



*"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country
is good enough to be given a fair deal later."™*

Women's Veteran Issues

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Female Specific Claims

- Review veterans records
- Many female specific issues may arise that seem 'off', but you may not think to discuss or claim for the veteran
- Many of these issues do not have a genetic component
- Following slide has the most common female specific claims the VA sees



Female Specific Claims

- Reproductive Issues that originated while on Active Duty
 - Menorrhagia (heavy menstrual cycles)
 - Amenorrhea (lack of menstrual cycle)
 - Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
 - Endometriosis
 - Ovarian Cysts
 - Abnormal Pap Smears/Cervical Dysplasia
 - Cervical Polyps and Cysts
 - Hysterectomy (loss of a creative organ)



Other Diseases/Conditions

- Loss of pregnancies/Chronic miscarriages-May need medical opinion to solidify claim
- Chronic hormonal imbalance
- Chronic yeast infections

- It is necessary to review the medical records and discuss with the veteran to see if the condition is still chronic



Gulf War Syndrome

- Undiagnosed Illness/Multi-symptom Illness
 - Menstrual Disorders
 - Chronic menstrual cramping, heavy menstrual cycles that are not well managed by birth control or other prescription methods, difficulty maintaining pregnancies or getting pregnant, hormonal imbalances, unexplained weight loss/gain, lack of cysts or adhesions to explain pain.
 - Lack of diagnosis to explain pain, menstruation issues, and pregnancy issues.
 - May pair with Fibromyalgia pain/joint pain.



Gulf War Syndrome Cont...

- In situations where a diagnosis is lacking or inconsistent in nature, a claim for Gulf War Syndrome is possible.
- Research specific to Women Veterans can be found here:
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/epidemiology/publications.asp#women>



Building Claims

- File an Intent to File
- Review the veteran's record for treatment, diagnosis list, and interactions with medical staff.
- Discuss symptoms with the veteran.
- Refer the veteran to the VA Women's Clinic for additional treatment to help build additional evidence, treatment, and updated diagnoses to show continuity of care.



Building Claims Cont...

- DoD has been limited in their care provided for women's health until about 10 years ago, which has limited the diagnosis, care provided, and records available.
- In addition, the VA has only created Women's Clinics in 2008, which became system wide in 2012.
- This has limited the strength of the records from both the VA and the military, which can weaken claims.



Building Claims Cont...

- Be as specific as possible, however, the records may be limited in diagnosis and quality.
- Due to the quality/quantity of the records, you may have to be somewhat vague in these claims as some of these issues do overlap, so you can simply claim, IE-Female Reproductive Issue, or Uterine Condition, or Heavy/Painful Menstrual Cycle.



Communication

- Women remain underserved in the VA system
- If you don't feel comfortable having these conversation, please refer them to myself or a female CVSO-we will help!
- Many of these conditions, if left untreated, may cause lifelong issues



Research

- The VA continues to publish more research on female specific health conditions and military service.
- These studies can be found at:
http://www.research.va.gov/programs/womens_health/



Claim Development

- Feel free to contact me for help developing your claims!
- File an IFT right away to give yourself time to develop your claim.
- Refer your female veteran to the Fargo VA Women's Clinic at: 701-239-3700-9-3893

Questions?



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Feel free to contact me with any questions!

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