



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF STATE WOMEN
VETERAN COORDINATORS

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE WOMEN VETERANS COORDINATORS, INC (NASWVC)



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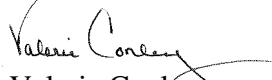
Dear Fellow Women Veterans,

As your newly elected NASWVC President, I join my predecessor in strongly encouraging all of my sister veterans to enroll in the VA healthcare system. The old adage, "there is strength in numbers", could not be more true than in this case. Only by showing the VA that there is a great need for VA healthcare services by our nation's women veterans will they allocate the resources necessary to fulfill this need. If you are not currently enrolled, but would like to be, please contact your State Women Veterans Coordinator, the VA Women's Program Manager at your local VA Medical Center or your County Veterans Service Officer to assist you in this process.

As many of you know, last year (2010) the VA made a decision to relax the evidentiary standard for establishing the required in-service stressor rule in claims made for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This new rule pertains only to combat veterans or those exposed to hostile military and terrorist actions. While I applaud the VA for doing this, I strongly believe that to exclude claims for PTSD based on Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is discriminatory and wrong. Because women veterans disproportionately file PTSD claims based on MST as compared to their male counterparts, these new regulations disparately impact female veterans in that they require us to meet a higher evidentiary standard. These regulations also present unequal standards for men and women veterans and must be reviewed and revised. The VA should only ask for the veteran's testimony of the attack along with a diagnosis of PTSD due to MST. This is an important issue to many women veterans throughout the nation and it is one that I plan to give my focus and attention to in the coming days and months.

There is strength in numbers and I am convinced that if we speak with a united voice we will be heard. Change is happening, not as quickly as we would like it to, but together we can achieve the parity and equality that we served and sacrificed for and that we earned as a result of our faithful service to this country.

Respectfully,


Valerie Conley,
President, NASWVC