

**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON**

August 18, 2017

**A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

It is my great honor to welcome you all to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) 2017 National Women Veterans Summit.

As we come together to honor the service of all women Veterans, and your fundamental sense of duty and courage to represent this country, let us renew our commitment to working together to improve how VA and the community at large address your evolving needs. You deserve the best care and services VA can provide, and that is why we are working hard to fully integrate services for our women Veterans.

The Summit is an important step in examining resources and brainstorming solutions that can help VA prepare to better serve our women Veterans—now and in the future. Bringing together over 800 Veterans, community leaders, and government agencies, the Summit is designed to facilitate resolution to persistent challenges in the most comprehensive and effective ways that can meet the unique needs of our women Veterans. Those challenges include health care inequities, military sexual trauma, homelessness, addiction, mental health, and unemployment. The Summit also provides opportunities for meaningful discussions, and it is my hope that these conversations lead to big ideas and implementation plans that will ultimately improve VA care and services.

Today, women make up approximately 2 million of our 22 million Veterans population, and they are expected to grow from 9.6 percent of the Veterans population to almost 11 percent by 2020. Those estimates make it clear that we must be prepared to address the gender-specific health care needs of our women Veterans. I am committed to supporting the growth and enhancement of VA services, to ensure that all women Veterans will want to choose VA for their health care needs.

To all the women Veterans who have worn this country's uniforms, thank you. We honor your service and sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.

Sincerely,

/s/

David J. Shulkin, M.D.