

Center for Women Veterans March 2017

In the Center for Women Veteran's (CWV) monthly collaborative meeting, I had the opportunity to sit down with Department of Labor, Office of Minority Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Blind Veterans Association, and VHA representatives:

The CWV is in the process of planning a Women Veteran Summit. Dates and Location will be set in stone soon, and I will certainly report on this as information becomes available. CWV has announced a "live stream" on Facebook that will be a collaboration between CWV, DAV, and VHA. This will take place at a Women Veterans Health Clinic, and they will be available to discuss all of your questions and concerns regarding women's healthcare within the VA.

In addition to this virtual event, we can expect to see an expansion in social media/virtual events sponsored by other organizations:

- There will be a Virtual Town Hall with Women Veterans Interactive on March 29th from 730-830pm (EST). Representatives from NCA, VBA, and Million Veterans Program will be available to answer questions. This will be advertised on EventBrite. It will be closed two days before the event so please save the date and RSVP as it becomes available. Their goal is for this to occur twice per year.
- Department of Labor will be holding a "live Twitter" conversation on March 14th
 - o *Click here for the DOL Twitter information*

While in DC, I noticed that Capitol Hill seems to be booming with constituents and advocates of all sorts; and this includes advocates for our clientele. In addition to our organization, the VFW, American Legion etc have been busy presenting information regarding benefits for veterans and their families. Everyone has been hard at work, nonetheless. PVA stated that they will be on The Hill in the following week advocating for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatments, through VHA to be permanent(as opposed to an expiration date in 2018) along with expansion of the caregiver programs. We are excited to keep everyone informed of their findings!

Speaking of IVF, I had the opportunity to meet with the Chief Consultant at VHA regarding Women's Health Services. She expanded on IVF information stating that yes, they do offer this for veterans and spouses affected by *service connected* health issues that prevent them from conceiving. Any individual that is interested in this and meets the criteria can call 1-855-VA-WOMEN and request more information. Also, adoption reimbursements are now available for adoptions that were finalized after the law was passed last year (2016). Adoption reimbursements are mirroring DoD's policy right now with a \$2000.00/child reimbursement with a \$5,000.00 lifetime reimbursement. The Chief Consultant, Patty, said LOOK FOR PRESS RELEASES regarding these important issues.

Since we are on the topic of Pregnancy, did you know that Women Veterans can receive medical equipment from VAMC's Prosthetics Departments to help ease some pain during pregnancy? If you have ever carried an additional 20-30 pounds in front of your stomach that housed a baby, you would understand that it can take a toll on your back and can cause a lot of pain. Prosthetics can issue equipment to help alleviate pain associated with these issues. Pregnancy can take a toll on your body and preventing future damage is important. Please share this information with your clients as their health is of the utmost importance.

In addition to Prosthetics, we should also support Adaptive Technology and Medical Equipment for all shapes and sizes. Women are typically smaller and not as broad as their male counterparts and not all equipment is suitable for women veterans. The most recent item brought to light was a watch that a blind female was wearing. She stated that the face of the watch was too bulky and didn't fit her right. These are items that we may take for granted each and every day, but we should take the time to support this equipment unique to women. I sincerely ask all of you: If you are in a position to continue this advocacy, keep sharing this message! Every individual who has to work with adaptive equipment, prosthetics, and more should have it meet their needs; we are not all built the same.