

16 November 2016

Hello All!

Thank you for all who are interested in hearing about my trip to the Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Women Veterans.

In early November, I traveled with a wonderful woman veteran and advocate friend of mine and met with Director of the Center for Women Veterans - Kayla Williams, her staff, and other women veteran representatives who are actively participating in legislative changes to better address women veteran issues.

We had a discussion of what Center for Women Veterans (CWV) is currently doing for women veterans and their families. There is a lot of excitement with these individuals as women veteran issues are one of the top initiatives set in the Department of Veterans Affairs. While they are listed as being one of the top initiatives, CWV has laced up their boots and are running the extra mile to expand wherever possible!

In our roundtable discussion, we met with bright individuals who have shared great information. We learned:

There has been a HUGE leap for women veterans and spouses of injured veterans who struggle with fertility - IVF will now be covered by the VA! Of course there will be certain criteria that has to be met and variables in place, but they will be attempting to mirror what DoD does for IVF. In addition to this, the DVA is looking into covering adoption fees! This is a wonderful expansion to the benefits that veterans receive.

We were then informed of additional legislation that could affect women veterans. We did not get into detail, but there is a **list at the LINK at the bottom of this update!** Also – I found this interesting and fun:

- Type in congress.gov and senate.gov
- Search for “Women Veterans”
- A lot of information for legislation will pop up – It’s a good read!

Later on in our comments and questions section of the meeting,

I brought up issues of Female Sexual Arousal Disorder - VBA will recognize FSAD for benefits, but I have yet to see someone apply and succeed (not to say that they won't). This is new, so if any ladies experience this and you do claims for it, let me know! Also - the VHA side is beginning to train providers in how to treat this. Going to VA Medical Facilities is difficult for this because often times, marital therapy is recommended. How about the pink pill, Addyi? Or Sexual Therapists? Pelvic Floor Specialists? Etc etc... There is more than meets the eye for options. But alas, it is movement on the VHA side. (There has been movement on the VBA side as well – please refer to [\\*National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators Conference 2016\\*](#) link on this page and read attached information at the bottom)

Now, the BRCA 1 & 2 genes are being addressed as well. I relayed a story that Hines VAMC is stating that when a female tests positive for these genes, it is considered an elected mastectomy or hysterectomy to combat cancer. The Center for Women Veterans had one of the perfect guests attending this meeting to address this; the Director of Reproductive Health for Women's Health Services and her Assistant Director said to REACH OUT to them! They can possibly address these issues. I have their contact information for anyone who would like to discuss a client dealing with these issues.

Lastly, looks like a speaker has committed to our NACVSO conference in 2017! I think you will all be very pleased. I will keep you updated as details iron out.

Thanks and have a great day!  
Olivia

PS - Please share!! I will update you further as I get more information on anything women veteran related – please be sure to follow all forums on the NACVSO webpage.