

Center for Women Veterans

The Center for Women Veterans was established by Congress in November 1994 by P. L. 103-446



Contact Us:

U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Center for Women Veterans (00W)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Phone: 202-461-6193
Fax: 202-273-7092

<http://www.va.gov/womenvet>
00W@va.gov



Our Mission

- Monitor and coordinate VA's administration of health care and benefits services, and programs for women Veterans.
- Serve as an advocate for a cultural transformation (both within VA and in the general public) in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military.
- Raise awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.

Our Activities

- The Director serves as primary advisor to the Secretary on Department policies, programs, and legislation that affect women Veterans.
- Monitor and coordinate with internal VA offices on their delivery of benefits and services to women Veterans.
- Liaison with other Federal agencies, state and local agencies and organizations, and non-government partners.
- Serve as a resource and referral center for women Veterans, their family and their advocates.
- Educate VA staff on women Veterans' military contributions.
- Ensure that outreach materials portray and target women Veterans with images, messages, and branding in the media.
- Promote recognition of women Veterans' military service and contributions by sponsoring activities and special events.
- Coordinate meetings of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

Where To Get Help

- **Women Veterans Call Center:** Is your guide to VA. Contact 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636) for assistance. Hours of operation are Mon-Fri, 8:00am—10:00pm (ET), and Sat, 8:00am— 6:30pm (ET).
- **Benefits:** Designated women Veterans coordinators (WVC) can be contacted at your nearest VA regional office to assist with claims. Contact 1-800-827-1000; visit their website at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/> for more information.
- **Homeless:** National Homeless Call Center for Homeless Veterans can be reached at 1-877-424-3838. Homeless Veterans coordinators can be located at <http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm>
- **Crisis Hotline:** To help a Veteran in crisis, call the Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-8255, press option 1 and you will be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a center in your area, anytime 24/7. You can also confidentially chat, by texting 838255 to get help now, or visit the website at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

The Center for Women Veterans

- **Health Care:** Full-time women Veterans program managers (WVPM) are located in VA health care facilities across the country. WVPM can assist women Veterans with accessing VA's health care services. Visit <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov>
- **Locating the nearest VA Medical Center:** VA medical facilities can be found across the country. Visit <http://www.va.gov> or call the regional office at 1-800-827-1000 for assistance locating a facility.
- **Minority:** Minority Veterans program coordinators are at every VA healthcare facility, regional office, and national cemetery. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans/>
- **Access to Patient Medical Information:** My HealtheVet is VA's online health record system designed to help VA Patients manage their healthcare records from medical providers. Contact 1-877-327-0022 or visit their website at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html>
- **VA for Vets:** VA for Vets is designed to help you successfully transition from military service to civilian careers and can be contacted at 1-855-824-8387 or via the web at <http://vaforvets.va.gov/>
- **Home Loan Assistance:** VA helps Servicemembers, Veterans, and eligible surviving spouses become homeowners. As part of our mission to serve you. Contact 1-877-827-3702 or via the web at <http://www.benefit.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp>
- **Education and Training:** For information on the Post 9/11 GI Bill contact 1-888-442-4551 or visit the website at <http://www.GIBILL.va.gov>

Legislation Related to Women Veterans

- P.L. 111-163, "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010," provides contract for a comprehensive study on barriers to health care for women Veterans, pilot program to provide group readjustment counseling in retreat settings for newly separated women combat Veterans, mandates inclusion of recently separated women on Advisory Committees for Women Veterans, and requires VHA to carry out a 2 year pilot program to assess feasibility and advisability of offering child care to Veterans.
- P.L. 110-186, "Military Reservist and Veterans Small Business Reauthorization and Opportunity Act," established a Women Veterans business Training Resource Program.
- P.L. 108-422, "Veterans Health Improvement Act of 2004," extended VA's authority permanently to extend Military Sexual Trauma counseling and treatment to active duty service members or active duty for training.
- P.L. 107-330, "Veterans Benefits Act of 2002," authorized special monthly compensation for women Veterans who lost 25 percent or more of tissues from a single breast or both breast in combination (including loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy) or has received radiation of breast tissues.
- P.L. 106-419, "Veterans Benefits and Healthcare Improvement Act of 2000," authorized special monthly compensation for women Veterans with a service connected mastectomy. It also authorized benefits to children born of mothers who served in Vietnam and who have certain types of birth defects.
- P.L. 113-146, The Veterans Choice Act of 2014 closed an eligibility gap for military sexual trauma (MST), permitting Veterans of the National Guard/Reserves to receive VA care related to experiences of MST during inactive duty training.

VA Helps Women Veterans...

Stay healthy

- Eligible Veterans can receive health care, including treatment for substance use.
- VA medical centers offer a wide range of health care services designed to meet the needs of women Veterans throughout their lives.
- VA has skilled, supportive mental health specialists to help women Veterans work through life challenges, recover from trauma, and readjust to civilian life.

Secure safe, stable housing

- Veterans at imminent risk of becoming homeless can get assistance with expenses such as utilities to help them stay in their homes.
- Qualified Veterans in temporary housing can get help finding a permanent home.
- VA can help Veterans having trouble making mortgage payments explore options to avoid foreclosure.

Care for your family

- Eligible Veterans at imminent risk of becoming homeless can get assistance with child care expenses.

Find a job

- VA provides job training or referrals to help eligible Veterans gain skills to prepare them for employment.
- Work therapy programs can help eligible Veterans who are homeless find temporary housing and a paying job.

Get a degree

- VA can help eligible Veterans go back to school and assist with living expenses while they pursue their studies.

VA provides individualized care through a wide range of services for Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Veterans of all eras and branches may be eligible for VA services. Make the Call and take the first step to access help from VA.

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

For Women Veterans

For women who served in the military and face homelessness,

VA IS HERE TO HELP.

Nicole, formerly homeless Veteran
Served 2002-2010

Make the Call!

Help for Homeless Veterans
877-4AID-VET
va.gov/homeless | (877) 424-3838

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

“Don't give up.
Go to VA to
get help.”

– Connie, *formerly homeless Veteran*
Served 1977-1981

Have you served in the U.S. military? VA is here to help you secure the safe, stable housing you have earned.

Adjusting to life outside the service can be hard, especially when others are relying on you. VA offers a variety of targeted programs that can help you secure safe and stable housing, make ends meet, and take care of yourself and your family.

Women Veterans face unique challenges.

Women Veterans may face emotional and physical challenges resulting from service-related trauma that can increase their risk of becoming homeless. If you are a woman who served in the military, VA recognizes the challenges you face and provides health care, employment, education, and housing assistance that can help you live a healthy life in safe, stable housing.

Make the Call.

If you are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, trained, supportive professionals are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to connect you with the services you have earned. If you need safe, stable housing and you're in crisis, Make the Call to **877-AID-VET** (877-424-3838) or chat online at

va.gov/homeless



“If it wasn't
for the VA,
I don't know
where I'd be.”

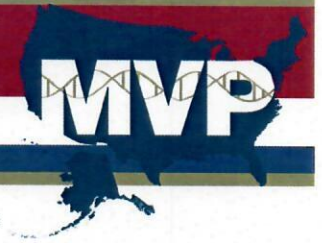
– Tracy, *formerly homeless Veteran*
Served 1988-1991



Department of Veterans Affairs

MILLION VETERAN PROGRAM

A Partnership with Veterans



WOMEN VETERANS

Program Purpose

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a national program to better understand how genes affect health and illness, with the goal of improving health care for Veterans.

How Genes Affect Health?

Genes are made up of DNA and are inherited. They are the instructions for building and maintaining our bodies. Genes determine the color of our eyes or hair, our height etc. Genes may influence our risk for disease. For example, people with certain genes have a higher risk for developing neurological disorders. Genes may interact with the environment or lifestyle and behavioral factors such as diet, exercise, or smoking and contribute to the risk of developing common illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer. Thus, genes may explain why some people get diseases and others do not.

Genes may also have an effect on how we respond to certain medications. For example, some people may respond to a treatment while others do not, or have bad reactions to certain medications while others do not. A better understanding of how genes work may help to prevent and improve treatment of disease.

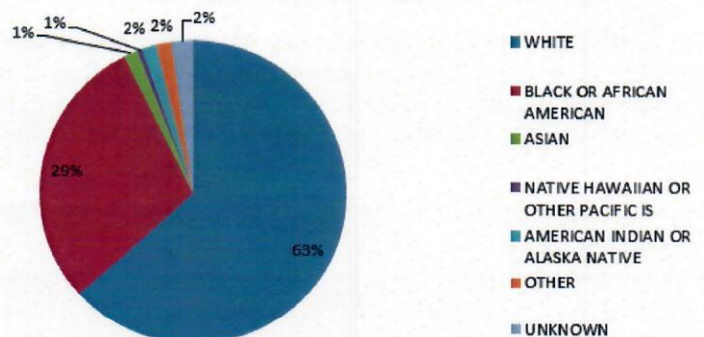
The MVP database will serve as a national resource for an unprecedented scope of discovery, including precision medicine, by making the coded data available to a broad community of researchers from Federal and academic institutions. By looking at genetic make-up along with health and disease information in a very large number of Veterans with and without a disease, researchers may be able to identify people with increased risk for specific diseases, when prevention of a disease is possible, or when early treatment would be helpful. This research could improve treatment, for example, by identifying people who will respond well to certain medicine, reducing serious side effects, and leading to the development of new treatments by learning how genes contribute to disease.

Women Veterans in Research

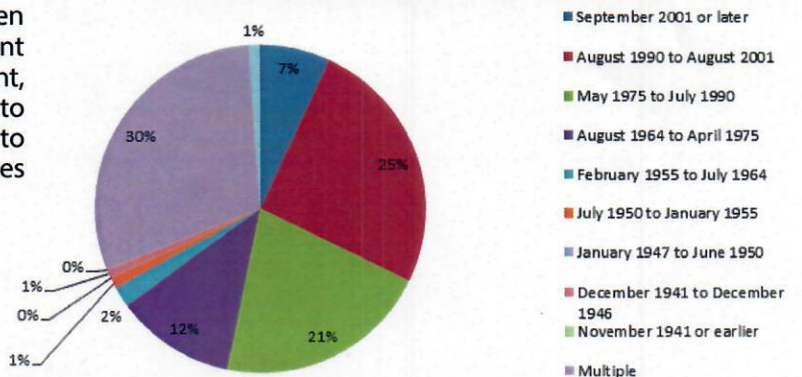
Historically, women were underrepresented in biological and medical research, leading to knowledge gaps that can lead to problems including misdiagnoses and drugs that may affect men and women differently. Although this has been changing in recent years, women minority status in the Veteran population can make it much more difficult for VA researchers to recruit enough women to get statistically valid results. By volunteering to participate in VA research, women Veterans can make a big difference for other Veterans of today – and the future.

So far, only 8% of more than 600,000 MVP enrollees are women. The goal is to increase the number to at least 11% with various backgrounds that will increase the probability for the results to be of greater statistical validity.

MVP Enrolled Women - Race (n = 51,175)



MVP Enrolled Women - Service Era (n = 51,175)



The decision to participate in this program is entirely voluntary and will not in any way affect Veterans' access to healthcare.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Research & Development

For more information about MVP, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP, or call toll free 866-441-6075

WOMEN VETERANS (continued)

What Is Involved in Participation?

Active involvement in this program includes:

- Filling out surveys about health and health-related behaviors;
- Providing a blood sample (containing DNA and other substances) that will be stored for future research;
- Completing an optional health assessment; and
- Allowing secure access to VA and VA-linked medical and health information, including past and future health records.

MVP Confidentiality & Privacy Protection

Protecting the privacy of Veterans is our top priority. We will make every effort to protect MVP participants' confidentiality and to make sure that their identity does not become known.

- All blood samples will be stored in a secured VA Healthcare System laboratory facility (also called a biorepository).
- All blood samples and medical and other personal information will be labeled with a code so that no one can directly identify participants. Only a small number of authorized VA employees will have access to the code.
- The research database containing medical and genetic information will be encrypted so that no one can read it or access it without special permission.

The goal is to make this opportunity to participate in MVP available to as many Veterans as possible, and to follow and update their health information over time. Enrollment is expected to reach 1 million participants over the next few years.

Below are the top five symptoms currently reported by women Veteran enrollees:

Symptom	Women Enrollees (n=51,175)%	% Enrollees reporting conditions
Depression	15888	31%
High cholesterol	14001	27%
Hypertension	13714	26%
Acid reflux/GERD	12492	24%
Anxiety/Panic disorder	10290	20%



Enrolling in the Million Veteran Program is an easy way that you can continue serving your fellow Veterans and your nation. Learn more about why others are signing up, and join fellow Veterans in this important health research initiative. Women Veterans of today – and tomorrow – are counting on us to make a difference in research that could save their lives.

Research Studies

MVP is on the forefront of a science revolution made possible by new ways to analyze our genes, the rapid expansion in the availability of health care data, and the development of ever more powerful computers to analyze these rich data. In many ways MVP represents a new way of doing research. Never before have we tried to assemble as much data that comes from our genes and combine it with large amounts of health data. Below is a list of studies underway as of fall 2017:

- Gulf War Illness risk factors
- Posttraumatic stress disorder risk factors
- Genetics of schizophrenia and bipolar illness
- Genetic vulnerability to substance abuse
- Heart disease risk factors
- Genetics related to heart disease
- How genes affect kidney disease
- Genetic risk for macular degeneration
- Genetic risk for suicide
- New computer algorithm to search database
- How gene variation relates to disease
- Genetics of osteoarthritis
- Genetics of diabetes
- Genes related to tinnitus

Predicting breast cancer risk for women Veterans-

Researchers are using MVP data to build a new screening strategy for breast cancer. The team is studying genetic and clinical markers to predict breast cancer risk. They will use this information to develop more personalized screening strategies for individual women, rather than relying, say, on age alone to plan screening. They are also looking at how military experience and race might affect breast cancer risk. Most current screening plans are based on studies of civilian, Caucasian women. This is an important study to look at a more diverse population in women who served.



For more information about MVP, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP, or call toll free 866-441-6075