

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Annual Report to Congress on Reporting and Tracking Harassment, Sexual Assault Incidents, and Other Safety Incidents Occurring in Facilities of the Department

May 2025

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Introduction

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has combined the Congressionally Mandated Reports (CMR) required by section 5303 in the Deborah Sampson Act of 2020, which is Title V of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-315), and provisions of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-154) that are codified at 38 U.S.C. § 1709(d). The combined CMR will provide comprehensive data gathering required by both laws. The report will include a standard date range which will eliminate duplicate counting of incidents occurring in VA and provide the Agency's comprehensive strategy to reduce harassing, disruptive, or violent behavior against VA employees, Veterans, volunteers, visitors, or anyone doing business with VA.

For background, VA established the Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention/Survivor Care and Support Project Sub-Council known as I~STAND, to coordinate world-class harassment prevention initiatives across the enterprise to ensure a unified approach in addressing harassment, sexual assault, survivor care, and interpersonal violence. I~STAND was established under the VA Evidence-Based Policy Council to ensure that enterprise policy decisions are consistent with the Secretary's strategic goals and are developed as intended to improve the lives of Veterans, caregivers, and their families. I~STAND was charged with organizing and supporting required activities related to sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention, survivor care, and support efforts. This includes executing the requirements of section 5303 of the Deborah Sampson Act and permanently establishing a culture of harassment prevention and respect.

I~STAND oversaw the successful implementation of section 5303 of the Deborah Sampson Act by establishing a comprehensive policy to end harassment and sexual assault, including sexual harassment, and harassment based on sex; providing annual training on how to report and address harassment and sexual assault, including launching Bystander Intervention Training for Veterans; using standard mail or email to annually distribute the policy and anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault educational materials to each individual receiving a benefit; standardizing anti-harassment/sexual assault signage across the enterprise; adding anti-harassment web banners to VA public-facing websites; designating points of contact to receive Veteran reports of harassment or sexual assault; mandating remediation plans for facilities with five or more substantiated incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault or a combination thereof; and assessing Veteran's feelings of safety at medical facilities of the Department. Further, VA established the VA Secretary's Work Group on Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention, which is comprised of state, local, and tribal advocates and survivors. The group is responsible for advising VA on the path forward on its harassment prevention efforts for Veterans.

Discussion

Pursuant to P.L.116–315, Title V, § 5303 (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 533) and 38 U.S.C. § 1709(d), VA's Secretary is required to submit an annual report to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs concerning tracking and reporting incidents of harassment, sexual assault, and other safety incidents within VA. The report shall include VA's comprehensive enterprise-wide efforts and initiatives taken to eliminate harassment and sexual assault at any VA facility or Staff Office. Each report shall include the following:

- a. Results of harassment and assault programming, which includes the End Harassment Program,
- b. Results of studies from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Women's Health (OWH) Practice-Based Research Network of the Department relating to harassment and sexual assault,
- c. Data collected on incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault,
- d. A description of any actions taken by the Secretary during the fiscal year to stop harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department,
- e. An assessment of the implementation of the training required in P.L.116–315, title V, section 5303(a)(2)(H),
- f. A list of resources the Secretary determines necessary to prevent harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department,
- g. The number and type of sexual assault incidents and other safety incidents reported by each medical facility of the Department,
- h. A detailed description of the implementation of VHA Directive 5019.02, Harassment, Sexual Assaults, and Other Defined Public Safety Incidents in VHA (October 13, 2022), including any revisions made to the policy from the previous year, and
- i. The effectiveness of VHA Directive 5019.02 on improving the safety and security of the medical facilities of the Department, including the performance measures used to evaluate such effectiveness.

The reporting period of this annual report is October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024.¹ To prepare this report, information was obtained from VHA, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and 13 VA Staff

¹ Note—VA submitted its annual report on Reporting and Tracking of Sexual Assault and Other Safety Incidents in October 2024, covering the period of April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. This year VA combined CMR P.L. 116-315 § 5303 and P.L. 112-154 § 106(a) and aligned the reporting period to the fiscal year, to match the cadence of similar Equal Employment Office reports and thus offer more relevant comparatives.

Offices. The Administrations and Staff Offices are responsible for ensuring their programs and activities are compliant with section 5303 of the Deborah Sampson Act, as well as other civil rights laws that ensure the workplace is free from harassing behavior. The Office of Resolution Management (ORM) provides oversight of the Agency's Harassment Prevention Program (HPP) Office.

The HPP Office is responsible for receiving, monitoring, and tracking harassment complaints, as well as providing training and support to HPP liaisons, Administrations, and Staff Offices. The Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) manages the VA Police Records Management System, known as Axon Records Management System (RMS). Axon RMS replaced the former VA Police reporting system, Report EXEC, on October 1, 2023, to align with federal compliance requirements under the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Axon RMS is used for tracking sexual assault and other safety incidents that occur on VA properties. While the transition to this new system was necessary to meet federal compliance standards, it has presented challenges affecting the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data collected. Some inconsistencies and gaps in data recording have been observed, partly due to system limitations and integration issues. These challenges have occasionally required manual data collection to fill in critical information, adding complexity to ensuring data consistency and reliability. Efforts are underway to address these issues by enhancing the system's functionality and improving the quality and reliability of future data collection processes.

The definition of key terms for this report are provided below:

- **Closed:** Refers to cases that have been investigated and where a determination has been made as to whether the claim is founded.
- **Engager:** The person who is alleged to have harassed. The harassment can include sexual harassment, harassment based on sex, or sexual assault.
- **Experiencer:** The person who experiences or alleges being subjected to harassment, including sexual harassment or sexual assault.
- **Finding:** A conclusion reached as a result of an inquiry, investigation, or trial.
- **Founded:** The criminal investigation reveals sufficient evidence or probable cause to make an arrest. Although probable cause exists, an arrest may not occur if: the suspect is incapacitated (e.g., dementia or other severe/terminal illness); the suspect is unknown; or the victim refuses to prosecute the crime.
- **Inconclusive:** Refers to cases where errors, missing information, or verification challenges prevented definitive conclusions from being reached.
- **Open:** Refers to current cases where a determination has not been made as to whether the claim is founded.

- **Other Safety Incidents:** This category includes reports of crimes against persons, such as physical assaults, threats, resisting arrest, weapons offenses, domestic violence, robbery, and so forth. These incidents are categorized in Axon RMS by more than 43² different NIBRS categories. Excluded from this category are sexually based offenses, property crimes (thefts, vandalism, and so forth), traffic offenses, and crimes in which there were no victims (disorderly conduct, trespassing, and so forth).
- **Patient Abuse:** This category includes reported acts of non-sexual, physical assaults perpetrated by an employee on a patient. It includes incidents of willful physical injury, intimidation, harassment, or ridicule of the patient.
- **Referred:** Applies to those cases that were referred to other Federal, state, or local law enforcement or VA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG).
- **Sexual Assault:** Any type of sexual contact or attempted sexual contact that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient of the unwanted sexual activity. Assaults may involve psychological coercion, physical force, or experiencers who cannot consent due to mental illness or other factors.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unsolicited verbal, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character.
- **Sexual Misconduct:** This category includes consensual sexual activity occurring or suspected to have occurred on property under VA's jurisdiction and control, in violation of VA regulations.
- **Substance Abuse:** This category includes substance-related incidents such as possession or distribution of narcotics and persons found to be under the influence of narcotics or alcohol while on VA property. These incidents are categorized in Axon RMS by more than 10 different NIBRS categories.
- **Substantiated:** An allegation that was administratively investigated and determined to have occurred.
- **Unfounded:** The criminal investigation does not reveal sufficient evidence or probable cause to determine that a crime or incident has occurred. This could be due to lack of corroborating evidence; the victim refusing to cooperate prior to finding probable cause; or evidence reveals the crime did not occur.
- **Unsubstantiated:** An allegation that was administratively investigated, and that investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether the event occurred.

² Axon RMS uses NIBRS categories which may differ from previous years codes where Report EXEC was used.

Data on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, and Other Safety Incidents

There are several avenues for redress to report incidents of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault within VA. The data is monitored and tracked in different forums depending on the individual making the report. ORM Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and HPP Offices are responsible for processing sexual harassment complaints involving VA employees.

VHA's Disruptive Behavior Reporting System (DBRS) monitors reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment against or by non-VA individuals towards other non-VA individuals and VA employees, as well as interchangeably. Per 38 C.F.R. § 1.203, VA Police Officers investigate allegations occurring at VHA facilities and complete an incident report in Axon RMS. Additionally, VHA facility leadership notifies VA leadership of the incidents through VHA's Enterprise Issue Reporting System (EIRS). VA regulations require VA employees with knowledge or information about actual or possible criminal violations related to VA programs, operations, facilities, contracts, or information technology systems, to report such information to their supervisor, a management official, or to OIG (38 C.F.R. § 1.201). If an actual or possible criminal violation relating to VA programs, operations, or facilities, or involving VA employees occurs on VA property, VA management officials must report such information to the VA Police component responsible for the VA station or facility, or where no VA Police component has jurisdiction, to Federal, state, or local law enforcement (38 C.F.R. § 1.203).

- The data for this report is from the following sources:
 - VA Police Axon Records Management System (**Tables 1, 2, and 6**);
 - **Table 1** (page 10): VA Police adopted Axon RMS and launched the system on October 1, 2023. Axon RMS data reflects that VA Police received 472 sexual assault reports during the reporting period. VA Police closed 82% of reported incidents; less than 1% are still pending investigation, and 17% were referred to OIG or local law enforcement. Of the cases closed, VA Police determined that 44% of the cases were founded and 56% were unfounded. Of the founded cases, 75% identify Veteran patients as the engager and VA employees as the experiencer. Charges were not filed in 88% of founded cases due to diminished mental capacity of the suspect, victim refusal to prosecute, or other extenuating circumstances.
 - **Table 2** (page 10): Axon RMS data reflects that VA Police received 743 sexual harassment reports during the reporting period. VA Police closed 28% of reported incidents, 29% remain open, 1% were referred to another reporting entity, while the remaining 42% are inconclusive. Of the cases closed, VA Police determined that 63% were founded and 37% were unfounded. Of the founded

cases, 78% identify Veteran patients as the engager and VA employees as the experiencer. While VA Police do not investigate the inherent administrative nature of sexual harassment, it is commonly reported to VA Police through the commission of other sexually related offenses and added as an offense on the police reports as a secondary offense. VA Police will investigate the criminal aspect of the case and may refer the sexual harassment piece to a more appropriate investigative authority such as EEO or the HPP Office. The fact that these administrative investigations are not within the purview of VA Police means that VA Police cannot consistently capture the requested data required by legislation. The Office of the Senior Security Officer (OSSO) as well as Assault and Harassment Prevention Office (AHPO) deeply understands the need for a more robust method of capturing these referrals so they can be verified and reported to the appropriate investigating office. The OSSO also identified that no standard methodology currently exists guiding the administrative referrals. Additionally, OSSO is working with Axon RMS to develop a referral template, with input from AHPO, to streamline the referral process into a simplified reporting template. This will allow OSSO to easily identify the requested data while protecting the integrity of the Axon RMS for criminally investigated offenses. OSSO is further going to produce guidance to VA Police to complement the referral template that will standardize the process across the VA Police enterprise.

- **Table 6** (pages 12-21): VA Police also recorded sexual misconduct, patient abuse, substance abuse, physical arrests, and other safety-related incidents during the reporting period. Axon RMS and EIRS data reflects that 27,564 reports were received.
- HPP Case Management System (**Table 3** on page 10): In fiscal year (FY) 2024, HPP opened and monitored 798 sexual harassment cases. Of these, 537 cases (approximately 67%) were substantiated (3 of which are cases that are still open), while 257 cases (approximately 32%) were unsubstantiated. Additionally, seven cases from FY 2024 remain open. This data highlights the ongoing efforts to address and resolve harassment cases VA-wide, with a significant portion resulting in substantiated findings.
- EEO EcoSystem (**Table 4** on page 11): The EEO complaints Case Management System tracks EEO complaints based on sexual harassment.
- DBRS (**Table 5** on pages 11-12): DBRS data reflects that 5,512 cases of sexual harassment were received. Of these cases, 73% identify Veteran patients as the engager and VA employees as the experiencer. Incidents

include reports by clinical staff involving Veteran patients with an altered or debilitated mental capacity, such as patients with advanced dementia.

Table 1. Number of Reported Sexual Assaults (Source: VA Police Axon RMS; Date Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024)

	VHA FY 2024	VBA	NCA	Staff Offices*
Open Cases	4	0	0	0
Closed Cases	389	0	0	0
Founded*	173	0	0	0
Unfounded*	216	0	0	0
Referred Cases**	79	0	0	0
TOTALS	472	0	0	0

*Founded and Unfounded cases are a breakdown of the Closed Cases total.

**Cases are referred to local law enforcement, OIG, and others.

Table 2. Number of Reported Sexual Harassment Cases (Source: VA Police Axon RMS; Data Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024)

	VHA FY 2024	VBA	NCA	Staff Offices*
Open Cases	214	0	0	0
Closed Cases	207	0	0	0
Founded*	130	0	0	0
Unfounded*	77	0	0	0
Referred Cases**	9	0	0	0
Inconclusive	313	0	0	0
TOTALS	743	0	0	0

*Founded and Unfounded cases are a breakdown of the Closed Cases total.

**Cases are referred to local law enforcement, OIG, and others.

Table 3. Number of Reported Sexual Harassment Cases (Source: HPP Case Management System; Data Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024)

	VHA	VBA	NCA	Staff Offices*	Grand Total
Open Cases	7	0	0	0	7
Closed Cases	771	8	5	7	791
Substantiated	523**	6	4	4	537
Unsubstantiated	251	2	1	3	257
Referred Cases*	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	778	8	5	7	798

*Cases are referred to local law enforcement, Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, OIG, and others.

**Three cases are still open but are marked as harassment found (8155, 8210, 8378).

**Table 4. List of EEO Complaints with a Claim of Sexual Harassment Cases
(Source: E²; Data Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024)**

	VHA	VBA	NCA	Staff Offices*	Grand Total
Open Cases	207	5	1	6	219
Closed Cases	161	3	1	3	168
Finding*	9	0	0	0	9
No Finding*	152	3	1	3	159
Total	368	8	2	9	387

*These decisions are only rendered by adjudicating authorities such as VA's Office of Employment Discrimination Complainant Adjudication and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This data does not include cases that were withdrawn, a settlement was reached, or the case was dismissed.

Table 5. VHA's Disruptive Behavior Reporting Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Incidents (Source: DBRS*; Data Timeframe: Oct. 1, 2023 – Sept. 30, 2024)*

*VA Privacy regulations require any incident number less than 10 be replaced by an asterisk to protect identities of parties involved.

Disruptive Individual Role	Experiencer Role	Sexual Harassment	Suspected/Alleged Sexual Assault	Confirmed Sexual Assault
Engager is a Veteran/Patient	Experiencer is Veteran/Patient	244	50	*
	Experiencer is Employee	4012	325	150
	Experiencer is Health Professions Trainee	156	15	*
	Experiencer is Visitor/Family	13	*	*
	Experiencer is Community Care Employee	347	59	13
	Experiencer is Contractor	146	24	*
	Experiencer is Community Member	122	31	*
	Experiencer is Unknown or Other	*	*	0

Disruptive Individual Role	Experiencer Role	Sexual Harassment	Suspected/Alleged Sexual Assault	Confirmed Sexual Assault
Engager is Employee, Health Professions Trainee, Visitor/Family, Unknown, Other	Experiencer is Veteran/Patient	70	44	*
	Experiencer is Employee	365	46	*
	Experiencer is Health Professions Trainee	13	0	0
	Experiencer is Visitor/Family	*	*	0
	Experiencer is Community Care Employee	*	*	0
	Experiencer is Contractor	*	*	0
	Experiencer is Community Member	*	0	*
	Experiencer is Unknown or Other	*	0	0
Totals		5512	602	193

*Incidents captured in DBRS are neither a medical record document nor a formal record of adjudicated facts and are not used to make decisions regarding legal proceedings or disciplinary actions. The information is used for a behavioral threat assessment to ensure a safe work environment.

Table 6. Sexual Assault and Safety Incidents Reported by Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN)/Medical Facility (Source: VA Police Axon RMS and EIRS; Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024)*

*VA Privacy regulations require any incident number less than 10 be replaced by an asterisk to protect identities of parties involved.

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
VHA Totals	173	472	743	379	4,984	21,823	205	28,779
VISN 01								
VISN 01 Totals	*	23	30	12	313	1,245	13	1,643
402 - Togus VA Medical Center (VAMC), Togus, ME	*	0	11	*	47	114	*	182

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
405 - White River Jct., VT	0	*	*	0	21	37	0	61
518 - Bedford, MA	0	*	*	*	30	156	*	201
523 - Boston Health Care System (HCS), MA	*	*	*	*	67	403	0	487
608 - Manchester, NH	*	0	0	0	13	50	0	65
631 - Northampton, MA	*	0	*	*	38	57	*	101
650 - Providence, RI	*	0	*	*	31	274	0	312
689 - Connecticut HCS, CT	*	*	*	0	66	154	*	234
VISN 02								
VISN 02 Totals	*	19	32	*	220	1,072	21	1,377
526 - James J. Peters VAMC	0	0	*	*	12	147	*	165
528 - Buffalo, NY	0	*	*	*	26	63	*	95
528A6 - Bath, NY	0	*	*	*	55	123	*	184
528A7 - Syracuse, NY	*	0	*	0	20	144	*	170
528A8 - Samuel S. Stratton VAMC	0	*	*	*	24	94	*	136
561 - VA New Jersey HCS	0	*	*	0	21	112	*	142
620 - Hudson Valley HCS, NY	*	*	*	0	18	92	*	123
630 - NY Harbor HCS, NY	*	*	*	0	19	87	*	117
630A4 – Brooklyn Campus	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	*
632 - Northport, NY	0	*	*	*	25	210	*	243
VISN 04								

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
VISN 04 Totals	12	27	47	*	324	1,547	19	1,984
460 - Wilmington, DE	*	*	*	0	58	318	*	389
503 - Altoona, PA	*	*	*	0	*	42	*	54
529 - Butler, PA	*	*	0	0	26	48	0	76
542 - Coatesville, PA	*	*	*	*	27	210	*	252
562 - Erie, PA	0	*	*	*	*	105	*	116
595 - Lebanon, PA	*	*	*	*	57	270	0	348
642 - Philadelphia, PA	*	*	10	0	34	184	*	236
646 - Pittsburgh, PA	*	0	*	*	78	201	*	297
693 - Wilkes-Barre, PA	*	*	*	*	37	169	*	216
VISN 05								
VISN 05 Totals	*	13	25	*	125	446	*	625
512 - Baltimore HCS, MD	0	*	*	*	38	156	0	210
517 - Beckley, WV	0	0	*	0	11	42	0	57
540 - Louis A. Johnson VAMC	0	*	*	0	18	51	*	81
581 - Huntington, WV	*	*	0	0	13	51	*	69
613 - Martinsburg, WV	0	*	*	0	21	65	*	94
688 - Washington, DC	*	*	*	*	24	81	0	114
VISN 06								
VISN 06 Totals	*	23	25	10	128	820	15	1027
558 - Durham, NC	0	*	*	*	*	172	*	185
565 - Fayetteville, NC	0	*	*	0	18	55	*	82

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
590 - Hampton, VA	*	*	*	*	15	122	*	148
637 - Asheville, NC	0	*	*	*	39	110	*	162
652 - Richmond, VA	*	*	*	0	15	68	0	94
658 - Salem, VA	0	*	*	*	16	122	0	148
659 - Salisbury, NC	*	*	*	*	19	171	*	208
VISN 07								
VISN 07 Totals	*	24	37	15	211	1,252	18	1,566
508 - Atlanta {Decatur}, GA	0	*	*	*	51	303	*	367
509 - Augusta, GA	*	*	*	0	27	160	0	195
521 - Birmingham, AL	0	*	*	*	14	109	0	133
534 - Charleston, SC	*	*	15	*	34	223	0	280
544 - Columbia, SC	0	0	*	*	17	143	*	167
557 - Dublin, GA	*	0	*	*	34	127	*	174
619 - Montgomery, AL	*	*	*	*	29	146	*	199
679 - Tuscaloosa, AL	*	*	*	0	*	41	*	51
VISN 08								
VISN 08 Totals	*	30	16	37	324	1,445	*	1,869
516 - Bay Pines, FL	*	*	*	26	116	214	*	371
546 - Miami, FL	*	*	*	0	23	103	*	130
548 - West Palm Beach, FL	0	*	*	*	28	180	0	216
573 - Gainesville, FL	*	*	*	*	61	307	*	384
672 - San Juan, PR	0	0	*	*	13	113	*	131
673 - Tampa, FL	0	*	*	*	32	197	*	244

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
675 - Orlando, FL	*	*	*	*	51	331	*	393
VISN 09								
VISN 09 Totals	*	18	30	11	190	1,084	*	1,343
596 - Lexington, KY	0	*	*	0	32	195	*	238
603 - Louisville, KY	*	*	*	*	22	209	0	243
614 - Memphis, TN	*	*	*	*	19	98	0	127
621 - Mountain Home, TN	0	*	*	*	67	132	*	205
626 - Mid Tenn. HCS, TN	*	11	13	*	50	450	0	530
VISN 10								
VISN 10 Totals	18	47	83	30	415	1,988	*	2,590
506 - VA Ann Arbor HCS	*	10	*	*	43	104	0	164
515 - Battle Creek, MI	*	*	*	*	46	381	*	442
538 - Chillicothe, OH	*	*	*	0	20	232	*	263
539 - Cincinnati, OH	*	*	16	*	35	180	*	244
541 - Cleveland, OH	*	*	11	*	83	247	*	357
552 - Dayton, OH	*	*	*	*	34	135	*	190
553 - John D. Dingell VAMC	*	*	*	*	43	202	0	257
583 - Richard L. Roudebush VAMC	0	*	*	14	67	324	0	411
610 - VA Northern Indiana HCS	0	*	*	0	13	56	0	79
655 - Aleda E. Lutz VAMC	0	0	18	0	22	56	0	96
757 - Columbus, OH	0	*	*	0	*	71	0	87
VISN 12								

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
VISN 12 Totals	*	23	89	30	333	2,023	*	2,512
537 - Chicago HCS, IL	*	*	*	*	86	528	0	630
550 - VA Illiana HCS	0	*	0	*	12	51	*	67
556 - North Chicago, IL	*	0	*	0	14	70	*	87
578 - Hines, IL	0	*	17	16	101	354	*	492
585 - Iron Mountain, MI	0	*	*	*	*	48	*	63
607 - Madison, WI	0	*	17	*	29	265	*	321
676 - Tomah, WI	0	*	*	0	26	124	*	159
695 - Milwaukee, WI	*	*	41	0	58	583	0	693
VISN 15								
VISN 15 Totals	*	15	18	27	209	639	*	925
589 - Kansas City, MO	*	*	*	14	87	196	0	305
589A4 - Harry S. Truman VAMC	*	*	*	0	29	160	0	202
589A5 - VA Eastern Kansas HCS	0	*	0	0	0	0	*	*
589A6 - VA Eastern Kansas HCS - Dwight D. Eisenhower VAMC	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	16
589A7 - Robert J. Dole VAMC	*	0	*	*	0	47	0	52
657 - St. Louis, MO	*	*	0	*	65	169	*	262
657A4 - John J. Pershing VAMC	0	0	0	0	*	19	*	23
657A5 - Marion, IL	*	0	*	*	*	48	0	62
VISN 16								
VISN 16 Totals	*	18	35	22	213	1,069	30	1,394

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
502 - Alexandria, LA	*	*	*	0	11	55	0	69
520 - Biloxi, MS	*	*	*	0	41	228	*	282
564 - Fayetteville, AR	0	*	*	*	29	84	0	121
580 - Michael E. DeBakey VAMC	*	*	*	*	23	193	*	238
586 - Jackson, MS	*	*	0	0	12	38	*	61
598 - Little Rock, AR	*	*	12	12	74	198	*	305
629 - New Orleans, LA	0	*	*	*	22	208	*	246
667 - Shreveport, LA	0	*	0	0	*	65	*	72
VISN 17								
VISN 17 Totals	13	24	36	17	250	1,240	18	1,598
504 - Amarillo VA HCS	0	*	*	*	*	69	*	81
519 - West Texas VA HCS	*	*	*	0	10	51	*	67
549 - Dallas, TX	*	*	*	*	51	298	*	378
671 - South Texas HCS, TX	0	*	*	*	30	184	0	226
674 - Central Texas HCS, TX	*	14	15	*	134	496	*	679
740 - Texas Valley Coast HCS	*	0	*	0	10	60	0	72
756 - El Paso VA HCS	0	*	*	0	*	82	0	95
VISN 19								
VISN 19 Totals	13	36	33	15	215	862	11	1,185
436 - Montana HCS, MT	*	*	0	*	22	61	0	90
442 - Cheyenne, WY	0	*	*	0	*	56	*	74
554 - Denver, CO	*	*	*	*	52	224	*	303

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
575 - Grand Junction, CO	*	*	*	0	*	28	0	39
623 - Jack C. Montgomery VAMC	0	*	*	0	35	94	*	138
635 - Oklahoma City, OK	*	14	*	*	28	201	*	259
660 - Salt Lake City, UT	*	*	*	*	31	127	0	175
666 - Sheridan, WY	0	*	*	0	30	71	*	107
VISN 20								
VISN 20 Totals	10	24	35	16	256	1,023	*	1,367
463 - Anchorage, AK	*	0	*	*	*	21	*	34
531 - Boise, ID	*	*	15	*	21	181	0	221
648 - Portland, OR	*	13	10	*	133	319	0	486
653 - Roseburg, OR	0	*	*	0	*	37	0	48
663 - Puget Sound HCS, WA	*	*	*	*	55	366	0	438
668 - Spokane, WA	0	*	*	0	13	32	*	51
687 - Walla Walla, WA	0	0	*	*	*	22	0	28
692 - White City, OR	0	0	*	0	15	45	0	61
VISN 21								
VISN 21 Totals	*	29	68	29	394	1,195	*	1,728
459 - Honolulu, HI	0	0	0	0	0	*	0	*
570 - Fresno, CA	0	*	*	*	30	122	0	156
593 - VA Southern Nevada HCS	*	*	33	14	92	384	0	530
612 - VA Northern California Health Care System	*	*	*	*	127	199	*	344
640 - Palo Alto, CA	*	20	28	*	60	252	0	363

Facility Station & Name**	Sexual Misconduct	Sexual Assault	***Sexual Harassment	Arrests Made	Substance Abuse	Other Safety Incident	Patient Abuse	Facility Total
654 - Reno, NV	0	*	*	*	44	129	*	179
662 - San Francisco, CA	0	*	0	*	41	103	0	150
VISN 22								
VISN 22 Totals	15	34	54	68	541	1,786	*	2,501
501 - New Mexico HCS	*	*	*	14	80	171	0	282
600 - Long Beach, CA	*	*	*	14	55	177	0	251
605 - Loma Linda, CA	*	*	*	*	45	228	*	291
644 - Carl T. Hayden VAMC	*	*	*	11	56	197	0	278
649 - North Arizona HCS	*	0	*	*	51	116	0	179
664 - San Diego, CA	0	*	*	*	84	353	0	454
678 - Southern Arizona HCS	0	*	11	*	21	176	0	220
691 - Los Angeles HCS, CA	*	*	*	12	149	368	*	546
VISN 23								
VISN 23 Totals	18	45	50	17	323	1,087	*	1,545
437 - Fargo, ND	*	*	*	0	12	50	0	74
438 - Sioux Falls, SD	0	0	*	*	10	25	*	42
568 - Black Hills HCS, SD	0	*	*	0	42	57	*	104
618 - Minneapolis, MN	*	15	*	11	86	328	*	451
636 - Nebraska-W Iowa, NE	*	*	*	*	24	62	*	97
636A6 - VA Central Iowa HCS	*	*	15	0	27	154	0	199
636A8 - Iowa City, IA	*	*	*	0	24	89	*	125
656 - St. Cloud, MN	*	15	13	*	98	322	0	453

**Please note: VHA facilities differ in number of encounters, complexity of care, size of staff, and number of Veterans served and are not comparable in nature.

***Sexual Harassment has been reported each year but was not previously included in this table. This category will be added to this table moving forward for this CMR.

Results of Harassment and Sexual Assault Programming

- HPP
 - Delivered multiple training programs including VA Handbook 5979, Creating a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace, HPP Virtual Training, Let's Talk about Sexual Harassment, Harassment Prevention Coordinator (HPC) Training, and Workplace and Sexual Harassment/Assault Prevention Training with Bystander Intervention. Approximately 2,000 managers/supervisors and 16,000 employees were trained.
 - Maintains a neutral pool of 78 trained Factfinders across VA to conduct thorough and impartial Fact-findings on workplace and sexual harassment allegations reported to HPP, ensuring timely and effective response to alleged harassing conduct.
 - Provides over 15,000 employees with key updates through a monthly harassment prevention bulletin on harassment prevention best practices, quizzes to reinforce knowledge, and reminders of mandatory and optional training opportunities to sustain awareness and compliance.
 - Designed and distributed informational materials – including banners, sidewalk signs, quick-response (QR) codes, brochures, bookmarks, and display boards – to VA facilities and Staff Offices nationwide, reinforcing VA's zero-tolerance policy and ensuring employees are aware of proper reporting avenues.
- VHA
 - VA aims to ensure that every person who enters a VA facility feels welcomed, safe, and free of harassment or sexual assault. Since the implementation of VHA Directive 5019.02, VHA has made considerable efforts to increase awareness of policy requirements, definitions of sexual harassment and assault, and reporting options. VHA Directive 5019.02 updated reporting processes and definitions and implemented the requirements of the Deborah Sampson Act to have a comprehensive policy to end harassment and sexual assault, including sexual harassment throughout the Department. The mandatory reporting processes for all VA employees and contractors, and clear reporting procedures for non-Department individuals—such as Veterans, visitors, and caregivers—are also outlined in VHA Directive 5019.02. In response to an overall increase in reporting, with more than 75% of founded cases involving Veteran patient-on-employee incidents, VA must balance delivering high-quality,

compassionate care to all Veterans and protecting staff from harm. This issue is further complicated when incidents involve Veterans with diminished mental capacity due to conditions such as traumatic brain injuries, substance abuse, dementia, or severe posttraumatic stress disorder. These conditions may impair judgment and impulse control, making traditional accountability measures ineffective because there is no intent to commit a crime. Still, we can build a safer, more supportive environment for Veterans who have served our country and our employees. To address this issue effectively, VA will review processes, refine policies, and develop and implement additional trauma-informed and evidence-based strategies prioritizing patient care and employee safety. This includes expanding education and training programs, strengthening prevention strategies, conducting gap analyses, and promoting a culture of respect and accountability. The rise in reporting reflects growing trust in the system, underscoring the need to sustain and enhance these efforts to address root causes and ensure that every individual feels safe and supported.

- For additional context, during the reporting period VHA had 1,399,435 inpatient admissions and 167,557,792 outpatient visits, for a total of 168,957,227 Veteran encounters. There was a total of 472 reports of sexual assault, with 173 reports determined to be founded after an investigation. Of the founded cases, 84% identified the Veteran as the engager. VHA remains dedicated to its efforts to encourage reporting and address sexual assault and harassment within VA facilities.
- In accordance with section 5303 of the Deborah Sampson Act, VA requires any facility to document a remediation plan when they have five or more substantiated sexual harassment and/or sexual assault cases within a single fiscal year. In this reporting period, 17 facilities have been identified to complete remediation plans for FY 2024.³
- White Ribbon VA is a national call to action for employees and Veterans, encouraging them to play a vital role in ending harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence. The White Ribbon VA pledge has been incorporated into senior executive swearing-in ceremonies, new employee orientation, the Prevention and Management of Disruptive Behavior Training as well as VA staff training currently in development. There are currently 80 White Ribbon VA champions across the enterprise, representing VHA, VBA, and NCA. VHA continues to host and promote the White Ribbon VA Challenge to highlight facility best practices to create a proactive culture of respect and one that is free of harassment. White Ribbon Day 2023 was held in Congress at the Capital to raise awareness and take action to end violence.

³ Sexual harassment and sexual assault data from Axon RMS was unavailable prior to the end of the fiscal year. Remediation plans will be initiated and completed for FY 2024 prior to June 2025.

- VHA continues to oversee the Veterans Signals (VSignals) Outpatient Safety Survey to assess Veterans' feelings of safety within VHA facilities during their medical appointment visits. In addition, VSignals digital survey platform also uses artificial intelligence to scan for pre-programmed keywords in all VSignals surveys with a free text capability to create Sexually Based Concerns (SBC) alerts. During FY 2024, 375,782 Veterans received the VSignals Veteran's Safety Survey after their medical appointments. VHA received 59,060 responses which is a 13% response rate. While less than 1% of the Veteran responses were sexually based complaints, 100% of complaints were tracked and addressed to ensure service recovery. Additionally, 49 SBC alerts out of 140 were identified to contain a sexually based complaint; 100% of these alerts were tracked and addressed to ensure service recovery.
- VHA AHPO distributed VA's Anti-Harassment and Anti-Sexual Assault Policy Letter along with an educational brochure to nearly 16 million Veterans through email and/or United States Postal Service mail during this reporting period.
- VHA continues to monitor MyVA411 sexual harassment and sexual assault cases. Veterans can call VA's 1-800-MyVA411, press 9, and speak with a live VA representative to report an incident after leaving VA medical facilities. This initiative marked the first time in VA history that Veterans had access to a publicly advertised direct number with case management for reporting sexual harassment and sexual assault. The Call Center operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with staffed customer service representatives available to accept reported incidents and offer health care services. VA processed 143 total sexual harassment or sexual assault cases during the reporting period.
- VHA Directive 1160.08(1), VHA Workplace Violence Prevention Program, dated August 23, 2021, amended February 22, 2022, established VHA's Workplace Violence Prevention Program (WVPP) which collects and analyzes reports of disruptive, violent, or threatening behavior by patients, family members, visitors, employees, contractors, and any person entering a VHA workplace. These reports are entered into DBRS and include events of harassment and sexual assault. The WVPP at each facility reviews every report and conducts behavioral threat assessments to determine the best plan for either changing the sexual harassment or assault behaviors or developing protective interventions to minimize the impact of unchangeable behavior on those affected. WVPP and DBRS have successfully given VHA employees a voice in notifying threat management teams about sexual harassment and assault behaviors of concern as demonstrated by increased reporting in DBRS of sexual harassment and sexual assault incidents over time.

- In January 2024, VA's Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) developed an action plan and stand-down to ensure all employees are knowledgeable of VA sexual harassment and assault policies and leadership's commitment to fostering a safe, respectful workplace. This plan included the following activities:
 - Senior leadership communicated a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment through an email message to all employees and included channels for reporting wrongdoing.
 - Developed anti-harassment reporting and protection tip cards and displayed them prominently in office common areas.
 - Hosted an employee town hall featuring an Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection (OAWP) presentation on reporting wrongdoing, including sexual harassment and assault.
 - Senior leadership announced an open-door policy for any questions, concerns, or complaints, and emphasized that all reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
 - Hosted training for all supervisors using the Listen, Improve, Facilitate, and Transform strategy to improve communication. Leaders were encouraged to foster a psychologically safe environment where employees feel empowered to bring forward ideas and problems.
 - Revised OEI orientation briefing materials for new employees which emphasizes the zero-tolerance policy for harassment and includes avenues for reporting wrongdoing.
 - Invited all staff to attend swearing-in ceremonies for incoming executives, that included the reciting of the White Ribbon VA pledge to never commit, excuse, or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault, or domestic violence against others.

- VBA
 - VBA updated its supplemental policy, VBA Letter 20-24-02, Prevention and Elimination of Harassment/Assault in the Workplace, which includes a requirement that all VBA employee's complete instructor-led training. For new employees, this is required within 6 months of commencing employment with VBA and for all employees at least once every 24 months thereafter. The update added references to highlight VBA policy letter (20-23-05), Workplace Violence Prevention Policy, and how to address disruptive behavior/assault.
 - VBA Leadership collaborated with officials from the Office of General Counsel (OGC), OAWP, Human Resources, Reasonable Accommodation leaders, and other subject matter experts, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), to obtain expert guidance on harassment trends and handling of unusual cases.
 - VBA Leadership required the Collateral Duty HPCs at the respective regional offices and from VBA Central Office to attend newly developed quarterly HPC training ORM's VBA Liaison Team provided.
 - VBA HPCs received training and attended EEOC's Anti-Harassment Community of Practice meetings, where they shared best practices from HPP experts. One result was that the proverbial "firewall" between HPP and EEO functions was improved.
 - VBA leadership, in conjunction with VHA Workplace Violence Prevention experts, continued to require new employees to complete a course titled, "Prevention and Management of Disruptive Behavior" (VA Talent Management System (TMS) 4635162). The course provides specific scenarios for addressing multiple forms of escalating harassment and assault, including that of a sexual nature. In addition, it has been designed to teach VBA employees basic principles of workplace violence. All newly onboarded employees must complete this course within their first 90 days of service. Topics also included "Procedures for Workplace Violence Reporting" and "Procedures Regarding Sexual Assault Reporting." Participants use the information to prevent and reduce the severity of workplace violence incidents.
 - VBA posted HPP prevention promotional items in public-facing spaces, including harassment prevention pamphlets, informational cards linking a QR code to a reporting hotline, and an ORM website.
 - VBA public-facing websites and social media platforms continue to direct users to ORM's main webpage, which contains short videos discussing sexual and other forms of retaliation and harassment.

- VBA supported 2,417 women Veteran-focused outreach events, accounting for 3,366 hours of outreach.
 - VBA Customer Outreach VSignals surveys were used to evaluate event participants' experience, with scores of 4.7 out of 5 for trust, 4.8 out of 5 for ease, 4.7 out of 5 for effectiveness, and 4.8 out of 5 for the promoter score.
- VBA supported 2,873 Military Sexual Trauma (MST)-focused outreach events, accounting for 5,050 hours of outreach.
 - These events provided critical information on benefits and resources available to MST survivors and helped to lower barriers to accessing high-quality VA mental health care support.
 - VBA Customer Outreach VSignals surveys were used to evaluate event participants' experience, with scores of 4.7 out of 5 for trust, 4.8 out of 5 for ease, 4.8 out of 5 for effectiveness, and 4.8 out of 5 for the promoter score.
- VBA focused attention on employee training and development to ensure employees who interact with Veterans had the necessary information and skills to effectively support Veterans' inquiries across a variety of access channels.
- VBA's National Contact Center and Public Contact Team employees completed over 8,500 hours of training addressing harassment, sexual assault prevention, and MST.
- 3,618 VBA employees took the White Ribbon VA pledge.
- VBA hosted the 5th Annual VBA MST National Training Symposium in Nashville, Tennessee, from July 30-31, 2024.
 - The symposium serves as a forum for front-line workers and VA leaders to learn about and discuss best practices relating to a variety of MST-centric topics, thereby improving their ability to effectively serve MST survivors. The focus was to improve support for MST survivors through better claims processes, timeliness, quality, and outreach, the practice of self-care, and an increase in collaboration between the different stakeholders in the MST space.
 - Senior VBA officials, clinicians from VHA, claims processors, outreach staff, and other stakeholders led the 2-day event.

- VBA leadership, in response to high-visibility concerns within the enterprise, implemented a VBA-wide stand-down mandating that every single VBA employee, manager, and supervisor attend or watch ORM's recorded instructor-led, interactive training on Harassment Prevention, Bystander Intervention, and Sexual Assault. During FY 2024, the completion rate was 35,330 (more than 99% compliance rate).
- In FY 2024, 35,045 employees were assigned to complete the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Training; 34,987 employees were compliant equaling a 99.83% compliant rate. Compliance with the mandatory Harassment Prevention and Accountability Training was equally as high. Of the 35,132 assigned to complete the training; 34,738 employees completed the training resulting in a 98.88% compliance rate. For the other mandated EEO and Discrimination-Free Workplace Training for Executives, Managers and Supervisors, 3,270 VBA leaders were assigned the training, and 3,240 (99.08%) completed the training. This high level of compliance demonstrates leadership's care and commitment.
- VBA staff requested and received additional targeted training on Civility in the Workplace, Reasonable Accommodation, and Workers' Compensation.
- VBA reviewed the results from the All-Employee Survey to improve workplace civility and respect as follows:
 - Enhancing internal communication protocols to improve workplace civility and respect brought substantial progress resulting in improved clarity and efficiency. A needs assessment identified opportunities for strengthening internal messaging and procedures. The process involved analyzing existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), prioritizing updates, and developing a standardized template to ensure consistency.
 - SOPs and protocols were drafted, enhancing communication practices. Additionally, SharePoint sites were created to enhance visibility and maintain collaborative documentation and resources. Tiered Huddles were also created to address immediate issues and provide structured communication, which enabled efficient problem-solving, collaboration, and alignment across different levels within the organization. These initiatives addressed staff concerns and laid a strong foundation for more effective communication and streamlined processes going forward.
 - Conducted a comprehensive rewrite of performance standards, ensuring they align with the evolving roles and responsibilities of

analysts and strategists. A thorough evaluation was conducted to identify key areas for adjustment, pinpointing critical areas for realignment. Based on these insights, updated performance standards were drafted and tailored to address the identified needs. The finalized standards were effectively communicated and rolled out, providing analysts with clear and updated expectations. This initiative has strengthened the performance evaluation process, fostering a more transparent, consistent, and growth-oriented environment.

- VBA shares All-Employee Survey results with Directors, and, in turn, they develop action plans as needed based on the results. Also, each office complies with the Whistleblower Action Plan each year that fosters an environment in which employees are comfortable reporting concerns to supervisory employees or to other appropriate authorities, including ensuring that employees are apprised of their right to make protected disclosures to Congress, OAWP, OIG, and the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, without a fear of retaliation and understand that they do not need to make a protected disclosure through their supervisory chain.

- NCA

- NCA actively participates in the White Ribbon VA Campaign. In addition to serving on the national White Ribbon VA Steering Committee, NCA includes the White Ribbon VA pledge in new employee orientation and holds White Ribbon VA pledge ceremonies. NCA promoted the anti-harassment campaign during Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month by increasing communications via emails and signage.
- NCA successfully completed an HPP Compliance Review conducted by ORM to ensure compliance with Federal and agency policies pertaining to harassment prevention. This review focused on the mandatory requirements for an effective HPP Program and compliance with VA Directive/Handbook 5979.
- NCA also successfully implemented a VA-directed workplace harassment prevention standdown. This stand-down was a proactive approach to ensure that NCA employees understood VA's zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment. The stand-down entailed implementing an action plan, live and virtual training, reissuing policy statements, and updating signage NCA-wide.
- NCA is committed to being proactive in addressing sexual harassment. NCA has a Service Level Agreement with VA's ORM to conduct anti-

harassment, conflict management, workplace civility, and other similar trainings for employees and supervisors.

- In FY 2024, NCA was 99% compliant with training completions of the Harassment Prevention and Accountability Training (VA TMS 45224). This high compliance rate is a strong indicator of NCA's commitment to promoting a culture of respect and a harassment-free environment. The EEO, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Rights and Protections Policy Statement (VA TMS 4309852) were assigned to all VA employees in support of VA's total commitment to a workplace free of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. NCA is 98.8% compliant with this training requirement.
- Additionally, during FY 2024, training on harassment prevention and/or civility was included in several courses, including Advanced Supervisor Training, Cemetery Director Refresher Training, and Administrative Officer Training. A total of 237 employees attended one or more of these three training offerings. Attendees included NCA supervisors and personnel from state and Tribal cemeteries. Employees learned how to protect employees from harassment, how to create a safe and supportive work environment for all, and how to build a workplace culture of mutual respect.
- Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)
 - Tracks mandatory TMS prevention of harassment training for staff and has 100% compliance. OSDBU also distributes the EEO policy via email on a quarterly basis to staff.
 - Implemented sexual harassment and sexual assault programming initiatives resulting in no documented complaints.
- Board of Veterans' Appeals
 - Routinely joins in administering the White Ribbon VA Pledge when onboarding new employees, especially new Senior Executives and Veterans Law Judges during their swearing-in ceremonies.
 - Actively ensures required TMS trainings related to sexual assault and harassment are completed. Our compliance and completion rates for these trainings are above 95%.
- HRA/OSP
 - Initiated several Department-wide actions focused on prevention and raising awareness of harassment and sexual assault:

- Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down – Directed all VA Administrations and Staff Offices to complete a workplace harassment stand-down, ensuring employees understand and adhere to VA’s zero-tolerance policy for workplace harassment.
 - Review of current VA training – Convened a multidisciplinary team of subject matter experts to perform a comprehensive review of all VA’s formal training on sexual harassment, sexual assault, and bystander training.
 - Review of VA policies and guidance – Coordinated a comprehensive review of VA harassment prevention policies and guidance.
- As a result of the Department-wide actions, VA:
 - Certified completion of Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down plans for all Administrations and Staff Offices.
 - Completed a detailed assessment of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and bystander training content and delivery methods of training that will be used to maximize the effectiveness of VA’s training program.
 - Initiated updates to VA Directive and Handbook 5979 to clarify roles and responsibilities and improve policy for maintaining a workplace free from harassment and other forms of discrimination.
 - Developed and released the first-ever policy on Romantic and/or Sexual Interactions in the Workplace.
 - Updated the SOP for VA Police to address the specific handling of sexual assault evidence and procedures.
 - Issued new procedures for performing risk assessments that consider substantiated EEO findings and substantiated allegations of misconduct when taking personnel actions for Senior Executives.
 - Incorporated mandatory reporting requirements as a critical element in Senior Executives’ performance requirements, and developed procedures for reprimanding, suspending, involuntarily reassigning, demoting, or removing a Senior Executive if the Secretary, or designee, determines the employee’s performance or misconduct warrants such an action.

- Office of Acquisition, Logistics, and Construction (OALC)
 - Has a standard requirement for employees to complete VA's mandatory training for supervisors and employees to better educate the staff on what harassment looks like. There are also signs posted throughout various facilities concerning EEO, anti-harassment, and Whistleblower Protection Rights. OALC has also posted information on shared network drives and SharePoint sites along with our operating policies addressing zero tolerance for any form of bullying, harassment, or violence.
 - During the reporting period, all employees completed mandatory TMS training to comply with harassment, sexual assault program awareness, and reporting requirements along with completing three activities associated with OALC's Workplace Harassment Standdown:
 - During the March 2024 OALC Town Hall, ORM/HPP staff provided training,
 - Employees took the White Ribbon VA pledge commitment, and
 - All Senior Executives and managers completed signed attestations that all employees completed the activities.

- OAWP
 - In April 2024, leadership hosted a Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down. During which there were presentations from OGC and the Office of Employment Discrimination and Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA). Additionally, OAWP's Investigation Directorate provided lessons learned during a roundtable discussion on recent cases. OAWP employees were given specific education on reporting procedures for incidents of harassment and guidance on seeking assistance if needed. The stand-down culminated with all employees taking the White Ribbon VA pledge.
 - OAWP continues employee engagement initiatives, which included numerous improvements to disseminating information, keeping staff apprised, and recognizing our workforce. These initiatives included monthly employee newsletters and Communications Hub messages which remind employees of HPP, VA Discrimination Free Workplace initiatives, and applicable Program Office points of contact. The Communications Hub was also used for notifying employees about relevant VA resources, guidance, etc. OAWP ensures representation at related VA intra-agency workgroups, as appropriate. OAWP's investigative functions are responsible for investigating allegations of senior leader misconduct, which can include sexual harassment involving senior leaders for those

cases that are not within ORM, and responsible for recommendations for discipline when OEDCA or EEOC make findings of sexual harassment.

- Over the reporting period, OAWP has had zero reports of sexual assault or harassment. All OAWP employees have taken the White Ribbon VA pledge.
- Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCLA)
 - TMS courses, Workplace Harassment VA Central Office Campaign Implementation, White Ribbon VA pledge. 100% Completion of All Initiatives.
- OEI
 - Completed its sexual harassment and assault action plan and stand-down. All staff have received information about VA's zero-tolerance policy and avenues for reporting wrongdoing.
- OGC
 - OGC has identified an HPC per VA Directive 5979 and maintains a SharePoint site promoting the Harassment Prevention Coordinator, VA Directive 5979, VA Handbook 5957, and ORM's monthly Harassment Prevention Bulletin. This SharePoint site is promoted in OGC's quarterly newsletter which is sent to all OGC employees. In addition, from February to April 2024 OGC completed a workplace harassment stand-down. OGC's stand-down plan relied on messaging, supervisory training, and discussions with staff to ensure that every OGC employee fully understands that VA has zero tolerance for harassment, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. OGC completed all the substantive elements of its stand-down plan by April 30, 2024.
 - No quantitative results are available for the impact of OGC initiatives to prevent harassment. Zero incidents of sexual assault and one allegation of sexual harassment were reported in OGC between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024. The single report of sexual harassment was not substantiated.
- OIG
 - OIG did not have any additional updates to provide for this fiscal year.
- Office of Information and Technology (OIT)
 - OIT completed the following trainings during FY 2024:

- White Ribbon VA pledge is incorporated into OIT's new employee orientation.
 - OIT-wide Harassment Prevention Training.
 - OIT-wide mandatory Employee Engagement Call, topic: Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down.
 - Established and distributed an HPP Prevention Action Plan.
 - ORM HPP Training: Creating a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace for OIT Supervisors and Managers (Only) August 14, 2024.
 - Creating a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace for OIT Line Staff Employees (Only) August 15, 2024.
 - Harassment Prevention incorporated in OIT's New Supervisor Foundational Training.
 - Executive leadership reviewed and provided concurrence for the Cyber Harassment Employee Resource.
 - Established Supervisor Quick Click Training at a Glance on EEO and Harassment Complaint processes.
- Office of Management (OM)
 - OM ensures that all employees are assigned mandated training in accordance with legislation.
 - OM does not have additional programs or initiatives other than mandated training and Departmental initiatives.
 - Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA)
 - Throughout FY 2024, OPIA published blogs that addressed the corrosive nature and harmful effects of harassment and sexual assault on the workforce and Veterans.
 - OPIA conducted an organization-wide Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down on April 11, 2024. In addition to broadly addressing the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment, our stand-down focused particularly on two areas.

- OPIA conducted training for 63 assigned personnel (21 in person and 42 virtually). All employees took the White Ribbon VA pledge.
- Veterans Experience Office (VEO): Did not have any additional updates to provide for this fiscal year.
- Veteran Service Organization (VSO)
 - The VSO Liaison Office requires all staff to complete mandatory training on Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention, including Bystander Intervention training, and take the White Ribbon VA pledge. VSOs and non-profit Veteran communities also have access to the links for Bystander Intervention training to ensure all staff and stakeholders are well-trained on preventing sexual assault and harassment and have the appropriate tools to report this behavior to provide a safe space within VA facilities.
 - In addition to ensuring mandatory training is completed routinely and timely, the VSO Liaison Office partners with internal and external stakeholders to promote awareness. Examples of these partnerships include but are not limited to the following:
 - The 2024 VBA MST National Training Symposium included training on trauma-informed outreach, suicide prevention, MST claims processing, and an overview of incident reports and other additional evidence from the Department of Defense's (DoD) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.
 - The Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Workplace Harassment Prevention Stand-Down, afforded employees the opportunity to openly engage in dialogue with VA senior leadership and to receive training from OEDCA.
 - Membership on the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) Sexual Trauma Working Group, which provides VA and DoD senior leadership a forum for collaboration and resource sharing and works to remove barriers and challenges that impede collaborative efforts, assert and support mutually beneficial opportunities to improve business practices, ensure high-quality, cost-effective services for VA and DoD beneficiaries, and facilitate opportunities to improve resource utilization. Additionally, JEC recommends to the DoD and VA Secretaries the strategic direction for joint coordination and sharing efforts between the two Departments and overseeing the implementation of those efforts.

- Membership in VA's I~STAND, which focuses on building a culture of trust, respect, and dignity, supports and strengthens VA's commitment to preventing sexual assault and harassment within VA facilities.
 - Additionally, I~STAND provides support to those who have experienced sexual assault and harassment and empowers all who conduct business with VA to foster the I~STAND principles and build a culture of safety.
 - Participation in the Disabled American Veterans Capitol Hill lunch and learn event to explore pertinent topics of sexual assault and harassment prevention and the journey to mental wellness, supporting women Veterans' mental health, and preventing suicide through care.
 - Participation in DoD's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for a legislative webinar on sexual assault prevention, which provided state and local leaders with best practices to expand integrated prevention initiatives, improve climate and culture, support reforming the military justice process, and enhance victim assistance to include sexual assault and harassment prevention.
 - Participation in White Ribbon VA, which is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence across VA by promoting a positive change in culture so that the actions outlined in the pledge become the organizational norm.
- During the reporting period, all VSO Liaison Office staff completed the mandatory training via VA TMS to comply with sexual assault and harassment program awareness and reporting requirements.
 - Additionally, all members of VSO have taken the White Ribbon VA pledge, affirming their commitment to preventing sexual assault and harassment.

Results of Studies from Women's Health Practice-Based Research Network

VHA Women's Health Practice-Based Research Network (WH-PBRN) is one of three arms of VA's Women's Health Research Network (WHRN), funded by VA's Office of Research & Development to build research capacity to address critical knowledge gaps and use research to inform improvements in VA care for the rapidly growing population of women Veterans.

WH-PBRN's arm is a network of 76 VAMCs, partnering together to increase the inclusion of women Veterans in VA research. WHRN's other two arms include a national consortium of researchers focused on increasing the volume, diversity, and impacts of women Veterans' research and a Multilevel Stakeholder Engagement arm focused on the implementation of research into practice and engagement of women Veterans in research design. One study of harassment was completed in 2024 on Designing a Novel Post-Incident Intervention to Address Patient Harassment of Staff in VA Primary Care (VA HSR PPO 21-272).

In parallel, WH-PBRN continued to conduct surveys of women Veterans who use VA in WH-PBRN facilities in partnership with OWH and AHPO.

WH-PBRN has been conducting surveys of women Veterans who use VA in WH-PBRN facilities since 2017, providing time-trend data tracking the effects of VA's initiatives to prevent harassment of women Veterans on VA grounds and serially eliciting their experiences and perspectives. In 2023, Veterans were invited to participate to enable comparisons by sex to assess culture change efforts. During the reporting period, WH-PBRN analyzed results from 1,591 surveys from Veterans (among whom 775 were women Veterans) from 24 participating VAMCs collected from May-July 2023 and collected another wave of surveys from May-June 2024 (data analysis in process). The 2023 survey included questions about whether Veterans had experienced sexual harassment (e.g., catcalls, stares, gestures, stalking) and/or sex-based harassment at their VA facility (i.e., denigrating their Veteran status, service, or eligibility for VA care because of their sex).

Looking across time, the proportion of women Veterans who reported experiencing harassment at VA facilities was 25%, 22%, 18%, 15%, 13%, and 10% for years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively. The proportion who believed VA is working to address harassment was 52%, 57%, 59%, 61%, 61%, and 59%, respectively. Of those who reported sexual harassment in 2023, 80% said they had been harassed by male Veterans, 24% by male VA staff, and 8% by male volunteers (numbers add to more than 100% because respondents were invited to select all that applied). Of those who reported sexual harassment, 76% said VA staff did not see the harassment occur, 12% said VA staff saw but did not try to help, and 12% said VA staff saw and tried to help. Many women Veterans in 2023 reported feeling safe (89%) and welcome (87%) at VA. In the 2023 survey wave, the proportion of women who reported experiencing either type of harassment was higher than the proportion of men who reported experiencing either type of harassment at VA facilities in the past year (10.4% of women Veterans versus 1.5% of men Veterans).

In FY 2024, the Veteran feedback project collected 1,056 surveys from women Veterans across 21 VAMCs. Results for the 2024 survey wave will be available during the next reporting cycle. The WHRN Consortium has also established a national VA work group focused on harassment research, providing a forum for dissemination support and development of new research proposals. One of the work group co-chairs is a member of VA's Women's Healthcare Modernization Integrated Project Team, to

ensure communication of harassment research and evaluation results at the highest levels.

Description of Actions to Stop Harassment and Sexual Assault

Throughout the reporting period, VA prioritized harassment and sexual assault prevention across all Administrations and Staff Offices. Key actions were centered around mandatory training completion, policy reinforcement, facility compliance reviews, outreach, and awareness campaigns. The following summarizes notable activities:

1. Training & Compliance

- Mandatory TMS training on harassment prevention was completed Department wide.
- Stand-down events were conducted across Administrations and Staff Offices to reinforce VA's zero-tolerance policy.
- Supervisors received additional targeted training on intervention and reporting responsibilities.
- Compliance reviews were conducted at VA facilities to ensure alignment with VA Handbook and VA Directive 5979.

2. Program Development and Tools

- VA developed cyber harassment prevention materials in partnership with I~STAND.
- VHA enhanced use of the Facility Remediation Plan tool and created a working group to review its effectiveness.
- Employees and Veterans received the Harassment Prevention Resource Guide and Bystander Intervention Trainings.

3. Campaigns and Awareness

- As a Department, VA supported national campaigns like Denim Day, White Ribbon VA, and observances during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- Outreach included blogs, podcasts ("She Wears the Boots"), social media, and in-person events.
- Facilities implemented visual outreach materials (e.g., signage, trifolds, bookmarks) to educate and promote reporting resources.

4. Focus on Culture Change

- VHA's OWH spearheaded culture change efforts, including a competition on trauma-informed care and outreach to over 1,800 women Veterans via focus groups.
- Sessions on microaggressions and bystander intervention were held to address subtle and overt harassment.
- Collaboration with internal stakeholders (e.g., AHPO, Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program (IPVAP)) emphasized the intersection of harassment with intimate partner violence and trauma.

5. Senior Leadership Engagement

- Executives and senior leaders across departments led by example through pledges, policy briefings, and stand-down coordination.
- Performance standards included accountability measures tied to EEO and anti-harassment compliance.

These coordinated, Department-wide efforts reflect more than compliance. These efforts demonstrate VA's unwavering commitment to cultural transformation. By embedding accountability into leadership, equipping staff and Veterans with practical tools, and addressing both systemic and interpersonal behaviors, VA is not only preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault but actively fostering a culture of safety, dignity, and trust. These sustained actions signal a clear message: Harassment and assault have no place in VA whether it is online, in facilities, or in the community.

Detailed Description of the Implementation of VHA Sexual Assault Policy

P.L.116-315, Title V, § 5303 (codified at 38 U.S.C. § 533) builds on P.L. 112-154 § 106, which required VA to develop a policy regarding reporting and tracking sexual assault incidents and other safety incidents. VHA Directive 5019.02 (Harassment, Sexual Assaults, and Other Defined Public Safety Incidents in Veterans Health Administration) replaces VHA Directive 2012-026 (Sexual Assaults and Other Defined Public Safety Incidents in VHA Facilities) dated September 27, 2012. Additionally, selected content specifically relevant to general workplace violence prevention has been consolidated and published in VHA Directive 1160.08(1), VHA Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

VHA Law Enforcement Services has taken a multifaceted approach to make improvements to their crime prevention strategy. In early FY 2021, the total approved full-time employee equivalent for VA Police Officers (0083 series) was 4,586. This number has increased significantly to 5,854, adding 1,268 new police officer positions as of September of 2023. These increases significantly improve our visual presence in

VAMCs as well as larger outpatient clinics and community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC).

The Prevention and Management of Disruptive Behavior (PMDB) program is an employee education curriculum that includes courses on verbal de-escalation, personal safety, therapeutic containment, and sexual assault prevention, as well as an online program through VA's TMS. This program has multiple levels of training based on the type and frequency of behavioral risk exposure in work settings. PMDB is ideally suited to meet the training requirements of the P.L. 112-154, section 106, and VHA Directive 1160.08(1). VHA aligns the assignment of mandatory PMDB training with data from VHA's annual Workplace Behavioral Risk Assessment (WBRA) to ensure VHA employees are trained to address situations they are most likely to encounter at their duty locations.

VHA Directive 5019.02 requires VHA facilities to assess the use and regular testing of additional physical security precautions and equipment. Each VISN is required to evaluate the need for surveillance equipment and to use risk assessments to identify and address gaps. In addition, VA uses integrated project teams to improve construction designs to ensure that security needs are incorporated into those designs.

VHA Directive 1198, Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program, states that the facility based IPVAP Coordinator must, at a minimum, be an ad hoc member of the Disruptive Behavior, Employee Threat Assessment, and Sexual Assault Response teams. IPVAP encourages all facility-based IPVAP Coordinators to collaborate and coordinate with their local WVPP/DBP and Employee Threat Assessment Team programs to offer consultation and support when violence involves intimate partners.

Ensuring the Collaboration of VHA Program Offices and the Senior Security Officer (SSO) in the Implementation of VHA Directive 5019.02

The following VHA Program Offices continue to collaborate with VHA's SSO: Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Nursing Services, Occupational Safety, VHA Institute for Learning, Education, and Development, Workforce Management and Consulting, and AHPO.

During this reporting cycle, VHA's SSO continued collaboration with VHA WVPP to continue implementing a WVPP that provides and improves essential employee training, public safety event reporting systems, and multidisciplinary assessment and management services across VHA, VBA, and NCA. A full suite of welcoming and human-centered design-informed materials is available for facilities across the Administrations to deploy to promote a culture of safety and respect for all persons.

Providing Oversight to the VISNs to Ensure Implementation of VHA Directive 5019.02 to include the following:

VA ensures that Vet Centers implement, utilize, and regularly test appropriate physical security precautions and equipment to include, as appropriate: security surveillance television, computer-based panic alarm systems, stationary panic alarms, electronic personal panic alarms, and other equipment as determined by local risk assessment.

All Vet Centers are required to maintain appropriate physical security systems and complete annual fire and safety inspections. Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) ensures that Vet Center facilities have appropriate panic alarm systems and that appropriate panic alarm systems are included in each new or renewed Vet Center security contract.

VA requires reporting actual or possible criminal violations related to RCS programs, operations, facilities, and employees to a supervisor, management official, or OIG. Any such violation must be reported to VA Police or to the appropriate Federal, state, or local law enforcement officials.

Each VHA facility is required to submit an annual WBRA.

The Effectiveness of VHA Directive 5019.02 on Improving the Safety and Security of the Medical Facilities of the Department

VHA Directive 2012-026 established a unified policy describing the management of all individuals in VHA facilities whose behavior has, or could, jeopardize the health or safety of others, undermine a culture of safety in VHA, or otherwise interfere with the delivery of health care at the facility. It implemented the provisions of P.L. 112-154 § 106, by ensuring that behaviors that undermine a safe and healing environment are appropriately reported, addressed, and monitored.

As established under VHA Directive 2012-026 and continued under VHA Directive 5019.02, VHA assesses the use and regular testing of additional physical security precautions and equipment. Each VISN is required to evaluate the need for surveillance equipment and to use risk assessments to identify and address gaps. In addition, VA uses integrated project teams to improve construction designs to ensure that security needs are incorporated into those designs.

VA Police have adopted and begun using the Modified Infrastructure Survey Tool to improve VHA's process for Vulnerability Assessments of VHA facilities. The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Protective Service created this tool which provides a standardized, enterprise-wide approach to assess internal and external vulnerabilities, identify areas where physical security interventions can be improved, and track the life cycle planning of security technology. Since the beginning of FY 2021, VA Police have completed Facility Security Assessments of 5,554 VA buildings and facilities which include medical centers, CBOCs, and Health Care Centers. VA Police have also made

improvements to our Criminal Investigator occupational series (1811). Since FY 2021, 65 investigators have completed the 12-week Criminal Investigator Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. This training is the gold standard for criminal investigation operations and better prepares VA Police to investigate and manage more complex criminal investigations.

VHA Directive 5019.02 takes a comprehensive and proactive approach to addressing harassment and sexual assault in VHA facilities. It provides mandatory procedures and processes necessary to address, prevent, and report all allegations of harassment and sexual assault in VA medical facilities. The policy enhances procedures related to managing sexually based incidents related to Veterans at VA facilities.

Assessment of Department-Wide Mandatory Training Initiatives

Across VA, mandatory training initiatives related to harassment prevention and workplace conduct are implemented and monitored through TMS. These trainings ensure compliance with federal requirements and support a respectful, safe, and accountable work environment.

Key Training Areas and Compliance Highlights

- Harassment Prevention and Accountability Training and No FEAR Act Training are mandatory for all employees. Department-wide, completion rates consistently exceed 95%, reflecting a strong commitment to workplace integrity and equal opportunity standards.
- Action plans to improve and maintain compliance include:
 - Regular training compliance audits,
 - Inclusion of training status in performance reviews, and
 - Frequent communication through staff meetings and leadership engagement.
- PMDB and related curricula equip employees with skills to de-escalate high-risk situations and prevent workplace violence. Completion rates for such programs are above 90%.
- Targeted initiatives such as harassment prevention stand-down events and sexual harassment training further support cultural change and awareness across the workforce.
- automated notifications, supervisory reminders, and TMS tracking are used to actively manage mandatory training assignments. Senior leaders receive regular compliance updates to ensure accountability at all levels.

Training Implementation Practices

- Performance standards often include language on training completion responsibilities.
- Supervisors are tasked with monitoring compliance within their teams and ensuring timely completion.
- Internal audits and reporting tools are used to maintain high levels of training completion and identify areas for follow-up.

VA will continue to prioritize mandatory training related to harassment prevention and workplace conduct, demonstrating consistent, Department-wide engagement and compliance. These efforts not only meet statutory requirements but also support VA's broader mission to foster a safe and respectful work environment for all employees.

Resources Necessary to Prevent Harassment and Sexual Assault at VA Facilities

- VHA
 - While Axon RMS may meet the P.L. 112-154 requirement for a centralized reporting, tracking, and monitoring system for sexual assault and other safety incidents, VA Police do not process harassment, including sexual harassment, cases since these incidents are not criminal offense. These incidents are routed to the appropriate Program Office or service line and recorded in a myriad of reporting departments with their own databases, thus, making it difficult to identify patterns, track trends, and assess the effectiveness of prevention efforts. A centralized platform would consolidate data from various sources, creating a comprehensive picture of the issue. This enhanced visibility would enable stakeholders to identify high-risk areas, target resources effectively, and develop evidence-based prevention strategies. Furthermore, a unified database would improve accountability, streamline reporting processes, and ensure consistency in data quality, ultimately strengthening efforts to combat and eliminate these incidents across VA. VHA is recommending an evaluation and analysis of the current reporting systems across VHA for the feasibility of organizing in a centralized system and exploring opportunities to enhance reporting. A centralized platform to consolidate data from various sources and create a comprehensive picture. This enhanced visibility would enable stakeholders to identify high-risk areas, target resources effectively, and develop evidence-based prevention strategies. Furthermore, a unified database would improve accountability, streamline reporting processes, and ensure consistency in data quality, ultimately strengthening efforts to combat and eliminate these incidents across VA. VHA is recommending an evaluation and analysis of the current reporting systems across VHA

for the feasibility of organizing in a centralized system and exploring opportunities to enhance reporting.

- VBA
 - To proactively address and prevent harassment and sexual assault within VBA both in-person and virtually, VBA personnel recommended the following:
 - Offer staff and constituents additional training that include post-training quizzes to ensure knowledge is retained.
 - Establish a requirement for all VBA employees, interns, or contractors to complete approved Bystander Intervention training to empower employees to take steps to address harassing conduct in person or virtually as part of new employee orientation and onboarding.
 - Ensure all VBA staff have access to annual Civility and Respectful Workplace training and additional free online courses.
 - Survey all Regional Office Directors and Service Line Chiefs to ensure they are subscribed to the monthly Harassment Prevention Bulletin.
 - Create additional technology for easier reporting of harassment and/or assault. This may include developing a new secure online platform and mobile application for submitting text-based complaints, or voice complaints with auto-transcription and distribution to appropriate ORM staff for review to ensure compliance with VA Directive 5979 and the timeframes therein for processing (30 business days).
 - Ensure reporting systems allow for anonymous submissions and includes an option for two-way masked communication, to maintain anonymity while allowing follow-up questions.
 - Offer multiple language options to accommodate VA employees who are overseas.
 - Develop methods to enhance leadership accountability ensuring consistent implementation of standards to evaluate VBA leadership's response to harassment complaints.

- HRA/OSP: To proactively address and prevent harassment and sexual assault, HRA/OSP recommended additional staff to serve as HPP coordinators.
- NCA, OSDBU, BVA, OALC, OAWP, OCLA, OEI, OIT, OGC, OIG, OM, OPIA, VEO, and VSO did not have any additional resources request for this fiscal year.

Department of Veterans Affairs
May 2025