



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR BENEFITS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20420

APR - 2 2013

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Pingree:

This letter is in response to your concern that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) places female Veterans at a disadvantage compared to male Veterans when evaluating certain sexual dysfunction conditions secondary to posttraumatic stress disorder caused by military sexual trauma. You note that VA has no diagnostic code for female sexual arousal disorder (FSAD) but may service connect male Veterans for erectile dysfunction (ED).

The current VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (rating schedule) provides for a separate evaluation for ED if it is the result of an organic or physiologic disorder, specifically, for penile deformity "with loss of erectile power" (see 38 CFR § 4.115b, diagnostic code 7522). Congress has also provided special monthly compensation (SMC) for ED when it constitutes the loss of use of a creative organ (38 U.S.C. § 1114(k)). VA may also grant SMC to women for the loss of breast tissue, radiation treatment of breast tissue, or the loss of an ovary.

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is working with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) women's health and mental health experts to clarify the clinical picture presented by FSAD. VBA and VHA are also working together to revise the sections of the rating schedule pertaining to the genitourinary system and gynecological conditions. As part of the upcoming revisions, VBA is considering how best to address the issue of FSAD, such as through the creation of a distinct diagnostic code in the rating schedule or by establishing entitlement to SMC if the disorder rises to the level of loss of use of a creative organ. VA is committed to ensuring gender parity in the rating schedule and will examine this issue closely.

I hope that this information is helpful and thank you for your dedication to our Nation's Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison A. Hickey", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Allison A. Hickey



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Puget Sound Health Care System
1660 South Columbian Way Seattle, WA 98108-1597

In Reply Refer To: S-182-GRECC

March 20, 2013

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-1901

We are pleased to enclose a copy of the special edition of the "Forum on Aging" from the VA's Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECCs). It highlights clinical advances in geriatrics, and will be of interest to anyone who provides care to older Veterans.

We anticipate that these projects can be productively exported to other clinical settings in the VA. If you are interested in learning more about any of them, please contact the individuals whose email addresses are listed in each article.

We hope that you will share this newsletter with any interested parties.

If you would like additional copies, please contact Julie Moorer (julie.moorer@va.gov).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debby Tsuang".

Debby Tsuang, MD, MSc
GRECC Director