



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
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Released: December 2024

Short summary in response to Senate Resolution 46 of 2023
Women Veterans Health Care in the Commonwealth
A Report of the Task Force

As directed by Senate Resolution no. 46 (Sess. of 2023), the Joint State Government Commission established a Task Force to evaluate the access to and quality of health care for women veterans in the Commonwealth in mental health services, inpatient treatment availability, women's health care through the VA, and private health care of women veterans.

The Task Force met nine times over the course of a year and a half to review research by Joint State Government Commission staff on possible barriers to care for women veterans and data on quality of care, availability of care, and satisfaction of veterans with their care. Barriers highlighted by the Task Force included confusing eligibility requirements, the amount of available women's health services, wait times, lack of Military Sexual Trauma consideration, and lack of childcare. Evaluation of available data on wait times, satisfaction rates, and quality standards found that VA clinics and hospitals overall were comparable to if not exceeding community health care.

Health care experience can be subjective. To encompass a broader range of experience of women veterans in the Commonwealth, Joint State Government Commission staff convened focus groups with women veterans who utilized VA health care and included these conversations in the report.

The Task Force believed the VA is providing accessible and quality health care and focused their attention on the need for screening for veteran status in private hospitals. This recommendation was followed by a recommendation for requiring veteran treatment training for all health care practitioners in Pennsylvania.

Additional recommendations covered screening for veteran status in all social service agencies in Pennsylvania and required reporting of efficacy of referral programs in Pennsylvania. Task Force members recommended more MST and general trauma-informed training for Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) and other nonprofit workers who work with women veterans.

The Task Force also recommended a collaboration between Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) and the VA to create a digital marketing campaign to increase awareness about the local health care and social services the VA offers women veterans.

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