



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

June 2022

VA Celebrates Pride Month

VA celebrates Pride Month by serving all who served. The “Pride Counts at VA” campaign continues VA’s initiative to inform Veterans that they can disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity within our national health record systems. Veterans can choose from several identity options or choose not to reveal them at this time.

Veterans can also choose from several sexual orientation identity options or choose not to disclose. Gender identity and sexual orientation are essential aspects of self that affect exposure to stress and health behavior.

VA health records now display gender identity and preferred name so VA staff can address the Veteran appropriately. Coming soon, you will also be able to modify your sexual orientation identity, too.

You can reach out to your medical facility’s eligibility and enrollment office or LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator to get started and update your record.

If you are among the one million Veterans who identify as LGBTQ+, VA wants you to know that they see you, hear you, respect you and appreciate your service. VA understands that many of you have felt pressure to hide your identities, have faced stigma, or felt unsafe when you came out.

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“When all Americans are treated as equal, no matter who they are or whom they love, we are all more free”

- President Barack Obama



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While coming out is a personal choice, being open and honest about your sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual practices with your provider is essential to patient-centered health care. Know that conversations and the information you share with your VA provider are confidential.

VA's commitment is to delivering care that fits the individual needs of Veterans enrolled in VA health care, including transgender and gender-diverse Veterans. VA is dedicated to promoting diversity, equality and inclusion. This Pride Month, VA wants you to know that your pride counts.

In the fact sheets below, learn more about health risks and why you should talk to your provider about your sexual orientation, birth sex, and self-identified gender identity.

- [Trans Men and Masculine of Center \(MOC\) Veteran Health Care](#)
- [Trans Women and Transfeminine Veteran Health Care](#)
- [Gay, Bisexual, and Queer Veteran Health Care](#)
- [Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Veteran Health Care](#)
- [Nonbinary Veteran Health Care](#)
- [Veteran-Birth Sex and Self-Identified Gender Identity](#)
- [Provider-Birth Sex and Self-Identified Gender Identity](#)

We invite you to check out the [Subscribe to our LGBTQ+ Health Program email list](#) and never miss an update.

You can also [find your local facility's LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator](#) or visit the [Patient Care Services LGBTQ+ Health Program office](#) website for more information on available health care services, online training, policies, research and resources.

A graphic with the text "PRIDE MONTH 2022" in large, colorful, block letters. The letters are filled with a rainbow gradient. Above and below the text are horizontal bars with a rainbow gradient.

Pride Month 2022

Every year, during the month of June, the LGBTQ+ community celebrates in a number of different ways. Across the globe, various events are held during this special month as a way of recognizing the influence LGBTQ+ people have had around the world. Why was June chosen? Because it is when the Stonewall Riots took place, back in 1969.

As well as being a month long celebration, Pride month is also an opportunity to peacefully protest and raise political awareness of current issues facing the community. Parades are a prominent feature of Pride month, and there are many street parties, community events, poetry readings, public speaking, street festivals and educational sessions all of which are covered by mainstream media and attracting millions of participants.

Pride Month is so important because it marks the start of huge change within the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the wider societal implications. Although attitudes and injustice still remain, we have come a long way since the riots of 1969 and by continuing in this long standing tradition we continue to raise awareness, improve the attitudes of society and encourage inclusiveness.

Known as the "Mother of Pride", it was Brenda Howard who coordinated the first LGBT Pride march. As well as sparking the idea for a week of events around Pride Day. These events then developed into the annual LGBT celebrations held every June.

PTSD Screening Day: Knowing is the first step

On June 27, 2022, the National Center for PTSD is launching National PTSD Screening Day, encouraging Veterans and others who experienced trauma to start the conversation about recovery. Learning whether you have symptoms that might be PTSD is an important step to getting the treatment you deserve.

PTSD is a mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident or sexual assault. While most people experience trauma, not all of them develop PTSD.

After a trauma, it's common to relive the traumatic event, avoid reminders of it, have more negative thoughts and feelings, or feel on edge or on the lookout for danger.

People who experience these symptoms longer than a month may have PTSD. While the only way to know for sure is to talk to a professional, like a primary care doctor or mental health care provider, there are self-screen questionnaires for PTSD.

A PTSD screen, or screening questionnaire, is a short set of questions. The screen helps you understand if your feelings and behaviors are related to PTSD. One screening questionnaire is the [Primary Care PTSD Checklist, or PC-PTSD-5](#). The PC-PTSD-5 is only five questions. After confirming you experienced a serious trauma, it asks how that event may have affected the way you've felt or acted in the past month.

After taking the PC-PTSD-5, you add up your "yes" answers. If your score is three or more, you may have PTSD. The next step is to schedule an appointment to speak with a health care provider. If you answered yes to one or two questions, and are bothered by your symptoms, you can still make an appointment. A health care provider can help you make a plan to manage the things that continue to bother you since the trauma.

While June 27th is PTSD Screening Day, the PTSD self-screen is always available, so you don't need to wait. If the results of your screen suggest you may have PTSD, you'll need [to find a mental health care provider](#). There are [Veteran-specific services](#) at every VA Medical Center. And if you're not sure how to start the conversation with a provider, you can tell them you completed a PTSD screen or take a copy with you.

If you're not ready to reach out to a provider, there are resources that can help you learn more. The [Understanding PTSD and PTSD Treatment booklet](#) is a good place to start. You can also hear from Veterans who turned their lives around with PTSD treatment at [AboutFace](#). The Veterans who share their stories on the site have been there.

Maybe you are concerned about a family member or friend. If you've noticed symptoms of PTSD or a change in behavior, you can encourage them to screen for PTSD or support them as they go through treatment for PTSD. The [Understanding PTSD: A Guide for Family and Friends](#) booklet may be helpful.

No matter what type of trauma you experienced or when you experienced that trauma, treatment can help. If you think you're experiencing symptoms of PTSD, take the [self-screen](#) and reach out to a provider today.

Visit the National Center for PTSD's [website](#) to learn more about PTSD treatment, [PTSD Awareness Month](#), and [PTSD Screening Day](#).

Upcoming Event

Sunday, July 3 ★ 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Military & Veterans Family Day

at the Milwaukee County Zoo

Enjoy **FREE** Zoo admission and parking.

- ★ Admission tickets will be available from May 31 to July 1. Active military and veterans residing in Wisconsin can pick up tickets at their local County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). Contact your local CVSO for details on ticket pick up.
- ★ Don't miss the Veterans Benefit Expo in the U.S. Bank Gathering Place from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. A one-stop-shop where veterans can learn about getting the benefits they deserve. Presented by the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office, including Hero Hut.

Important Information: Tickets are required for entry and available for immediate family only. Limit 10 tickets per family. Keep in mind that tickets are limited and will be distributed on a first come first serve basis. Please only obtain tickets if you are sure you will be visiting the Zoo on July 3.



Milwaukee County Zoo
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Visit us on the web at:

www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans



www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCVSO

For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar](#) !