenvet** and **www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth.**

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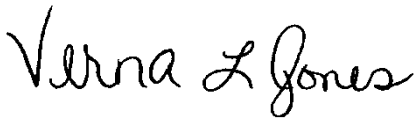
VERNA L. JONES, Director
National Veterans Affairs and
Rehabilitation Commission