

Improve Services for Women Veterans with SCI/D

More than three quarters of a million women veterans are currently using health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and this rate is expected to grow by 18,000 women per year. Women veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) are a small, but important subset of these users.

Women veterans, including those living with SCI/D, need access to comprehensive gender-specific mental and physical health care with high standards of care regarding the quality, privacy, safety, and dignity of that care. VA has developed a robust SCI system to serve the needs of veterans with SCI/D but there needs to be a stronger focus on the needs of women veterans living with these disabilities.

While the majority of care provided for veterans with SCI/D is within the VA's SCI spoke and hub system of care, veterans also access other VA facilities for specialty, OB/GYN, and ER care. Many of the facilities in these buildings are not accessible for non-ambulatory users.

As Congress develops strategies and policies for VA to follow, additional emphasis is needed to ensure women veterans with SCI/D are incorporated into these plans.

PVA Position

- Congress must conduct oversight to ensure the needs of women veterans with SCI/D are being met by VA and that any programming and facilities are accessible.
- Congress must mandate and fund VA to conduct research on the unique health care and economic opportunity needs of this population.
- Congress must ensure robust oversight of the implementation of the women veteran specific sections of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Pub. L. 116-315).