



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON**

November 25, 2025

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your June 12, 2025, letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of War seeking information about Service members with gender dysphoria transitioning to Veteran status.

Connection to VA for all Service members begins before they depart from active duty. As such, the mandatory VA Benefits and Services course, which is part of the Transition Assistance Program, explains the many benefits and services for which Service members may be eligible. This includes demonstrating how to navigate VA and providing customizable tools and resources needed to navigate the transition, maintain whole health, and identify support and career readiness benefits, as well as establish housing and community resources.

Connection and outreach efforts continue post separation through VA's Solid Start (VASS) program. VA contacts all recently separated Service members by phone during their first year of transition from the military at three key stages (0-90, 91-180, and 181-365 days post release from active duty). VASS aims to increase the likelihood that recently separated Service members will connect to VA earlier and utilize VA benefits and services, to include mental health resources, when needed. Specially trained VA representatives address issues or challenges identified by the recently separated Service member during the call and assist with accessing benefits and services, health care, mental health care, housing assistance, education, and employment opportunities. After each successful connection, the individual receives a comprehensive follow-up email from the VASS representative, providing information on all issues discussed and connections for additional support and assistance.

VA continues outreach and connection throughout a Veteran's lifetime. VA utilizes various outreach strategies such as webinars and symposiums, VA's official website (www.va.gov), and partnering with Veterans Service Organizations to ensure Veterans, Service members, and family members are aware of VA benefits, services, and resources.

VA has a formal and longstanding partnership with the Department of War (DoW) to seamlessly transition Service members into VA health care. VA Liaisons for Healthcare and Post-9/11 Military2VA (M2VA) teams work closely with transitioning Service members (TSM) to coordinate health care into VA and connect TSMs to community resources.

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As set forth in VHA Notice 2025-01(1) and as noted in a March 17, 2025, press release, Veterans who have a current diagnosis or history of, or exhibit symptoms consistent with gender dysphoria, will receive hormone therapy only if:

- Such Veterans were already receiving such care from VA as of March 17, 2025; or
- Such care was provided as part of and upon separation from military service, if otherwise qualified for VA health care.

VA accepts and considers any supporting evidence submitted by the Veteran, such as medical health records from both Federal facilities and private medical centers. This includes Service members' military treatment records and personnel records. As stated in the VHA Notice, Veterans who do not meet the criteria above are not eligible for hormone therapy through VA health care, and VA does not provide any other medical or surgical therapy for gender dysphoria.

In regard to the impact of JFF, JDK, and reenlistment eligibility (RE)-3 codes on VA disability compensation and education benefits, these codes are DoW separation codes and VA does not use these codes for eligibility determinations. GI Bill education benefits require an honorable discharge for eligibility.

For health care eligibility, RE codes do not determine VA health care eligibility. A Veteran with an RE-3 code could still be eligible for VA health care if the discharge characterization and statutory rules allow. Veterans discharged under JDK are eligible for VA health care benefits, but they must meet the specific length-of-service requirements. Veterans with JFF separations are health care eligible, assuming no statutory bars apply, such as discharges under dishonorable conditions.

Veterans' Preference in Federal employment is determined by dates and character of service as defined in 5 U.S.C. § 2108 and 5 C.F.R. Part 211.

In rendering security clearance determinations, VA applies the National Security Adjudicative Guidelines, found in Security Executive Agent Directive 4. Therefore, VA must defer questions about whether discharges undertaken pursuant to Executive Order 14183 and other related issuances will impact security clearance determinations to the Security Executive Agency within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Thank you for your continued support of the Nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Collins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Douglas A. Collins

Cc: The Honorable Jerry Moran