

WOODBURY COUNTY VETERAN AFFAIRS

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas with your families, unfortunately we didn't have a snowy one this year but there is still a lot of winter left!

Our pancake breakfast had a wonderful turn out and we were able to serve just under 100 Veterans and spouses! We spent a lot of time out in the community this last quarter with going to a lot of outreach events and are happy to have spread so much holiday cheer this season.

In the office we had over **120** appointments/walk-ins with over **95** claims filed since October! Woodbury County currently has **1,750** Veterans and /or surviving spouses receiving benefits, resulting in a total amount of **\$2,738,797**. We truly love serving the Veterans of Woodbury County and couldn't do our jobs without you!

Fiscal year 2024 was historical for Veteran Benefits, just take a look at the numbers below!

HISTORIC YEAR FOR VETERAN BENEFITS
How VA delivered for Veterans in FY 2024

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| 2.5 MILLION Number of Veteran claims processed, the highest in history | 11,000 Number of claims processed on September 25, 2024, the most in any single day |
| \$170 BILLION Earned benefits awarded to Veterans during FY 2024 | 741,259 Number of women Veterans receiving compensation payments from VA, an 8.2% increase from last year |
| 29.8% Increase in number of claims submitted to VA since the PACT Act was signed into law | 116,192 Number of Veteran appeals processed, a 12.5% increase over last year's record |

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| <p>SERVING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS, AND SURVIVORS How VA supported Veterans' families, caregivers, and survivors in FY 2024</p> <p>519,453 Number of spouses and dependents who received survivor benefits, a 43% increase from last year's record</p> <p>88,095 Number of Veteran family caregivers who received services, resources and assistance from VA, an 184% increase from last year's record</p> <p>158,000 Number of Veterans, service members and families who avoided foreclosure with the help of VA homeowner programs</p> | <p>HISTORIC YEAR FOR VETERAN HEALTH CARE How VA provided world-class care to Veterans in FY 2024</p> <p>10 MILLION The number of Veterans who have commemorative pages on the Veterans Legacy Memorial, the nation's first digital platform dedicated to the memory of Veterans and service members</p> <p>\$1.5 TRILLION Life insurance coverage for more than 3.6 million Veterans who signed up for VA Life Insurance which was established in 2022</p> | <p>127.5 MILLION The number of health care appointments VA delivered in FY 2024, a 6% increase over last year's record</p> <p>92% Veterans who say that they trust the care they get from VA, an all-time high</p> <p>630,000 Number of Veterans receiving dental care at VA, a 12.5% increase over last year's record</p> | <p>50,000+ Number of Veterans in acute suicidal crisis who received no-cost emergency care from VA</p> <p>1,123,591 Number of calls, texts, and chats that the Veteran Crisis Line received, a 12% increase from last year</p> <p>52,130 Number of women Veterans who enrolled in VA care in FY 2024, and VA is now taking care of more women Veterans than ever before</p> |
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HOURS: 8AM - 4PM

Please make an appointment.

WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://WWW.WOODBURYCOUNTYIOWA.GOV/VETERAN_AFFAIRS/](https://www.woodburycountyiowa.gov/veteran-affairs/)

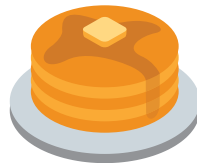
FACEBOOK:
[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WOODBURYCOUNTYVA](https://www.facebook.com/woodburycountyva)



PICTURES FROM OUR MOST RECENT EVENTS!



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VETERANS DAY
November 11th



Veteran Affairs News!

VA RAISES THE BAR ON CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

The Barriers for Women Veterans to VA Health Care 2024 report examines the input of over 7,000 women Veterans and shows that women are happier with VA health care than ever before. This comprehensive study provides crucial insights into your experiences, and it highlights both our successes and areas where we can do better.

Key highlights from the survey results:

- Safety and comfort: 83% of women Veterans who use VA feel safe and comfortable at VA facilities.

-Since 2014, we've made notable strides to improve VA facilities, resulting in a significant satisfaction increase from women Veterans: facility cleanliness and equipment are up by 10%, accessible parking by 17%, safe parking by 8%, privacy at check-in by 8%, and welcoming waiting areas by 9%.

- Provider satisfaction: 82% of women Veterans who use VA are pleased with their VA provider and feel respected by their primary care providers, specialists, nurses and office staff.

-Most notably, satisfaction with general medical knowledge has risen from 79% in 2014 to 86% in 2024, likely due to the success of our VA Women's Health Mini-Residency Program. VA has trained over 11,500 VA providers specifically in women Veteran's care. Through this training, providers are able to better serve women Veterans with gender-specific care, including reproductive health, gynecology, breast health and cancer screening, maternity care and more.

- Sense of belonging: 74% of women Veterans who use VA feel a strong sense of belonging at VA.

-Women Veterans' strong sense of belonging is a positive reflection of VA's commitment to creating an inclusive environment and increasing women-specific communications over the past 10 years. VA women's health care-related campaigns and materials consider the diverse needs of women Veterans and emphasize that VA provides personalized health care to meet each woman's individual needs. This includes access to trauma-informed care and options in how they receive their care, such as requesting a provider of a certain gender, private waiting rooms, telehealth options, chaperones during appointments and more.

-Additionally, communications continue to include culture change campaigns to highlight VA's approach and services around topics important to women Veterans, including gender-based harassment, suicide prevention, diversity and inclusion, Women's History Month and more.

While these results are encouraging, we recognize that there are still areas where we need to focus our efforts. You identified several barriers to care, which we are actively addressing and improving.

- Understanding benefits and health care: 37% reported not understanding benefits and 27% reported not having enough information on how to use VA health care.

-VA is committed to empowering you with information regarding your health care options. Our monthly health and culture change campaigns, Women Veterans Call Center, and the Center for Women Veterans' newsletters are designed to keep you informed and engaged. Additionally, local VA facilities offer specialized support through Women Veterans Program Managers, Maternity Care Coordinators and LGBTQ+ Care Coordinators.

Veteran Affairs News Continued...

- Expanded access to care: About one in four women have switched to a non-VA provider due to limited hours, and over half of those of you who use VA say extended hours would be helpful.

-We understand the importance of convenient care options. Many VA facilities have extended weekday and weekend hours. For added flexibility, we encourage the use of telehealth appointments to make it easier to receive care without the need for travel.

- Family needs: For those of you with children needing care, 40% said it was difficult to find childcare and 46% had canceled a medical appointment in the past 12 months because of this.

-Recognizing the challenges of balancing childcare with medical appointments, VA is enhancing support through the Deborah Sampson Act of 2021, ensuring additional childcare support to help you manage family responsibilities while accessing essential health care services.

Our commitment to you

We are committed to making significant improvements to ensure that you have the support you need and more options than ever before. Our services and resources continually expand each year. Enhanced women Veterans' health care includes:

- Expanded services: Increased availability of extended hours, childcare, telehealth, home care, medical equipment, mail-order prescriptions and transportation.
- Comprehensive care: Access to personalized services, such as primary care, gynecology, reproductive health, maternity care, mental health, specialty care and cancer screenings.
- Women providers: Enhanced access to women's health providers and women-only clinics, with options to request a specific gendered provider.
- Safety and respect: A respectful environment with practices like medical chaperones and accommodating specific requests to ensure safety and comfort.
- Mental Health support: Access to Women's Mental Health Champions, counseling, support groups and 24/7 confidential support through the Veterans Crisis Line (dial 988 and press 1).
- Increased communication: Improved access to information via the Women Veterans Call Center (1-855-VA-WOMEN), the Center for Women Veterans' newsletters, womenshealth.va.gov, Veteran Service Organizations, and direct messaging with VA health care teams.



Veteran Affairs News Continued...

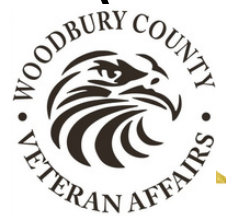
UPCOMING 2025 VA DISABILITY CHANGES

There are significant updates that will be effecting the VA rating system in 2025. Some of these changes will impact mental health, sleep apnea, and tinnitus ratings.

- **Mental health-** The VA will focus on symptom severity rather than social or occupational impact when evaluating mental health conditions. This could result in higher ratings for Veterans with severe symptoms while creating more consistency in how claims are evaluated.
- **Sleep apnea-** Under the current rating system, Veterans using a CPAP receive a 50% rating. With the new update, you may receive only a 10% rating.
- **Tinnitus-** Veterans will no longer receive a separate 10% rating for tinnitus. Instead it will only be rated if it's tied to another compensable condition.

Upcoming Events

- **January 20th (OFFICE CLOSED)- Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- **February 14-15th - PBR, Tyson Events Center, Sioux City, IA**



American Legion: 515-323-7532
VA Benefits Hotline: 1-800-827-1000
QTC: 1-800-682-9701
VES: 877-637-8387
Optum Serve/LHI: 866-933-8387
Sioux City CBOC: 605-232-2800
Sioux Falls VA Hospital: 1-800-316-8387



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans in Suicidal Crisis

The VA will provide, pay for, or reimburse emergency care for certain veterans and individuals, for ambulance transportation costs, follow-on inpatient, or residential care related to the event for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days, including social work. Inform the emergency care provider to report your emergency treatment to the VA Centralized Emergency Care Reporting Center as soon as possible after your treatment starts by using the VA Emergency Care Reporting portal or calling the VA 72-Hour Notification Hotline at 844-72-HRVHA (844-724-7842).

Military dates to remember:

February

- 3- Four Chaplains Day
- 4- USO Birthday
- Week of 12th- National Salute to Veteran Patients
- 19- Coast Guard Reserve Bday

March

- 3- Navy Reserve Bday
- 5- Seabee Bday
- 13- National K9 Veterans Day
- 15- American Legion Bday
- 25- National Medal of Honor Day
- 29- Vietnam Veterans Day

Happy
New Year!