

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Establishing the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care.

WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the projected veterans population nationwide is approximately 23,000,000 with women making up an estimated 10% of that population; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs estimates the percentage of female veterans between 2010 and 2040 will increase from approximately 9% in 2010 to approximately 18% in 2040; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as of September 2012, this Commonwealth was home to approximately 981,000 veterans, including 719,000 wartime veterans from World War II through the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Females comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime veterans; and

WHEREAS, The number of women veterans will increase with the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Women veterans often face unique challenges in transitioning from active duty to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, The challenging needs facing women veterans can often be overlooked in providing services to such a large veteran population; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring the availability of specialized services for physical and mental health, including treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma and alcohol and substance abuse tailored to the specific needs of women veterans is essential if the

Commonwealth wants to ensure that our returning veterans receive proper care; and

WHEREAS, Establishing a task force to study the issues facing women veterans and to make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly will provide much needed information and insight from those who address the issues on a daily basis; therefore be it

RESOLVED (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care be established; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care consist of 17 members who shall be appointed as follows within 25 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:

(1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the President pro tempore and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

(2) Two members of the House of Representatives, one appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) Thirteen members appointed by the Governor as follows:

(i) the Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs of the Pennsylvania National Guard;

(ii) the Secretary of Health;

(iii) the Secretary of Public Welfare;

(iv) the Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs;

(v) four women veterans who are residents of this Commonwealth;

(vi) a representative from the health care provider community in this Commonwealth who has experience in providing health care to returning women veterans;

(vii) a representative from the Commonwealth's mental health care provider community with experience in providing mental health care treatment to returning women veterans;

(viii) a representative from the Commonwealth's substance abuse and addiction treatment provider community with experience in providing substance abuse and addiction treatment to returning women veterans;

(ix) a representative from a Commonwealth advocacy group that represents the interests of sexual assault victims with experience in providing services to women veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma, including harassment or abuse; and

(x) the chairman of the State Veterans' Commission;  
and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care study the health care needs of women veterans, including, but not limited to:

(1) quality of and access to mental health services, including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury;

(2) in-patient treatment availability;

(3) adequacy and availability of appropriate women veterans' health care within the Federal health care system and this Commonwealth; and

(4) adequacy, quality of and access to services

providing for the identification and treatment of military sexual trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse;  
and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care identify other needs relating to the provisions of women veterans' health care services and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor to address those needs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care consult with Federal, State and local entities in completing its study, including:

- (1) The Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation.
- (2) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (3) The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.
- (4) The Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities.
- (5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society.
- (6) The Hospital Association of Pennsylvania.
- (7) Veterans organizations or other organizations or associations that advocate for women veterans;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care elect one of its members to serve as chairperson; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care conduct its business as follows:

- (1) The physical presence of nine members constitutes a quorum of the task force.

(2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or ratified by a majority vote of its members.

(3) A member not physically present may participate by teleconference or video conference.

(4) The following shall apply:

(i) The task force shall meet as necessary, but no fewer than five times prior to November 30, 2014.

Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as necessary.

(ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon written request of eight members of the task force.

(iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45 days of the adoption of this resolution by both chambers at a time and place established by the Governor.

(iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as necessary to obtain the information required to conduct its review.

(v) Members shall not receive compensation but shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in service of the task force;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Department of Health and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs provide staff support to the task force; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, upon request of the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care, a State agency assist the task force in the completion of its duties, including, to the extent permitted by law, relating to confidentiality to furnish information and advice to members of the task force necessary to perform their

duties; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care have the following powers:

(1) To examine and analyze the current delivery of health care services to women veterans at the Federal and State level.

(2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and rules relating to delivery of health care services to women veterans.

(3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony and the requesting of documents.

(4) To administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses appearing before the task force at the request of the chairperson;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care have the following duties:

(1) To accept and review written comments from individuals and organizations.

(2) To make, by November 30, 2014, a final report to the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(3) To include in the report under paragraph (2) recommendations based on its review:

(i) To improve the delivery of health care services to women veterans.

(ii) To implement any necessary changes in State statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating to the delivery of health care services to women veterans.

(4) To make reports as follows:

(i) The task force may file status reports and updates with the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives as it deems appropriate.

(ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted at a public meeting.

(iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care expire April 30, 2015.