FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WOMEN'S ELIGIBILITY

Q: Will VA provide maternity care?

A: Yes. Pregnancy services are covered in the standard benefits package. Guidance on maternity benefits for women veterans is found in Information Letter 10-99-002.

Q: Is every woman veteran eligible for Pap smear and mammography?

A: Women veterans who are otherwise eligible for VA care, such as service-connected and lower income women veterans, may be eligible for Pap smear and mammography services.

Q: Does VA do tubal ligations?

A: Yes.

Q: Does VA reverse tubal ligations?

A: Yes, as outlined in Information Letter 10-2001-001, "Guidance on Infertility Services for Veterans Enrolled in the VHA".

Q: Does VA cover abortion?

A: VA is specifically prohibited from providing *nontherapeutic* abortion. A board of at least 3 physicians, led by the VA Chief of Staff, must determine the need for therapeutic abortion. Therapeutic abortion will *not* be performed on VA premises but at an appropriate non-VA facility and may be at VA expense.

Q: If a woman separates from the military early, reportedly due to sexual assault, is she eligible for services?

A: Women veterans being treated for sexual trauma may be eligible for related health care services. Women veterans may also be provided healthcare if they have filed a claim for service-connected disability. Women veterans treated should be aware that they may be responsible for payment of services received if their service-connected claim is denied.

Q: If particular or specialized women's health services are not available at the facility, what options are available?

A: Fee-basis care may be authorized in cases where VA facilities are not capable of furnishing the care or services required or because of geographic inaccessibility. Contracts may also be initiated with private health care providers to furnish specialized services not available. Referral to another VA facility is also possible.

Q: Is there a limit on fee services available for women?

A: Local determination may affect fee services financial constraints. Technically, there is no established limit.

Q: What is the policy for treating a woman veteran who presents at a VA with recent sexual assault?

A: Each facility is mandated by JCAHO requirements to have policies on sexual assault, domestic violence, and elder abuse. The policies are usually found in Emergency Room or Ambulatory Care procedures.

Q: Does VA provide infertility services?

A: Infertility services are included as part of the standard benefits package effective FY 1999. Advanced assisted reproductive technologies (i.e. *in vitro* fertilization) are not covered.