



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# **News Release**

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## **Women Veterans Task Force Draft Plan Released *VA Seeks Public Comment on Strategies***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs is releasing for public comment a draft of its strategic report to address key issues facing women Veterans. The plan outlines steps for improvements to care and services for women Veterans that are sustainable, accountable and a part of the department’s culture and operations.

“Expanding care and services to women Veterans is too important to limit ourselves solely to the views within the department, so we are seeking feedback from all stakeholders, most importantly women Veterans themselves,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The VA must be visionary and agile enough to anticipate and adjust not only to the coming increase in women Veterans, but also to the complexity and longevity of treatment needs.”

Shinseki formed a task force to develop an action plan to address women Veterans’ issues. Since then, the group has conducted a broad survey of department experts to identify those issues and organize them by priority. The draft report is an interim step prior to VA finalizing its overall plan.

The report comes at an important juncture in VA’s history that demands a review of the quality, quantity, and types of services and programs it provides to women Veterans. The number of women Veterans using VA has increased 83 percent in the past decade, from about 160,000 to over 292,000 between fiscal years 2000 and 2009, compared with a 50 percent increase in men.

Women are now the fastest growing cohort within the Veteran community. In 2011, about 1.8 million or 8 percent of the 22.2 million Veterans were women. The male Veteran population is projected to decrease from 20.2 million men in 2010 to 16.7 million by 2020. In

contrast, the number of women Veterans will increase from 1.8 million in 2011 to 2 million in 2020, at which time women will make up 10.7 percent of the total Veteran population.

VA is training providers in basic and advanced topics in women's health through mini-residencies, and over 1200 providers have currently received training. Comprehensive women's health care can be provided within three different models of care, including comprehensive women's clinics; separate, but shared, space women's clinics; or integrated primary care clinics. All of these clinic models ensure that women receive all of their primary health care (prevention, medical, and routine gynecologic care) by a single primary care provider. A network of medical directors and program managers who coordinate care for women Veterans now encompasses all 153 medical centers in the VA Health Care System.

The public notice and instructions for how to submit comments will be posted at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The draft written report will be open for comment for 30 days, and responders will have a number of options to provide both electronic and written feedback. Readers will also be able to participate in a public discussion board on the Internet at: <http://vawomenvetstratplan.uservice.com/forums/159415-general>.

To view the report without making recommendations, please visit VA's website at: [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft\\_2012\\_Women-Veterans\\_StrategicPlan.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft_2012_Women-Veterans_StrategicPlan.pdf).

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