

## Wounded Warrior Project Testifies in Support of Survivors of Military Sexual Trauma



*Photo by Sgt. Brandon Banzhaf - DVIDShub.net*

**WASHINGTON, DC** (Nov. 17, 2021) – [In Congressional testimony today](#), Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Vice President for Connection & Wellness Tracy Farrell drew upon her 22 years as a leader in the U.S. Army and [WWP’s Women Warriors Initiative Report](#) to make specific recommendations for how the Department of Veterans Affairs can improve care and benefits for MST survivors.

Farrell told members of two U.S. House Veterans’ Affairs subcommittees that more needs to be done to support survivors of military sexual trauma (MST). Specifically, Farrell said

WWP supports the Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) integrating more mental-health care into the MST claims process.

“When submitting an MST-related disability claim, survivors are required to share the details of their traumatic experiences, often time and time again throughout the process,” Farrell said. “VBA should anticipate these challenges and build in processes and resources to support MST survivors during stressful moments, like compensation and pension exams and appeals hearings.”

Farrell also offered recommendations to improve access to health care for MST survivors, advocating for efforts to foster more inclusive, comfortable VA facilities.

“Some MST survivors are reluctant to seek care at VA medical facilities for fear of harassment or general discomfort in male-dominated spaces,” Farrell testified. “For women MST survivors, we encourage the expansion of women’s health clinics into VA medical centers.

“We also recognize telehealth as a valuable alternative. We strongly encourage continued investment in the infrastructure to support its delivery, as well as research to identify the most effective treatment approaches and target populations.”

In addition, Farrell stressed the need for greater consistency, accuracy, and quality of the VBA claims process. “Just a few months ago, VA’s inspector general reported that more than half of denied claims related to MST contained processing errors that may have triggered premature denials. We strongly recommend increased, more consistent training for VBA employees and contracted examiners.”

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**About Wounded Warrior Project**

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition. [Learn more.](#)

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