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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov) | | December 2, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller Holds Nevada VA Hospitals Accountable to Women Veterans**  *Following GAO Report on the VA’s care for women veterans, Heller ensures Nevada’s VA hospitals are doing their part.*  **(Washington, DC)** – Earlier today, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a [report](http://www.gao.gov/prerelease/pHDn) co-requested by Senator Heller that assesses the VA’s care for women veterans. Heller has been one of the strongest advocates in the Senate and on the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee for ensuring that America’s growing population of female veterans receive quality VA health care specific to their needs.  In response to this report, Senator Heller issued the following statement:  **“As a member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I have worked closely with local VA hospitals to ensure quality service and care are provided for Nevada’s veterans. That is why I’ve written each VA Medical Center Director serving Nevada’s veterans asking specific questions about how these hospitals work to uphold the privacy, safety, and dignity of women veterans based on the concerns raised in this GAO report. While Nevada’s facilities were not examined for compliance, I expect the highest standard of care and will hold these facilities accountable to that exact standard,”** said Senator Heller.  Click on the links below to read:  Senator Heller’s [letter](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/722e3533-ed65-4659-9179-f5321f24f3dd/Letter%20to%20Director%20Lisa%20Howard%20(Reno%20VAMC)%20on%20women%20GAO%20report%2012.1.16.pdf) to the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System in Reno.  Senator Heller’s [letter](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/e3e53cc1-b1ab-4acb-9e5b-baa8f4b36e17/Letter%20to%20Director%20Peggy%20Kearns%20(LV%20VAMC)%20on%20women%20GAO%20report%2012.1.16.pdf) to the Southern Nevada Health Care System in North Las Vegas.  Senator Heller’s [letter](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/ba823152-2543-4446-858a-378bbca04181/Letter%20to%20Director%20Shella%20Stovall%20(SLC%20VAMC)%20on%20women%20GAO%20report%2012.1.16.pdf) to the Salt Lake City Health Care System in Salt Lake City, Utah.  **GAO Report Summary:**  The GAO report found that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) did not have accurate data on whether its medical centers comply with environment of care standards for women veterans, which includes ensuring the privacy, safety, and dignity of these patients visiting the VA facility. The GAO report also found that some of the VA medical facilities were not in compliance with these standards. Furthermore, the report shows that about 27 percent of VA medical centers lack an on-site gynecologist, and Senator Heller has been fighting for every VA medical center to have a GYN through his legislation, the [Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act (S.471)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/471?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22S.+471%22%5D%7D&r=1).  **Background on Heller’s Advocacy for Women Veterans:**   * [Filed and secured passage](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=37BD7C42-FDB3-4EB6-BACC-9AFC1E260F90) of an amendment (SA #456 to S.ConRes.11) to ensure VA medical facilities properly meet the needs of women veterans by taking into account their safety, privacy, and dignity. * [Sent](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/d56885a0-667e-4831-a264-268e7d4ea76d/Letter%20to%20Vets%20Committee%20re%20Women%20Vets%20Hearing%202.27.15.pdf) a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee requesting a hearing to assess the VA’s efforts to care for women veterans and returning female service members. * [Introduced](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=3EDF4CBE-8E98-45E6-8472-3530376F3F18) bipartisan legislation with Senator Murray, the Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act (S.471), to ensure the VA meets the health care needs of female veterans. * Included a provision in S.471 requiring the GAO to report on the VA’s care for women veterans. * [Questions](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/videos?ID=341E746B-060B-4D43-A9C9-4422E66C8171) the VA at a Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearing about the importance of women’s clinics at VA hospitals. * [Discusses](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9MBSvpxIu0) at a Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearing the needs of Nevada’s women veterans with a member of the Nevada Women Veterans Advisory Committee, Dr. Anne Davis. * [Files](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=B9B43D4E-EBED-4820-81EC-4565E95D50A3) the Ensuring Women Veterans Access to Care Amendment to the 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act to ensure every VAMC has a full-time gynecologist to meet women’s health needs.   ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |