

VA Expands Women's Healthcare Training

The VA has trained nearly 1,500 providers through its flagship National Women's Health Mini-Residency Program, one of many training opportunities for VA clinicians to sharpen their women's health skills.

Several courses target physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners; other courses have sections geared toward wider audiences, including nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and psychologists. The courses supply providers with up-to-date information about important women's health topics.

By 2020, VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population and 8 percent of VA patients. For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, visit VA's Women Veterans [webpage](#) and VA's Women Veterans Health Care website [website](#).

New Stolen Valor Act

On Wednesday, the House passed a new version of the Stolen Valor Act introduced by Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV). The bill, H.R. 1775, was approved by a vote of 410-3 and then sent to the Senate for further action.

The new bill attempts to get around the recent Supreme Court ruling by making clear that it applies only in cases where people lie about a military record with the aim of obtaining payment or other benefits.

This means those who choose to lie about their records can still wear medals they have no claim to and inflate their resumes with falsehoods. Exposure of these charlatans and pretenders is left to the American public.

Sequestration Update

The Office of Management and Budget released its long-awaited report today on the pending effects of sequestration on government programs, as required by the Sequestration Transparency Act. Veterans' programs would not be affected by sequestration. Personnel accounts related to pay and retirement in the Department of Defense are also untouched.

Senate Committee Clears Veterans' Legislation

This week, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee cleared an array of veterans' bills. Provisions from several bills were rolled into a larger bill mental health care package (S. 3340) sponsored by Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA). The Senate is expected to vote on the bills next week.

Some of the provisions within S. 3340 include:

- * Extend mental health services to families of deployed service members
- * Direct VA to carry out an outreach programs to recruit more mental health professionals
- * Require DOD to develop a comprehensive suicide prevention program
- * Increase outreach to women veterans regarding VA health care and benefits
- * Provide immunizations to veterans as recommended on the Schedule established by Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
- * Allow continuation of homeless programs to include VA drop-in centers and emergency shelters.
- * Direct those given grants for transitional housing for homeless veterans to meet gender specific privacy, safety and security needs.

Other bills cleared included S. 2241, GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act which provides protections and information for those using GI Bill benefits and requires institutions to maintain and report academic data to VA. S. 2259, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act increases rates of compensation for service-connected veterans and DIC compensation for survivors of certain veterans effective December 1, 2012.

S. 3313, Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvement Act of 2012 directs VA to expand research by collaborating with DoD and HHS on long-term reproductive and gender-specific health including urinary tract trauma in the battlefields. It also requires VA to provide fertility counseling and treatment to veterans who have service-connected injuries that caused infertility.

S. 3322, the Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2012 extends additional Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) and USERRA protections to military families, veterans, and families of the fallen, including additional protections against foreclosure, allowing service members to terminate leases if on-base housing becomes available,

increasing penalties for SCRA violations, making USERRA arbitration agreements unenforceable, and treating the Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration as federal agencies for the purposes of USERRA redress.

Montgomery GI Bill Increasing by Six Percent

Even as the Post 9/11 GI Bill is receiving most of the attention there are many active duty, retired and discharged veterans that have Montgomery GI Bill eligibility which is now potentially worth up to \$56,304.

Effective 1 October 2012, the full-time monthly GI Bill rate will increase 6% to \$1,564 per month. Click [here](#) for more information.

New Army Retiree Newsletter

The latest version of the Army retiree newsletter *Echoes* is now available on line. Click on [Army Echoes](#) to see the issue.