PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July XX, 2025

VA to rescind Biden-era abortion mandate and follow federal law

(b)(5)

###

PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July XX, 2025

VA to stop providing abortions

(b)(5)

###

PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 1, 2025

VA to stop providing abortions

(b)(5)

###

PRE-DECISIONAL

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **8320-01**

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900-AS31

Reproductive Health Services

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

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PRE-DECISIONAL

Sent: Fri, 23 Jan 2026 16:01:25 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 10:24 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

Link to opinion: https://www.justice.gov/olc/media/1421726/dl

Other ways to do this but here's a proposed new version:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 10:06 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

This might do it... proposed draft for (b)(6) is below.

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 9:05 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

Sure.... was looking to give him some more background but we've been using this and we can send again if we want:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 10:26 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: CNN Inquiry

(b)(5)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 7:06:24 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: CNN Inquiry

Last one for tonight, just trying to stay ahead.

(b)(6) with a very late story on abortion. You'll see below he's spoken with several opponents.

Draft below and we can discuss Friday... reworked a little to account for the time lapse:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @cnn.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 2:30 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; VA Public Affairs (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CNN Inquiry

Peter and colleagues--

This is (b)(6) from CNN. I'm reporting on the reactions to the VA's new policy on abortion services for veterans.

Could you please respond, on the record, to these questions?:

- Why is the VA changing this policy, reversing the Biden administration's policy enacted in 2022 - which allowed abortion under limited circumstances, including rape and incest?

- Why did VA decide to eliminate rape and incest as circumstances under which abortion services would be allowed in the VA health care system?

- Do these new restrictions extend to all VA health care facilities, including those in states where abortion services are legal?

- To clarify the new policy: is the VA now saying it will not refer out female veteran patients who are victims of rape and incest to civilian facilities, and not pay for those services at civilian facilities— or is VA only saying it will not perform those services at VA facilities?

- Can you tell us how many abortions were provided by the VA since 2022? And - how many were paid for, outside of the VA system?

Below is a sampling of the responses we've received. There is no need to respond to each one individually, but we'd welcome your general response to the criticism.

- From two female veterans who have gone through the VA for reproductive services: One said "You're not going to provide care for a woman who's been raped? It seems dystopian." Another said "It's just heartbreaking. They're disregarding the whole health of women veterans."
- An OB-GYN doctor in the VA system warns: "Patients will die" as a result of the new policy. This doctor is concerned that some veteran women who need abortions won't get them, because VA providers "will be afraid to render this care."
- National Nurses United, which represents about 13,500 VA nurses, calls this policy "misogynistic, dangerous and discriminatory", and says it will cause "immeasurable harm".
- Women's health and reproduction advocates are concerned over how the policy will affect female veterans who are the victims of military sexual trauma. For example- Jackii Wang from the National Women's Law Center said "When we think of the number of women veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma, it's unconscionable that the administration would implement a policy like this."
- Sen. Tammy Duckworth says "In cases of rape, incest or when the health of the mother is at risk, Trump is denying our heroes the care they've earned through their service." Sen. Richard Blumenthal calls the policy "cruel", "reckless" and "reprehensible". Rep. Mark Takano says it is a "cruel and dangerous move" which will "harm veterans" and calls it "draconian".

Would you be able to send me a response by the end of business tomorrow, January 23rd?

You can email me back or call/text me at (b)(6)

Thank you-

(b)(6)
CNN

Sent: Wed, 15 Oct 2025 18:09:47 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: note to Daily Signal

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 1:22 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: note to Daily Signal

Signal is hoping for two stories... one on the money stuff, another on the woke stuff we've fixed.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

Sent: Wed, 30 Jul 2025 13:45:58 +0000
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule
Attachments: AS31 REG 2025-07-24 (ROCIS FINAL).docx

(b)(6) (b)(5)
(b)(5)

Reporters are already tracking the activity on the site, as you can see here, but they don't know what the change is. At that time, visitors will be able to download the proposal in its entirety (it's attached).

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 9:48 AM
To: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E.
(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

(b)(6)

VA is going to release likely next Friday a repeal of the Biden era abortion rule. (b)(5) Curt

(b)(5)

V/r,
Brian

J. Brian Sikma
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Domestic Policy
Work Cell: (b)(6) *Calls Only/No Text]*
(b)(6) @who.eop.gov

PRE-DECISIONAL

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **8320-01**

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900-AS31

Reproductive Health Services

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

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PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

Date Approved: _____

_____
Douglas A. Collins
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

Sent: Tue, 29 Jul 2025 13:36:16 +0000
To: DAC
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir -

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:47 PM
To: DAC (b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir – A draft holding statement is below. We would only use this in response to incoming media inquiries. Please let us know if you have any feedback or edits. Thanks.

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

Sent: Mon, 28 Jul 2025 16:10:03 +0000
To: Kalett, Ethan G.; (b)(6) Syrek, Christopher D.
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 12:00 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Bergin, Donald J. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

The regulation to be released Friday at 4pm seeks to "un-do" what Biden did. Therefore:

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett

Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 11:34 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

OK. Clean, updated version below.

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 11:26 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek,

Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Curt,
Few slight adjustments. (b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 10:32 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Thanks. Is everyone OK with the following holding statement?

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:55 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan Kalett

Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:53 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

(b)(6) for OCLA

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:48 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan - can you share the final reg with me? Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 2:39 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

We will tell them to release it on Friday 8/1 at 4pm.

Confirming my other items:

(b)(5)

@Syrek, Christopher D.: **Question: Do you want me to also let (b)(6) know on Thursday 7/31?**

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:36 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

ok

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:34 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

4:00pm Friday Aug. 1 for public inspection is good with me. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: tick tock for A rule
Importance: High

Curt:

OFR advises that we can request publication for public inspection at 4:00pm on Friday July 1, which means it will be officially published in Federal Register the following Monday morning. That is the latest we can request.

Please let me know soonest if that is your preference.

Additional update: OMB intends to complete review by 6p, which means that the web site change we discussed (where OMB closes review) will either happen late today or tomorrow AM.

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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Sent: Mon, 28 Jul 2025 13:46:35 +0000

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

Sent: Wed, 30 Jul 2025 23:22:39 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Still waiting on WH to clear.

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2025 7:21 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Curt,
Can you share the final statement so we can share with on friends on the Hill tomorrow?

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 7:44:07 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; DAC (b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Bergin, Donald J. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Ok. Will make that change and socialize with WH.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 7:43:13 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; DAC (b)(6 @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

(b)(5)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 10:39:00 AM
To: DAC (b)(6) @va.gov>

Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Ok. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: DAC (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 10:32 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Will call from the car. Couple of questions

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 8:37:45 AM
To: DAC (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir – Just following up on this. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:47 PM
To: DAC (b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir – A draft holding statement is below. We would only use this in response to incoming media inquiries. Please let us know if you have any feedback or edits. Thanks.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

Sent: Fri, 21 Feb 2025 17:55:03 +0000
To: Tallman, Gary; Johnson, Lyndon (VA)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Attachments: Copy of Second Leadership Review and Justification of GSA and VA Consulting Contracts 2.21.25.xlsx

Please see below and attached. Can you review for anything else

---

From: Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 12:26 PM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Christy, Phillip (SES) <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts

(+) Phil for awareness and to "Maintain" the contract

(b)(6)

Best regards,

Karen L. Brazell, PMP
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 11:34 AM
To: Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Fw: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts

Karen,

Per guidance from the Chief and Curt, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

From: Brazell, Karen L. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 7:57 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) @va.gov>; Mason, Cheryl L. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Hoffman, James A. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Davis, Lynda C. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Lieberman, Steven (b)(6) @va.gov>; Evans, Neil C (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cosmas, Laura M. (b)(5) @va.gov>; Rosenmerkel, Lisa S. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Christy, Phillip (SES) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Reed, Ernest (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Importance: High

Forwarding for your awareness.

Best regards,

Karen L. Brazell, PMP

Senior Advisor to the Secretary

Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Christy, Phillip (SES) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 7:47 AM
To: Parker, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Neill, Jeffrey (b)(6) @va.gov>; Quinones, Juan (b)(6) @va.gov>; Jordan, Curtis M. (RPO West) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Fox, Zebulon (b)(6) @va.gov>; Chandler, Richard C. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Reed, Ernest (b)(6) @va.gov>; Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Beard, Dewaine L. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Murray, Edward (b)(6) @va.gov>; Sanfilippo, Nathan T. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Nassar, Joseph W. (PDAS, HRA) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Suh, Ryung (b)(6) @va.gov>; Walters, Ronald (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Importance: High

All

[URGENT]

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Please provide all answers back to Dr. Ernest Reed @ (b)(6) @va.gov, so he can compile for the review. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thank you for your support.

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 27 Jan 2026 19:35:56 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; Syrek, Christopher D.
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

(b)(6)

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:16 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

MSNOW will report there's going to be a CRA bill to overturn VA's new abortion policy.

Any objections if we send her our standard lines on this issue? Will flag for WH first once you approve:

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) @versantmedia.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 1:50 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

Hi, reaching out from MS NOW with a scoop about how House and Senate Dems will introduce Congressional Review Act resolutions this afternoon seeking to overturn the VA abortion ban implemented last month, which bans abortion counseling and services in cases of rape, incest or when the veteran's health is at risk.

Does the VA have any comment?

Please respond ASAP, thanks.

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for Mac

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 27 Jan 2026 19:14:30 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

Clear it through Chris and the WH.

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:09 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

Give her this?

(b)(6)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:06 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

What'd we give (b)(6) ?

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 2:04 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

flagging

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6)@versantmedia.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 1:50 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

Hi, reaching out from MS NOW with a scoop about how House and Senate Dems will introduce Congressional Review Act resolutions this afternoon seeking to overturn the VA abortion ban implemented last month, which bans abortion counseling and services in cases of rape, incest or when the veteran's health is at risk.

Does the VA have any comment?

Please respond ASAP, thanks.
(b)(6)

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From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 2 Dec 2025 16:30:55 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: Reaching out re: status of abortion ban

Ask her if the piece is for print or broadcast and when it will publish/air. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Reaching out re: status of abortion ban

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 11:13 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Reaching out re: status of abortion ban

From: (b)(6)@versantmedia.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 11:13:12 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Reaching out re: status of abortion ban

Hi please respond by 330 pm EST, thanks

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From: (b)(6)@versantmedia.com>
Date: Monday, December 1, 2025 at 3:48 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Reaching out re: status of abortion ban

Hi - reaching out from MS NOW regarding the status of the department's proposed abortion ban.

When does the VA expect to finalize this rule?
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/04/2025-14687/reproductive-health-services

Thanks,
(b)(6)

Get Outlook for Mac

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 16 Oct 2025 15:39:41 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: note to Daily Signal

Ok. Please have Chris clear.

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 16, 2025 11:36 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: note to Daily Signal

Mark is good with this version immediately below... (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 4:17 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: note to Daily Signal

See below. The red highlights need updated or verified. Thanks.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q&A

Abortion

(b)(5)

Q: Mr. Collins, you say you're in favor of greater choices for veterans to seek care in the community when they and their VA doctors agree it's in their best medical interest. As you know, women comprise a growing share of the veteran population and VA patient base. When they and their doctors agree that a reproductive health choice, such as abortion services, is in their best medical interest do you support their right to obtain it at VA?

(b)(5)

I'm not going to make policy during this hearing, but, if confirmed, this is an issue we are going to look at to ensure the department is following the laws Congress has passed.

Q: Will you allow your personal view to dictate the outcome of your review of VA's abortion policy?

(b)(5)

Q: Under the Biden administration, women veterans have never been better protected, and I am proud to have championed many of these developments. One such success was the VA's regulation confirming that the VA can facilitate and cover abortions for women based on rape, incest, life, or health of the mother. In the wake of the *Dobbs* case, I would hope this policy is not modified, for the sake of our women veterans. Can you commit to ensuring this reproductive health care remains available to women in the VA health care system?

(b)(5)

Accountability

(b)(5)

Q: During the last Republican Administration, the VA Secretary used his interpretation of authorities in the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act to summarily fire VA employees without proper due process. Subsequent court rulings found those firing actions violated employees' rights. What will you do to ensure this never happens again and what changes need to happen to protect employees from unfair personnel actions like the ones that occurred under President Trump's first term in office?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What are you going to do to put quality employees in place at all the veterans' centers and hospitals?

(b)(5)

Alternative treatment options

(b)(5)

Q: Congressman Collins, I constantly hear from veterans who suffer from chronic pain, PTSD, or TBI and do not want to use traditional prescription drugs to treat their symptoms. They seek support from the VA to try alternate treatment options, whether that be psychedelics, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, even hypnotherapy. Sometimes these treatments are FDA-approved, and sometimes they are not. What approach would you take at the VA in exploring innovative treatment options and how would you weigh them against traditional prescription drugs?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you plan on incorporating more innovative approaches to VA health care such as the use of alternative treatments and drugs?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you support projects like [random program that you are not familiar with]?

(b)(5)

Budget shortfalls

(b)(5)

Q: Congressman Collins, as you are likely aware, the VA notified Congress last July of an end of FY24 budget shortfall for the Veteran Benefits Administration. The VA claimed if Congress didn't provide an emergency appropriation of $3 billion by September 20, "payments to veterans and dependents would be delayed." In the end, Congress appropriated the money, only to hear from the VA that, in fact, the shortfall did not exist, and they ended the fiscal year with a surplus. You can imagine that was an incredibly frustrating experience for us, and we'd all prefer if it didn't happy again. What plans do you have for budgetary reviews in the department? How would you handle a situation where your budget staff informed you of a potential shortfall?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What action would you take on day one to ensure all VA resources are being allocated efficiently and how would you cut waste?

(b)(5)

Q: Veterans spending is sometimes caught up in budget fights. Do you support taking it off the books?

(b)(5)

Claims Sharks

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: Mr. Collins, predatory claims sharks are bilking veterans out of their earned disability benefits by charging them exorbitant fees for services they can freely obtain through accredited Veterans Organizations. Do you commit to cracking down on these claims sharks?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you believe non-accredited claims preparers should be allowed to operate in this space.

(b)(5)

Construction/Facilities Management

(b)(5)

Q: Numerous VA construction projects have come in grossly over budget. What will be your strategy for new projects and their management?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: Would you be willing to close facilities that aren't meeting the standard?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What will you do to ensure VA is allocating its resources effectively and do you support closing any VA facilities?

(b)(5)

Cybersecurity

(b)(5)

Q: What are your plans to bolster VA's cybersecurity posture to protect sensitive veteran data?

(b)(5)

Q: How will you address vulnerabilities identified in recent audits or incidents, such as the Change Healthcare ransomware attack?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: Who will you balance IT modernization with enhanced cybersecurity investments?

(b)(5)

Democrat and Media Criticism

Q: What experience do you have when it comes to dealing with VA policy?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: Please describe your military service and the lessons you learned that apply to the VA.

(b)(5)

DOGE/Project 2025

Background: Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, who President-elect Donald Trump tapped to lead the Department of Government Efficiency have said they plan to target "unauthorized" federal spending, a category that includes the VA's medical services.

(b)(5)

Q: I am highly concerned that comments coming from the so-called Department of Government Efficiency and recommendations put forth by the extreme right organization Heritage Foundation Project 2025 propose reducing Veterans health and benefits programs. The nonpartisan Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute said in its analysis of Project 2025 that "a second Trump term would decimate veterans' healthcare and benefits." And Mr. Ramaswamy has called out appropriations for longstanding and existing programs that lack a current Congressional authorization. Some of those are in the VA's Medical Services budget and are very beneficial to our veterans. What are you going to do to ensure pressure from the White House and outside groups doesn't result in curtailing these highly beneficial programs?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you support getting rid of VA health care?

(b)(5)

Q: How do you provide easy access to high quality healthcare while ensuring that the system isn't taken advantage of?

(b)(5)

Electronic Health Records Modernization

(b)(5)

Q: Congressman Collins, we've spent about $20 billion on updating the VA's electronic health record. The Department of Defense has completed their update. Yet, the VA has nothing to show for it. We need a plan, we need VA employee engagement, and we need to roll out yesterday. This has been an obscene waste of taxpayer funding. This must be a day 1 agenda item. How do you intend to manage this?

(b)(5)

Q: The first Trump Administration green lighted a massive overhaul of the VA's medical records system to the tune of 16 billion over ten years, but when the Biden Administration came in they found that 10 year project to be full of problems that are still being addressed today due to major cost overruns and implementation delays with the technology. Patient safety was a primary concern with this new system under the Biden Administration, so much so that they delayed implementation. How are you going to ensure this Trump approved project maintains patient safety for our veterans?

(b)(5)

Q: What is your plan to address the delays and challenges in the EHRM program?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you intend pressure the organization to realize completion of the electronic healthcare project? What will you do differently from your predecessors? How will you ensure interoperability between VA and DoD health records systems?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What metrics will you use to evaluate the success of EHR implementation?

(b)(5)

Homelessness

Background: President Trump said the following in 2023: "When I am reelected, this national scandal will end. On Day One, I will sign an Executive Order to cut off Joe Biden's massive spigot of funding for shelter and transport of illegal aliens and redirect a portion of those savings, a very large portion I might add, to provide shelter and treatment for homeless American Veterans. I will make it a personal mission to totally eradicate Veterans' homelessness in America by the end of next term." According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, there were 32,882 Veterans who experienced homelessness in 2024, an 8 percent drop from the year prior.

Q: What is your plan to house the overflowing number of homeless Veterans?

(b)(5)

IVF

Background: Patty Murray has been a big proponent of expanding invitro fertilization services. Pursuant to her language in annual appropriations bills, VA provides it for service-related injuries related to infertility. Lawmakers have been seeking to broaden eligibility on the DoD side, which typically is a precursor to seeking VA coverage as part

of the medical package. Further, increasing numbers of federal employee health benefit plans offer IVF coverage.

Q: Mr. Collins, a growing number of Federal employees have options under their health plans to use IVF for family planning purposes. Shouldn't veterans enrolled in VA have that same benefit?

(b)(5)

Q: what about destroying embryos?

(b)(5)

Q: Congressman Collins, I am very passionate about fighting for women and families, and I've made it a priority to ensure that veterans have access to IVF services when they cannot conceive naturally. The VA has done a fantastic job of expanding coverage through their own regulatory authority, and I introduced the Veteran Families Health Services Act to protect such coverage. However, I am aware of Republican threats to restrict IVF services, and I am concerned that this administration will try to narrow such coverage for service members and veterans. Can you commit to ensuring that IVF services remain available to veterans, regardless of marital status or sexual orientation?

(b)(5)

IT Modernization

Background: Many of VA's computer systems are operating beyond their service life and create challenges for VA staff to do their jobs. But large, ambitious projects aimed at modernizing VA technology have been plagued by problems over the years. The government Accountability Office and lawmakers have urged VA to break complex technology projects into smaller, more manageable pieces.

Q: How will IT modernization support timely and accurate benefits processing for veterans?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What specific initiatives will you prioritize to use IT as a tool to enhance healthcare access and delivery?

(b)(5)

Q: How will you integrate community care systems to improve service for veterans?

(b)(5)

Medicare Advantage

Background: The Wall Street Journal came out with a recent piece about veterans in Medicare Advantage plans who also are enrolled in VA health care. The piece asserts the government pays too much money to Medicare advantage plans because veterans get a lot of their care at VA. Sens. Moran and King have a bill to pilot better care coordination between Medicare and VA, so they may raise the issue.

Q: Mr. Collins, the Wall Street Journal came out with an article in December alleging overpayments to Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, which have significant numbers of veterans enrolled who also utilize VA healthcare. The article suggests that because VA picks up most of the tab for veterans' healthcare the MA plans are overpaid. It would seem there is a significant element of government waste when it comes to the issue of veterans covered by multiple government insurers. Are you aware of the issue? What do you commit to doing about it?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Migrant Health Care

Background: A 22-year-old arrangement between the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Immigration and Customs Enforcement has drawn ire from conservatives in Congress, who claim it puts health care for detained migrants over that of veterans. But VA officials say it has no impact whatsoever on veterans' services or health care -- and costs the agency nothing. Since 2002, the VA's Financial Services Center, or FSC, has processed medical claims for an ICE program office that is responsible for providing health care for migrants detained by the border security agency. The VA center facilitates the same work under separate contracts for a variety of other federal offices. In December, Illinois Republican Rep. Mike Bost, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., introduced a bill called the "No VA Resources for Illegal Aliens Act," which would prohibit the VA from using resources to provide health care or process claims for migrants.

Q: Do you support VA paying for health care for illegal immigrants?

(b)(5)

Non-VA Care/Privatization

Background: Last January the Biden administration convened a panel of health care experts (former Under Secretaries for Health, etc.) to analyze the growth in VA's community care budget. The so-called Red Team final report dubbed community care as an "existential threat" to the direct care system. Sen. Sanders and others are likely to cite it as evidence of a privatization scheme underway to end the VA as we know it. He'll cite VSO concerns to frame the question.

Q: Mr. Collins, a group of former Republican and Democrat VA health officials released a report last year calling the growth in veterans utilizing community care as a "potential existential threat" to the VA healthcare system. Many veterans' organizations agree. Do you? Do you believe there is value in safeguarding the VA healthcare system?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: You have expressed support for greater privatization of veteran health care stating, if veterans "want to go back to their own doctors, then so be it." Do you plan on cutting veterans' health care benefits?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: You could lower the VA access standards. Will you do that?

(b)(5)

Q: In the MISSION Act, the department is still the gatekeeper, do you see a way of getting over that so veterans really do have the choice?

(b)(5)

Q: Do you support privatizing the VA?

(b)(5)

Q: Non-VA emergency care is the largest driver of community care costs, yet VA leadership under the Biden administration continually blamed veterans' use of the community care network as the main budget buster. It seems to me that veterans want to see a provider quickly and of their choosing. Given the staffing shortages at the VA, what strategies do you have to prioritize provider hirings as well as strengthen MISSION Act access standards?

(b)(5)

Q: The VA continues to see high levels of trust from veterans using it for health care, yet you are in favor of expanding non-VA healthcare options for veterans, where veterans will be seen by clinicians who are not well versed in military service-related conditions. The estimates I have seen indicate that almost 40 percent of care for veterans is now sourced from the private sector. I am concerned that a continued over reliance on the private sector will only lead to problems for veterans who are seeking care the VA is better or best suited to address, especially mental health and battlefield toxic exposures and that there are inadequate standards of accountability from these private doctors. How are you going to ensure the private sector is accountable for providing proper care to our veterans?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: What will you do to see that elements required by law are met to fully realize the benefits of the MISSION Act?

(b)(5)

Older Veterans

Background: Veteran-Directed Care is a program for Veterans who need personal care services and help with activities of daily living, including help with bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. Veterans in this program are given a budget for services that is managed by the Veteran or the Veteran's representative. With the help of a counselor, Veterans hire their own workers to meet their daily needs to help them live at home or in their community.

Q: Will you continue the advancements the VA has made towards veteran-directed care?

(b)(5)

Q: Between 2021 and 2041, the number of veterans older than 85 is expected to increase by 31%, according to VA data. In part, that's because the overall number of veterans nationwide is decreasing. Scotte Hartronft, the director of geriatrics and extended care at VA, says, "We're kind of compounding multiple variables, in the sense that not only are people living longer, but ... many of them survived something that wasn't survivable. A lot of veterans have survived significant injuries over the last couple of conflicts that [they] wouldn't have survived in previous wars." How do you plan to deal with this core problem for the VA?

(b)(5)

Q: While “aging in place” and “home care” have been important focuses recently for the VA, some veterans either cannot, or prefer not to, age in place. They want to be surrounded by others who understand their service. Do you see ways to support both ventures?

(b)(5)

Personal Attacks

Q: In 2020, you made a claim accusing Democrats of being “in love with terrorists.” Why did you make this comment, and do you still believe this?

(b)(5)

Q: You helped represent President Trump in challenging the results of the 2020 election in Georgia. Do you believe the 2020 election was stolen?

(b)(5)

Q: Please describe any meetings or conversations you have had with Boris Epshteyn regarding your nomination to this position.

(b)(5)

Suicide

Background: VA’s top clinical priority is preventing suicide among all veterans. According to the latest VA data, an average of 17.6 veterans per day died by suicide in 2022. Of those, 42% had no contact with VA.

Q: What specific actions do you intend to take to combat veteran suicide?

(b)(5)

Transgender Health Care

Background: The Biden Administration in 2021 floated a policy on permitting gender reassignment surgeries at VA. No rule has been published, but Democrat senators are still pushing. Meanwhile, VA says it provides, "ALL needed gender-affirming care except gender-affirming surgeries." According to the department, this includes gender-affirming hormone therapy, voice/communication training and gender-affirming prosthetics.

Q: Mr. Collins, there are an estimated 150,000 transgender veterans with 10,000 who already get their gender affirming care at VA. Reports suggest that 4,000 would be interested in receiving gender reassignment surgeries at VA. What is your position on providing gender reassignment surgeries at VA?

(b)(5)

Q: Mr. Collins, do you plan to phase out the gender-affirming care VA currently provides?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Veterans Benefits

Background: A widely criticized opinion article in The Economist on Nov. 28 described veterans' disability benefits as "absurdly generous." The Economist piece echoes an argument made by the Washington Post's editorial board last year that limiting disability payments to veterans would help get America's financial house in order.

Q: I am concerned that proposals from some Republicans and conservative policy groups are focused on how to reduce benefits to veterans for their disabilities. We have a strong system in place to ensure veterans get compensated for their disabilities and we have an obligation to treat those claims seriously, yet I am very concerned when I hear veterans growing increasingly worried that those earned benefits are going to be rolled back. What are you going to do to ensure no veteran has his or her disability rating reduced because of a need to lower a budget for political purposes?

(b)(5)

Q: Some in the media are denouncing the amount of benefits that Veterans receive. What are your thoughts on this issue?

(b)(5)

Background: VA defines a disability benefits claim as backlogged when it is more than 125 days old. The claims backlog reached an all-time high of more than 611,000 in March 2013, reached historic lows of 65,000 during the Trump Administration and currently sits at more than 235,000.

Q: What is your plan to deal with the claims backlog?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: How will you deal with difficulties in the GI Bill program?

(b)(5)

Background: VA's Veterans Readiness and Employment Program is designed to help veterans with disabilities that are severe enough to restrict or keep them from working find employment. But the program is experiencing a surge in applicants that is creating backlogs, draining resources and delaying benefits. More than 65% of regional VA offices have wait times of more than a month for an initial VR&E appointment, according to some reports.

Q: On Dec 11th HVAC held a hearing that revealed problems with Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E). How will you deal with those problems?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: How can we improve communication to rural Veterans about their benefits?

(b)(5)

Background: Currently, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is responsible for all VA benefits provided to veterans outside of health care and cemetery services. While there are many different benefits that VBA provides, the bulk of staffing and resources have been directed toward the administration of disability compensation and pension claims. The VET OPP Act from Reps. Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Mike Levin (D-CA.) would realign transition, education, and employment programs at VA under a new administration, the Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration. This new administration would be accountable to a presidentially appointed undersecretary.

Q: Do you support a 4th Administration (focused on Economic Opportunity) at VA?

(b)(5)

Women Veterans/Sexual Harassment

Background: Sen. Hirono always asks witnesses (this stems from her Bret Kavanaugh performance in Judiciary) whether they have sexually harassed/assaulted anyone. In addition…and because this would be a raw political question…she may dredge up the waning days of Sec. Wilkie's tenure when there were allegations that he improperly

investigated a female veteran who alleged harassment at the Washington DC VA Medical Center.

Q: Congressman Collins, I ask the following two questions of every nominee. 1) Since you have become a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature? 2) Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?"

(b)(5)

Q: Mr. Collins, the last Secretary under President Trump was found to have improperly used his office to investigate the background of a woman who asserted she was harassed at a VA facility. Do you think that use of Secretarial power is appropriate? Will you commit to never using your authority in such a manner?

(b)(5)

Q: Female service members who suffered sexual assault now have PTSD: what will you do to target and help these women get the mental health counseling they need?

(b)(5)

Workforce

Background: According to media reports, VA requires employees with telework agreements in the National Capital Region to work a minimum of five days in the office each two-week pay period.

Q: How will you ensure that far more of the workers at VA headquarters come back to the office? We know many employees actually live and work out of state.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Q: Will you allow VA employees to work remotely, or will you require all VA employees to be in-person full-time?

(b)(5)

Q: With imminent threats to protections for LGBTQ veteran employees in this administration, would you deny or take away these protections as they stand?

(b)(5)

Background: VA and the American Federation of Government Employees leaders signed a master collective bargaining agreement in 2023, updating the terms of their labor contract for the first time in more than a decade. The new agreement between VA and AFGE closes one of the most contentious chapters in recent federal labor relations history. The new contract allows VA to speed up the hiring process and staff up more quickly. But aside from those hiring changes, the agreement is largely a rollover from the 2011 contract signed during the Obama Administration. More than 79% of VA's employees belong to a union.

Q: How will you ensure VA employees' union rights are respected?

(b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Wed, 3 Sep 2025 15:24:03 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: FW: URGENT: NBC Statement Request

Send them the following:

VA Spokesperson Statement
Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:12 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT: NBC Statement Request

OK to send this to NBC? See below:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:05 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT: NBC Statement Request

From: (b)(6)@nbcuni.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:04:49 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@nbcuni.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] URGENT: NBC Statement Request

Good morning,

I'm reaching out with NBC Washington. We're covering a press conference on Capitol Hill with veterans concerned about a proposed rule that bans VA abortions for veterans and abortion counseling. Would you please send us a statement that addresses these points:

- Concerns that this proposed new rule puts the lives and health of pregnant veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries at great/urgent risk in states that have banned or otherwise severely restricted access to abortion.

- More than 462,000 women veterans of reproductive age are enrolled in VA health care. More than half of these women live in states that have enacted abortion bans or restrictions. If this rule is finalized, a pregnant veteran residing in one of these states whose health is in jeopardy or who has been raped will have nowhere to turn.

We'd like to include your statement in our reporting today. **Our deadline is 2pm ET.**

Respectfully,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)
Senior Producer, DC Bureau
NBC Owned & Operated Stations

4001 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20016
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Main
(b)(6) @nbcuni.com

NBCUniversal Local
Owned Stations Regional Sports Networks

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 2 Sep 2025 16:28:28 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: FW: Media query -- abortion data?

Have Chris and (b)(concur.

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @Monster.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media query -- abortion data?

My colleague wrote this story after the first year of the VA covering abortions other than life of the mother, rape or incest, on data that the VA provided to Congress the first year.

https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/10/19/va-says-it-performed-88-abortions-past-year-congress-again-threatens-subpoenas-pursuit-of-more.html

The VA under the Biden administration did not provide Congress with the second year's data, and also declined to provide it to Rebecca when she asked.

Any way we can get that data? Also, if there is any data for this calendar year that may show a change, that would be helpful.

As you probably know, congressional Democrats are having a press conference tomorrow on the issue; if we could get the data by tomorrow afternoon and any statement you have in response to their concerns, (top lines of press release included below) it would be greatly appreciated.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD AT 2:00 PM: BLUMENTHAL, TAKANO, SENATE & HOUSE DEMOCRATS JOIN VETERANS TO RAIL AGAINST THE TRUMP VA'S MOVE TO STOP PROVIDING LIFE-SAVING ABORTIONS TO VETERANS

Lawmakers, reproductive health care advocates, and veterans to speak on how the Trump Administration's upcoming ban of abortion care and counseling at VA will hurt veterans and their families

Appreciated,
(b)(6)

(b)(6)
VA and Military Health Care Reporter
Cell: (b)(6)
X: @
BlueSky: @p(b)(6)

NOTICE:

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 28 Aug 2025 16:56:50 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; Syrek, Christopher D.
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] NEW INQUIRY: VA abortion rule, deadline 5pmET

Good here. Please flag for the WH once Chris approves. Thanks.

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 12:51 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] NEW INQUIRY: VA abortion rule, deadline 5pmET

(b)(6) is writing for the Guardian about our abortion rule, see below.

His deadline is 5 pm today, story likely runs Friday but still confirming that with him.

We've given out this statement to anyone asking follow-ups but flagging in case we want something different. I can also flag WH if needed:

(b)(5); (b)(6)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 12:01 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) .@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NEW INQUIRY: VA abortion rule, deadline 5pmET

Hi Peter,

I'm writing a story on the VA's proposed rule excluding abortions and abortion counseling from the medical benefits package. Under this rule, VA clinicians will be barred from performing abortions even in the cases of rape and incest.

I have interviewed veterans who characterize the policy as cruel, and who say it it could be particularly damaging for female veterans given the high rate of sexual assault in the military.

Following the adoption of strict state-level abortion restrictions post-Dobbs, they say this policy may force veterans to cross state lines or leave the country to have an abortion or otherwise carry a baby fathered through rape to term.

Please let me know VA's perspective on these concerns and if Secretary Collins has previously spoken to these matters publicly.

All the best,
(b)(6)

--

(b)(6)
Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University
m: (b)(6)
e: (b)(6) @gmail.com
web: (b)(6)
Twitter: @(b)(6)

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Fri, 1 Aug 2025 21:26:43 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Cc:
Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: RE: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

FYI below…

Media Coverage/Statements
Fox News: VA reverses Biden admin policy providing abortion services agency calls contrary to federal law
Catholic News Agency: Trump administration proposes rule change to end abortion at Veterans Affairs facilities
Reuters: US Veterans Affairs agency proposes reinstating abortion exclusion
LifeNews.com: Trump Will Overturn Biden Policy Allowing Abortions at VA Clinics
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs: House Republicans Issue Joint Statement on Trump Administration Ending Abortion Services at VA

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 4:52 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

Thank you

(b)(6)

On Jul 31, 2025, at 4:47 PM, Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov> wrote:

Hi, folks. I spoke with (b)(and we are good. Below is our rollout plan. Let us know if you have any concerns. Thanks.

Today: VA proposes embargoed story to Fox News' (b)(6)
Friday AM: VA provides Fox News with details, embargoed until 4 p.m.

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 2:20 PM
To: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Cc: @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

Thanks, (b)(6) – any objections?

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2025 5:20 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

This looks good to me. (b)(6) all ok with you, too?

Thank you, Team VA

(b)(6)

On Jul 30, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov> wrote:

(b)(6) – As we've been discussing, VA's proposed abortion rule (attached) is scheduled to publish this Friday at 4 p.m. on this website.

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Fri, 1 Aug 2025 20:04:27 +0000
To: Kalett, Ethan G.
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D.;(b)(6)
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Nevermind. It's accessible here: https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/2025-14687/reproductive-health-services

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Friday, August 1, 2025 4:02 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>;(b)(6)
(b)(6) @va.gov>;(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan – can you share the link to the proposed reg? Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 4:23 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E.(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>;(b)(6)
(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: tick tock for A rule

(b)(5)

PREDECISIONAL

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 4:19:02 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Thanks.

When does the comment period close and what happens after that?

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 4:17 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: tick tock for A rule

Tomorrow the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) will be available for public inspection. That means that the NPRM will be posted on the Federal Register website for the public to review; however, the public will not be able to submit comments or review the regulatory impact analysis on www.regulations.gov until Monday morning.

Current Regulations:

1. Medical Benefits Package: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-38/chapter-I/part-17/subject-group-ECFRf01c7718f2a7e24/section-17.38
2. Champva Benefits: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-38/chapter-I/part-17/subject-group-ECFR6c9c741d1d5a11f/section-17.272

PREDECISIONAL

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:52:32 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan – can you share with us a copy of the reg that is in place right now?

Also, can you sketch out for us the next steps after the proposal publishes on the website tomorrow at 4 p.m.? Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 4:26 PM

To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: tick tock for A rule

No—was waiting until Thursday but would be happy to do it sooner if you are okay with that?

PREDECISIONAL

From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:33:29 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

+Ethan

Ethan – have you briefed VHA on this yet? I know that was planned for this week.

Chris

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:31 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Made an update highlighted below. Do you want someone from VHA to review this before we start using it?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:19 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: tick tock for A rule

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 12:14 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

OK. How about the following?

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 12:00 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

The regulation to be released Friday at 4pm seeks to "un-do" what Biden did. Therefore:

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 11:34 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

OK. Clean, updated version below.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 11:26 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Curt,
Few slight adjustments. (b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 10:32 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Thanks. Is everyone OK with the following holding statement?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:55 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky Sallie.Massarsky@va.gov

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From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:53 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

(b)(6) for OCLA

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 9:48 AM

To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Ethan – can you share the final reg with me? Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 2:39 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

We will tell them to release it on Friday 8/1 at 4pm.

Confirming my other items:

(b)(5); (b)(6)

@Syrek, Christopher D.: Question: Do you want me to also let (b)(6) know on Thursday 7/31?

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:36 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

ok

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:34 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

4:00pm Friday Aug. 1 for public inspection is good with me. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: tick tock for A rule
Importance: High

Curt:

OFR advises that we can request publication for public inspection at 4:00pm on Friday July 1, which means it will be officially published in Federal Register the following Monday morning. That is the latest we can request.

Please let me know soonest if that is your preference.

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 31 Jul 2025 20:01:42 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); Kasperowicz, Peter I.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: final regulatory change holding statement

(b)(5)

Today: (b)(6); (b)(5)
Friday AM: (b)(5)
Friday 2PM: (b)(5)
(b)(5)
Friday 3PM: (b)(5)
Friday 4PM: (b)(5)
(b)(5)
Friday evening: Pete (b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:58 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I.
(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: final regulatory change holding statement

Yes

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:33 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I.
(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: final regulatory change holding statement

Confirming this is cleared for our congressional outreach?

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I.

<(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: final regulatory change holding statement

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2025 7:21 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Curt,
Can you share the final statement so we can share with on friends on the Hill tomorrow?

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 7:44:07 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; DAC <(b)(@va.gov>

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 31 Jul 2025 19:22:07 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) .; Kasperowicz, Peter I.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: final regulatory change holding statement

ok

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:16 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: final regulatory change holding statement

Come up at 430.

(b)(6) Curt and Pete are fine.

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: final regulatory change holding statement

The final holding statement is below. Recommend we touch base briefly today to discuss the tik tock of the rollout tomorrow.

(b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Mon, 28 Jul 2025 19:43:25 +0000
To: Pimentel, Jace T. (OGC)
Cc: (b)(6); Kalett, Ethan G.; Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC)
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Pimentel, Jace T. (OGC) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:43 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E.(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G.(b)(6)@va.gov>; Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

PRE-DECISIONAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT AND/OR PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

Curtis, no legal concerns with below. Thank you.

Jace Pimentel

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:27 PM
To: (b)(6)(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Jace – we are prepping for the proposed rule to publish this Friday. Any legal concerns with the following holding statement?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 12:38 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

PRE-DECISIONAL
ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT AND/OR PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

Curtis, (b)(5) Ethan's (b)(5)
Looping Jim for awareness.

Jace Pimentel

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From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 11:46 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 11:21 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. [redacted]@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Thanks very much, Ethan. Slightly updated version attached. Adding (b)(so he can take a look as well.

(b)(6) let us know if the press release is accurate and legally sound. Background is in the second attachment. Thank you.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 10:59 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

This is excellent. Truly excellent.

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director

VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 10:53 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Folks – let me know if the attached is accurate. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 11:39 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 10:10 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(6) and Ethan,

Can you please review the attached release on abortion? We want to make sure the language in the release is legally sound and does not conflict with the proposed reg? Thank you.

Best,

(b)(6)

PRE-DECISIONAL

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Mon, 28 Jul 2025 19:22:44 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.
Subject: Re: tick tock for A rule

Thanks

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:20:59 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

Approved

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:19 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: tick tock for A rule

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 12:14 PM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: tick tock for A rule

OK. How about the following?

(b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 17 Jul 2025 19:25:13 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); Kasperowicz, Peter I.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: for review: VA press release for Aug. 1
Attachments: AS31 June 6 2025 version FINAL.docx

see attached.

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 2:19 PM
To: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: for review: VA press release for Aug. 1

Good afternoon. Attached is the announcement we've been discussing. Let us know if you have any edits or concerns. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

PRE-DECISIONAL

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **8320-01**

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900-AS31

Reproductive Health Services

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 1, 2025

VA to stop providing abortions

(b)(5)

###

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 17 Jul 2025 18:08:43 +0000
To: DAC; Syrek, Christopher D.
Cc: (b)(6); Kasperowicz, Peter I.; (b)(6)
Subject: for review: A press release for Aug. 1
Attachments: 2025-7-17 Press Release on Abortion.docx

Good afternoon. The attached has been cleared by (b)(6) and OGC. With your approval, I will run it by the WH. Let me know if you have any edits. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Thu, 17 Jul 2025 17:31:58 +0000
To: Kalett, Ethan G.; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab
Attachments: 2025-7-17 Press Release on Abortion.docx

Ok. Thanks. Changed it back to how we had it before in the attached.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 11:46 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 11:21 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Thanks very much, Ethan. Slightly updated version attached. Adding (b)(so he can take a look as well.

(b)(6); (b)(5)
(b)(5) Thank you.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 10:59 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

This is excellent. Truly excellent.

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 17, 2025 10:53 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Folks – let me know if the attached is accurate. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 11:39 AM

To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Attached are changes— (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Additional info: We just returned to OMB today. Hoping this will be the final passback. Regulation could be ready to publish in ~5-10 days.

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 10:10 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(6) and Ethan,

Can you please review the attached release on abortion? (b)(5)
(b)(5)
Thank you.

Best,

(b)(6)

PRE-DECISIONAL

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 1 Jul 2025 19:18:31 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: Regulation for your approval to send to OMB
Attachments: AS31 June 6 2025 version FINAL.docx, AS31 RIA Passback 2025-06-03 VA Response 6.9.docx

This is it.

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 1, 2025 3:18 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Regulation for your approval to send to OMB

Give this a read, but it will go to OMB right after SECVA approves today.

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 1, 2025 3:10 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Regulation for your approval to send to OMB

Chief: Attached are revised regulation and RIA for your clearance.

PRE-DECISIONAL

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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This electronic transmission may contain attorney work-product or information protected under the attorney-client privilege. Portions of this transmission may contain information also protected from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC §552. Do not release this information without prior authorization from the sender. If this has inadvertently reached the wrong party, please delete this information immediately and notify the sender. Any security screening of this email by information officers or server administrators is not intended to be consent to any party to review the content of the email or a waiver of the attorney-client privilege and/or work product privilege.

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Tue, 4 Mar 2025 15:27:38 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: PRE-DECISIONAL - PRIVILEGED - Reg Briefing Materials
Attachments: 2025-02345.pdf, 12866.pdf, 2025-03138.pdf, WP25-02IF Reproductive Health Services 3.3.2025 All exclusions.docx, AS31(IF) RIA to PO with 00REG edits (3.3.25) Reproductive Health Services.docx, Meeting Summary Reproductive Health Regulation for OSVA 3.3.25.docx, Talking Points SECVA Meeting 3.4.25 Reproductive Health Proposed Regulation.docx

---

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 3, 2025 7:20 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Lieberman, Steven (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Blauert, Susan (OGC) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: PRE-DECISIONAL - PRIVILEGED - Reg Briefing Materials

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(6)

Attached please find the read-ahead packet for our meeting with the Secretary at 0930 tomorrow morning, Tuesday, March 4.

Please let me know if you need additional information. I have not provided these documents to (b)(6) or (b)(6) pending your review.

PRE-DECISIONAL

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **8320-01**

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900-[WP25-02]

Reproductive Health Services

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Interim final rule.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

(b)(5)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

(b)(5); (b)(6)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

(b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Fri, 21 Feb 2025 17:58:08 +0000
To: Tallman, Gary; Johnson, Lyndon (VA)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Attachments: Copy of Second Leadership Review and Justification of GSA and VA Consulting Contracts 2.21.25.xlsx

Please see below and attached and identify anything else OPIA related. Thanks.

From: Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 12:26 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Christy, Phillip (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts

(+) Phil for awareness and to "Maintain" the contract
(b)(6)

Best regards,

Karen L. Brazell, PMP
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 11:34 AM
To: Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Fw: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts

Karen,

Per guidance from the Chief and Curt, (b)(5)
(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

From: Brazell, Karen L. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 7:57 AM

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Fri, 21 Feb 2025 14:47:47 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Attachments: Copy of Second Leadership Review and Justification of GSA and VA Consulting Contracts 2.21.25.xlsx
Importance: High

Please see if ChooseVA is in here.

From: Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 7:57 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6) (b)(6)>; Mason, Cheryl L. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Runyan, Danielle A. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Quill, Joshua J. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Davis, Lynda C. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Lieberman, Steven (b)(6)@va.gov>; Evans, Neil C <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Cosmas, Laura M. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Rosenmerkel, Lisa S. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Christy, Phillip (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Reed, Ernest <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT----Second Review of Professional Service and Consulting Contracts
Importance: High

Forwarding for your awareness.

Best regards,

Karen L. Brazell, PMP
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Christy, Phillip (SES) (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 7:47 AM
To: Parker, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; Neill, Jeffrey <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Quinones, Juan (b)(6)@va.gov>; Jordan, Curtis M. (RPO West) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Fox, Zebulon (b)(6)@va.gov>; Chandler, Richard C. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Dark, Alyssa M., VBAVACO (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Reed, Ernest (b)(6)@va.gov>; Brazell, Karen L. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Murray, Edward <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Sanfilippo, Nathan T. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Nassar, Joseph W. (PDAS, HRA) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Suh, Ryung <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Walters, Ronald <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Tue, 27 Jan 2026 20:31:17 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

thanks

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 3:23 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

(b)(6) for awareness. Ok by me.

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 3:04 PM
To: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

MSNOW will report there's going to be a CRA bill to overturn VA's new abortion policy.

Any objections if we send her our standard lines on this issue?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) @versantmedia.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 1:50 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) .@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MS NOW scoop re: CRA resolution seeking to overturn VA abortion ban

Hi, reaching out from MS NOW with a scoop about how House and Senate Dems will introduce Congressional Review Act resolutions this afternoon seeking to overturn the VA abortion ban implemented last month, which bans abortion counseling and services in cases of rape, incest or when the veteran's health is at risk.

Does the VA have any comment?

Please respond ASAP, thanks.
(b)(6)

Get Outlook for Mac

From: Syrek, Christopher D.
Sent: Fri, 23 Jan 2026 18:08:37 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: Re: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

Cleared on my end

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 8:52:07 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

Will do thanks all

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 11:52 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

Good. Please run by the WH so they're aware. Tell them the response is similar to what we've said previously.

Thank you.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 8:49 AM
To: (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

This version my discussion with (b)(6) just now... good to go?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 11:42 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

(b)(5)

Otherwise looks good.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 8:22:58 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

Suggested change and new link based on Syrek's email:

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 11:19 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

(b)(5)

Rest looks good. (b)(6) please weigh in.

Chris

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 8:07:57 AM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>

Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: for review: CNN Inquiry re abortion

Chris (b)(6) – Incoming hit piece from CNN. We plan to respond with the following, which is consistent with what we've said previously. Let us know if you have any concerns. Thanks.

(b)(5)

###

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @cnn.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 2:30 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; VA Public Affairs (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CNN Inquiry

Peter and colleagues--

This is (b)(6) from CNN. I'm reporting on the reactions to the VA's new policy on abortion services for veterans.

Could you please respond, on the record, to these questions?:

- Why is the VA changing this policy, reversing the Biden administration's policy enacted in 2022 - which allowed abortion under limited circumstances, including rape and incest?

- Why did VA decide to eliminate rape and incest as circumstances under which abortion services would be allowed in the VA health care system?

- Do these new restrictions extend to all VA health care facilities, including those in states where abortion services are legal?

- To clarify the new policy: is the VA now saying it will not refer out female veteran patients who are victims of rape and incest to civilian facilities, and not pay for those services at civilian facilities— or is VA only saying it will not perform those services at VA facilities?

- Can you tell us how many abortions were provided by the VA since 2022? And - how many were paid for, outside of the VA system?

Below is a sampling of the responses we've received. There is no need to respond to each one individually, but we'd welcome your general response to the criticism.

- From two female veterans who have gone through the VA for reproductive services: One said "You're not going to provide care for a woman who's been raped? It seems dystopian." Another said "It's just heartbreaking. They're disregarding the whole health of women veterans."

- An OB-GYN doctor in the VA system warns: "Patients will die" as a result of the new policy. This doctor is concerned that some veteran women who need abortions won't get them, because VA providers "will be afraid to render this care."

- National Nurses United, which represents about 13,500 VA nurses, calls this policy "misogynistic, dangerous and discriminatory", and says it will cause "immeasurable harm".

- Women's health and reproduction advocates are concerned over how the policy will affect female veterans who are the victims of military sexual trauma. For example- Jackii Wang from the National Women's Law Center said "When we think of the number of women veterans who have suffered military sexual trauma, it's unconscionable that the administration would implement a policy like this."

- Sen. Tammy Duckworth says "In cases of rape, incest or when the health of the mother is at risk, Trump is denying our heroes the care they've earned through their service." Sen. Richard Blumenthal calls the policy "cruel", "reckless" and "reprehensible". Rep. Mark Takano says it is a "cruel and dangerous move" which will "harm veterans" and calls it "draconian".

Would you be able to send me a response by the end of business tomorrow, January 23rd?

You can email me back or call/text me at (b)(6)

Thank you-

(b)(6)
CNN

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Fri, 23 Jan 2026 15:06:05 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

This might do it... proposed draft for Brian is below.

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2026 9:05 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: CNN Inquiry

Sure.... was looking to give him some more background but we've been using this and we can send again if we want:

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 10:26 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: CNN Inquiry

(b)(5)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 7:06:24 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: CNN Inquiry

Last one for tonight, just trying to stay ahead.

(b)(6) with a very late story on abortion. You'll see below he's spoken with several opponents.

Draft below and we can discuss Friday... reworked a little to account for the time lapse:

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Mon, 22 Dec 2025 18:58:11 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: RE: Important Updates: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

no

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 1:58 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: Important Updates: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

Did they ask for comment via email?

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 1:56:27 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Important Updates: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

Draft statement:

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 11:49 AM
To: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>; Kelly, Anna EOP/WHO (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Important Updates: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule

UPDATE:

DOJ's opinion is now online: https://www.justice.gov/olc/media/1421726/dl?inline

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 3:30 PM
To: (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Important Updates: VA roll out of Biden abortion repeal rule
Importance: High

Hi, folks. A few updates on this:

(b)(5)

We will keep you posted as things move forward and coordinate any media inquiries we receive with you.

Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Fri, 19 Dec 2025 15:28:33 +0000
To: Massarsky, Sallie N.; Syrek, Christopher D.; Kalett, Ethan G.
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6); Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: RE: AS31 Regulation and RIA to go to OMB
Attachments: AS31(F) RIA PB1 to VA Leadership 12.19.JSB.docx

This looks good to me. I concur with both documents.

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)
General Counsel

Office of General Counsel
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
Work Cell: (b)(6)
Work Phone: (b)(6)
Email: (b)(6)@va.gov

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PRIVILEGED/PRE-DECISIONAL/CONFIDENTIAL

From: Massarsky, Sallie N.
Sent: Thu, 18 Dec 2025 20:00:09 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; (b)(6) Kalett, Ethan G.
Cc: (b)(6) Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: RE: AS31 Regulation and RIA to go to OMB
Attachments: AS31(F) REG Passback 2025-12-18_VA Response to VA Leadership 12.18.docx, AS31(F) RIA PB1 to VA Leadership 12.18.docx

Good afternoon,

I am attaching the TRACKED Regulation and RIA that will be ready to send back to OMB pending the OLC citation and your concurrence. If you have any concerns with the draft responses, please let me know and we will make the necessary edits.

(b)(5)

Thanks,

Sallie

PRE-DECISIONAL

From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2025 1:49 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Massarsky, Sallie N. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: AS31 Regulation and RIA to go to OMB

+ OCLA, OPIA and VHA Leaders (Current and incoming).

(b)(5)

(b)(5) Ethan (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Chris

From: Baehr, James S. (OGC) <James.Baehr@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 18, 2025 1:13 PM

From: Kalett, Ethan G.
Sent: Wed, 19 Nov 2025 13:23:24 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; (b)(6)
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: AS31(F) Reproductive Health Services post VHA cc
Attachments: AS31(F) Reproductive Health Services post VHA cc.docx, AS31(F) RIA cleared by ROM (10.28.25)Reproductive Health Services.docx
Importance: High

Chief:

Attached regulation has been concurred in by OGC, (b)(6) and Women's Health. Next steps:

1. Please review and advise if you or SEC have concerns
2. If you approve, we will formally transmit to OMB

(b)(5)

(b)(5) **Curt and** (b)(5); (b)(6)

4. **Note #2 FOR** (b)(**ONLY:** (b)(5); (b)(6)

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6) @va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6) @va.gov

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From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Mon, 8 Sep 2025 15:37:23 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: RE: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Thanks... will use going forward, including for this Spectrum request that just came in:

I'm working on a TV story about the proposed rule to reinstate the full exclusion of abortions and abortion counseling at the VA. I understand that the public comment period is closed. Is there an estimated timeline for next steps? When will the decision be made about the rule? My deadline is Wednesday at noon.

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/04/2025-14687/reproductive-health-services

Thank you very much,

(b)(6)
Washington Reporter
Spectrum News D.C. Bureau

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 11:36 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Approved.

Pre-decisional

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 10:19 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Christian Post asking about the abortion rule.

He's fishing for an update now that the comment period is over... assuming fine to give him this combined statement:

Hi (b)(6) you can attribute this to a VA spokesperson:

(b)(5)

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @christianpost.com>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 8:31:16 AM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Greetings,

I am a reporter with The Christian Post, an online news publication based in Washington, D.C.

Today, I am working on an article about the United States Department of Veterans Affairs possibly rescinding a policy from the Biden administration that allows tax-payer funded abortions at VA hospitals under certain circumstances.

For my news article, I would like to know if the VA is indeed planning to rescind the policy and, if so, what is the current status of that change in policy.

A response today by 2:00 PM Eastern Time would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

From: Syrek, Christopher D.
Sent: Wed, 3 Sep 2025 19:40:55 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6); (b)(6) (OGC)
Subject: Re: Blumenthal abortion letter

As the Biden admin never responded to Chairman's letters on abortion data, maybe we return favor with the Ranking Member and just don't respond

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:05:12 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Runyan, Danielle A. (OGC) <Danielle.Runyan@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Blumenthal abortion letter

Reading the letter, it appears they are not even asking for a response. But if we feel one is necessary, I would recommend the following:

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 2:58 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Blumenthal abortion letter

(b)(5)

I like the language below.

Curt – (b)(5)
(b)(5)

Chris

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:52 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>;

(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Blumenthal abortion letter

Removing the Secretary.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:19:29 PM
To: DAC <(b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Blumenthal abortion letter

Sir,
Senator Blumenthal led the attached letter signed by nearly the entire Democratic caucus regarding the abortion rule. Will work with the team on a response.
VR,
(b)(6)

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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 2, 2025

Steven L. Lieberman, MD
Acting Under Secretary for Health
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Dr. Lieberman,

We write today to comment on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) proposed rule, RIN: 2900-AS31, published in the Federal Register on August 4, 2025, to reinstate a near-total ban on abortions and abortion counseling from VA's medical benefits package. This incredibly dangerous and reckless rule change will take away essential health care for veterans and beneficiaries of the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). For the past three years, these patients have been able to obtain comprehensive pregnancy counseling, including information about abortion services, and abortion care in cases of rape, incest, or life or health endangerment. This proposed rule seriously calls into question whether the Department is putting political allegiances and culture wars ahead of its sacred obligation to deliver quality, life-saving health care to veterans, including the more than 462,000 women veterans of reproductive age enrolled in VA health care.

We reject this rule's premise that only providing a carveout for abortions in cases of life endangerment is adequate for providing "needed" health care for veterans. Evidence has shown that extreme abortion bans, like the ban this rule would create, cause chaos and confusion for providers, putting them in the impossible position of navigating laws that don't allow them to deliver the appropriate standard of care to ailing patients. Worse, such a ban would also be extremely dangerous to the health and wellbeing of veterans. As we have seen in states with extreme abortion bans, even those with "life exceptions" in place, patients have faced severe health complications and even death in cases when providers did not know if the patient's life was endangered *enough* to be covered under this exception.

Additionally, though this proposed rule claims "[n]o State law prohibits treatment for ectopic pregnancies or miscarriages to save the life of a mother," there are numerous cases of providers nationwide being unable to provide care for women with ectopic pregnancies or experiencing miscarriages, due to restrictive, ambiguous laws. As such, this rule will now require VA providers to make the impossible determination of whether a veteran is close enough to death to be covered under the "threat to life" exception before providing an abortion. VA's proposed rule presupposes that a blanket prohibition and a narrow, undefined exception will be sufficient to ensure VA can provide "needed" care to veterans and that "the lives of pregnant women will continue to be protected…" instead of trusting veterans and their providers to decide on a path forward that actually meets patients' needs and protects their lives. This is no way to treat our veterans, or VA providers.

Beyond the ban on abortion care, the prohibition on abortion counseling in this proposed rule also endangers VA's ability to provide appropriate care to veterans. Regardless of the reason a veteran chooses or needs to seek abortion care, they must be allowed to discuss all their health care options openly and honestly with their provider. In removing VA providers' ability to provide comprehensive, evidence-based pregnancy counseling, including information about abortion services, in this proposed rule, the Department is unnecessarily and detrimentally allowing the government to interfere with health care decisions that should be between a veteran and their provider. In putting forth this proposed rule, VA has decided that its political judgement and legal analysis should supplant medical care decisions that are best made by providers and the patients in their care, even in life and death situations.

Further, despite VA's argument that previous eligibility requirements for abortion care and counseling at the Department – as put in place under the Biden Administration's September 9, 2022, interim final rule – were contradictory to "decades of Federal policy against forced taxpayer funding for abortion," the Biden-era rule brought VA *more* in line with abortion coverage in other federal programs. Most federally funded health programs – including those covered under the Hyde Amendment – have carveouts for abortions in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment. VA's rule will lead to an inequity for veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries when compared to their civilian counterparts, making their access to abortion care more limited than those who use almost any other federally funded health care program.

This proposed rule also claims the Biden-era rule was an act of overreach, "creating a purported Federal entitlement to abortion for veterans where none had existed before and without regard to State law." In reality, the Department has previously issued a regulation (38 CFR 17.419) confirming the ability of VA providers to practice their health care profession consistent with the scope of their VA employment, regardless of any State license, registration, certification, or other requirements that unduly interfere with their practice. Additionally, the Justice Department issued an opinion after the release of the Biden-era rule, citing the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution and its applicability to the Biden rule: "[s]tates may not impose criminal or civil liability on VA employees…who provide or facilitate abortions or related services in a manner authorized by federal law, including VA's rule." Given the applicability of VA's own regulations and the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, we fail to see how the Department can reject the Biden-era rule on the premise of "overreach."

Finally, we find the Department's claim that "abortion is not a 'needed' service for veterans" to be insulting and ignorant. Veterans of reproductive age have high rates of chronic health conditions – many of which may be service connected, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), severe hypertension, and renal disease – that can increase the risks associated with a pregnancy. If a provider determines these conditions or others make an abortion necessary to preserve a veteran or CHAMPVA beneficiary's health, access to abortion should be considered essential health care. In addition, veterans who are forced to carry to term pregnancies resulting from rape or incest are at risk of long-lasting psychological conditions and traumatic stress, making abortion access for these veterans needed for protecting their health. It is also vital given the high incidence of military sexual trauma in the Armed Forces, and the number of veterans who already suffer from PTSD or other mental health conditions.

The concerns we raise about this cruel proposal to roll back essential health care for veterans are not ours alone – they are shared by veterans and their families nationwide. A survey conducted by Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision found more than two-thirds of their members surveyed *supported* both VA and the Department of Defense stepping in to ensure veterans, servicemembers, and their families have access to the reproductive care they need. Since the *Dobbs* decision, more than half of women veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries of reproductive age live in states that have enacted abortion bans or restrictions. Should their health be in jeopardy due to a pregnancy, or if they are raped, this rule will leave them with nowhere to turn. To finalize this rule will be a failure for our veterans, and we urge the Department to reconsider.

Thank you for your consideration of this comment.

Sincerely,

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Greg Casar
Member of Congress

Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress

Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

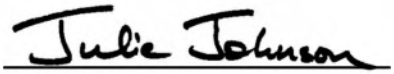
Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress

Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress

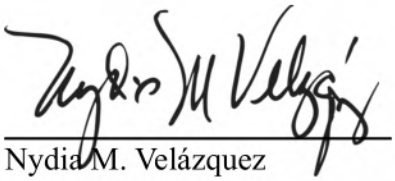
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



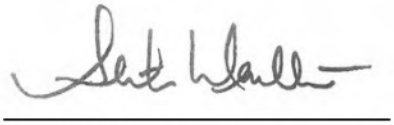
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



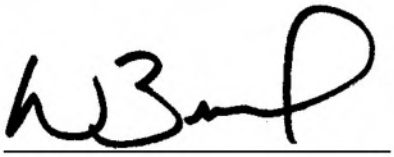
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



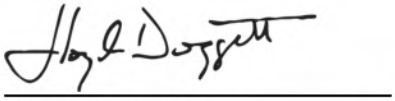
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



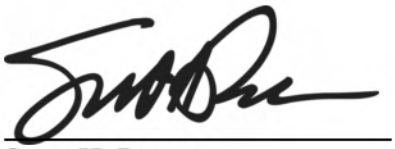
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



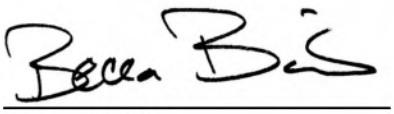
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



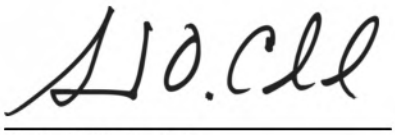
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



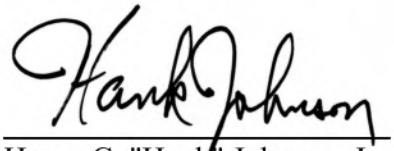
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

Johnny Olszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress

Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress

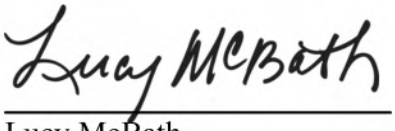
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

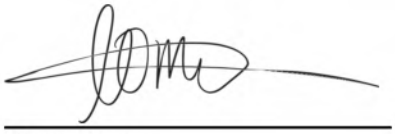
John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

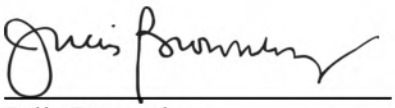
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



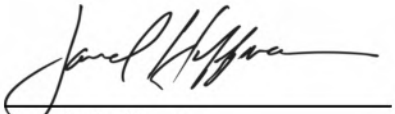
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



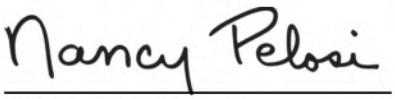
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



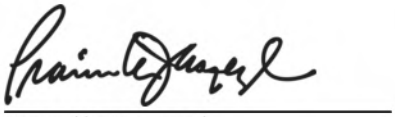
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



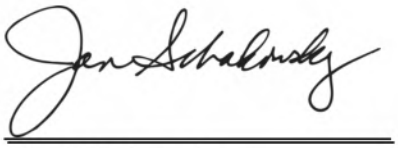
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



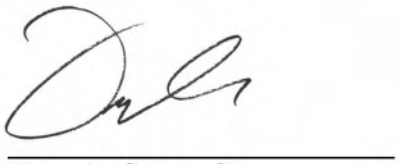
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



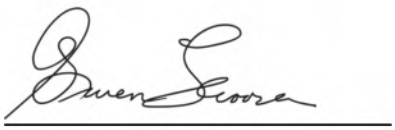
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



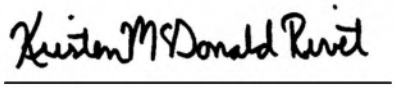
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



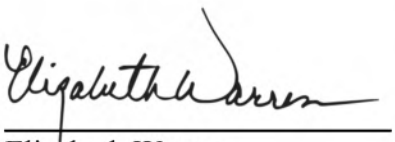
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



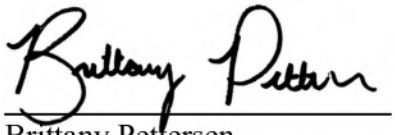
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



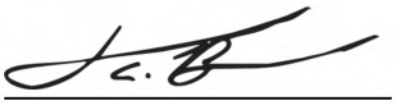
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



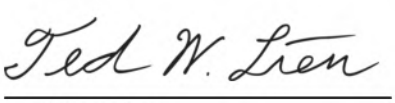
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



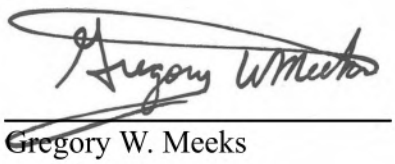
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



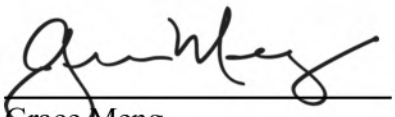
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



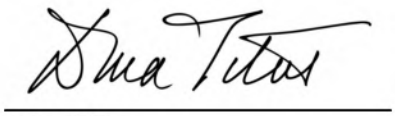
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



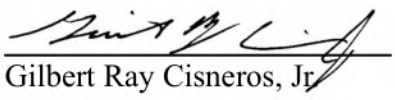
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress

Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Sarah McBride
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress

Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress

Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Laura Friedman
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
United States Senator

Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress

Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

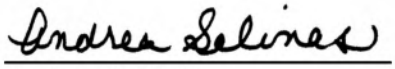
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

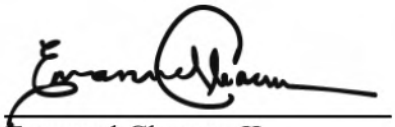
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

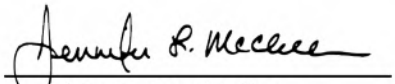
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



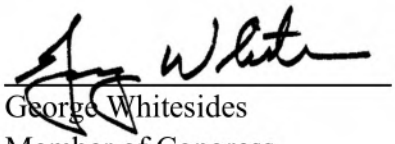
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



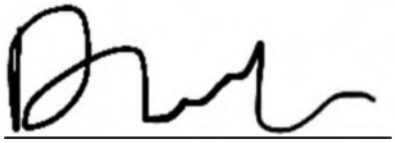
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



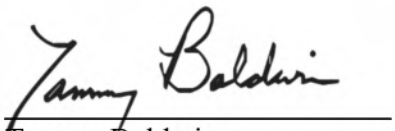
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



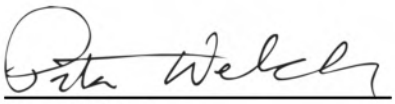
George Whitesides
Member of Congress



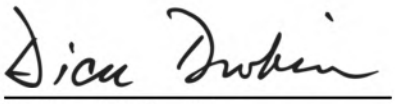
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



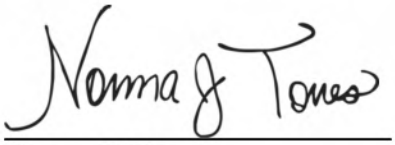
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



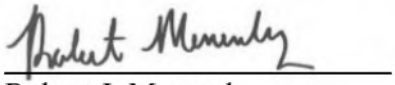
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



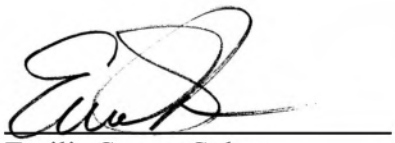
Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

John Fetterman
United States Senator

Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress

Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Shomari Figures
Member of Congress

Dave Min
Member of Congress

Cleo Fields
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Emily Randall
Member of Congress

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress

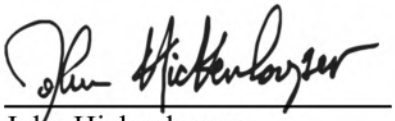
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

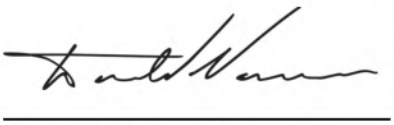
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



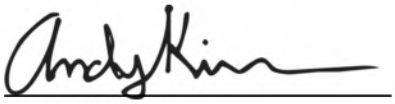
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



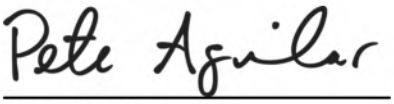
Josh Riley
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



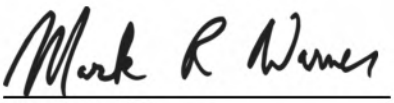
Andy Kim
United States Senator



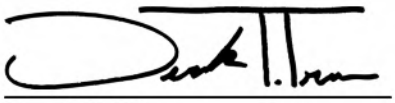
Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



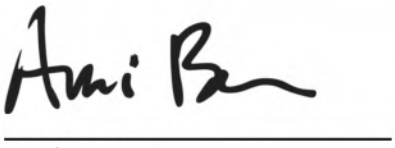
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Ami Bera
Member of Congress

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Nellie Pou
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

George Latimer
Member of Congress

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Adam Gray
Member of Congress

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Tue, 2 Sep 2025 17:41:55 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E.; Stapleton, John O.
Subject: RE: Media query -- abortion data

Thanks... and yes, almost all of this is stuff we've used before.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:40 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Media query -- abortion data

This is all things we have said before? Fine with me if so.

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:16 PM
To: (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Media query -- abortion data

Military.com is writing about our abortion proposed rule.

The reporter refers to a Blumenthal-Takano-Dem rally tomorrow on this issue, near the Capitol.

Let me know if you have any objections to this reply:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @Monster.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media query -- abortion data?

My colleague wrote this story after the first year of the VA covering abortions other than life of the mother, rape or incest, on data that the VA provided to Congress the first year.

https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/10/19/va-says-it-performed-88-abortions-past-year-congress-again-threatens-subpoenas-pursuit-of-more.html

The VA under the Biden administration did not provide Congress with the second year's data, and also declined to provide it to Rebecca when she asked.

Any way we can get that data? Also, if there is any data for this calendar year that may show a change, that would be helpful.

As you probably know, congressional Democrats are having a press conference tomorrow on the issue; if we could get the data by tomorrow afternoon and any

statement you have in response to their concerns, (top lines of press release included below) it would be greatly appreciated.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD AT 2:00 PM: BLUMENTHAL, TAKANO, SENATE & HOUSE DEMOCRATS JOIN VETERANS TO RAIL AGAINST THE TRUMP VA'S MOVE TO STOP PROVIDING LIFE-SAVING ABORTIONS TO VETERANS

Lawmakers, reproductive health care advocates, and veterans to speak on how the Trump Administration's upcoming ban of abortion care and counseling at VA will hurt veterans and their families

Appreciated,
(b)(6)

(b)(6)
VA and Military Health Care Reporter
Cell: (b)(6)
X: (b)(6)
BlueSky: (b)(6)

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From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Tue, 2 Sep 2025 17:13:41 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Media query -- abortion data?

thanks

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:13 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: Media query -- abortion data?

Approved

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From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 12:38:42 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Media query -- abortion data?

Military.com is writing about our abortion proposed rule.

Also note there's a Blumenthal-Takano-Dem rally tomorrow on this, near the Capitol.

With your OK we'll show this to the WH before sending:

(b)(5)

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Thu, 28 Aug 2025 17:27:39 +0000
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: Guardian story, VA abortion rule, deadline 5pmET

(b)(6) is writing for the Guardian again, this time about our abortion rule, see his email below.

His deadline is 5 pm today and his story will likely run Friday.

We've given out this statement to anyone asking follow-up questions. Just wanted to flag before we sent to him in case you have any concerns:

Hi Aaron, you can attribute this to a VA spokesperson:

Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: Aaron Glantz <afglantz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 28, 2025 12:01 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <Peter.Kasperowicz1@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NEW INQUIRY: VA abortion rule, deadline 5pmET

Hi Peter,

I'm writing a story on the VA's proposed rule excluding abortions and abortion counseling from the medical benefits package. Under this rule, VA clinicians will be barred from performing abortions even in the cases of rape and incest.

I have interviewed veterans who characterize the policy as cruel, and who say it it could be particularly damaging for female veterans given the high rate of sexual assault in the military.

Following the adoption of strict state-level abortion restrictions post-Dobbs, they say this policy may force veterans to cross state lines or leave the country to have an abortion or otherwise carry a baby fathered through rape to term.

Please let me know VA's perspective on these concerns and if Secretary Collins has previously spoken to these matters publicly.

All the best,
(b)(6)

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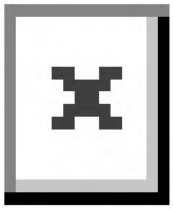

(b)(6)
Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University
m: (b)(6)
e: (b)(6)@gmail.com
web: (b)(6)
Twitter: @(b)(6)

From: Syrek, Christopher D.
Sent: Mon, 11 Aug 2025 19:41:23 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Agree

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From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 3:22:17 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Chris – flagging the below media inquiry from the Intercept regarding the language of the proposed reproductive regulation. We are not responding.

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @theintercept.com <(b)(6) @theintercept.com>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 10:19 AM
To: Kunich, Gary J (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Hi Gary,

Thank you so much for sending this. I wanted to clarify two statements in the draft of proposed rule:

"Taken together, claims in the prior administration's rule that abortions throughout pregnancy are needed to save the lives of pregnant women are incorrect."

"For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed rule would make clear that the exclusion for abortion does not apply “"when a physician certifies that the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term""

Do these statements contradict each other, and if not, why?

Best,

(b)(6)
On Thursday, August 7th, 2025 at 2:32 PM, Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6) @va.gov> wrote:

Hi (b)(6) - Please see our VA statement below, attributable to a VA spokesperson.

VA Spokesperson Statement
Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.

- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

From: (b)(6) @theintercept.com <(b)(6) @theintercept.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 8:53 AM
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Hi,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm a politics reporter for The Intercept. I'm working on a story about the proposed Reproductive Health rule for the VA . I wanted to get your comment on the expected impact of this rule, and a response to concerns that this could endanger pregnant veterans and put their mental health at risk.

Best,

(b)(6)

On Monday, July 28th, 2025 at 2:22 PM, (b)(6) @theintercept.com (b)(6) @theintercept.com> wrote:

Hi,

I hope this email finds you well. I'm a politics reporter for The Intercept. I wanted to confirm that the proposed Reproductive Health rule for the VA is a reversal of the Biden-era policy protecting abortion rights for veterans? I also wanted to get a comment from the VA about the expected impact of this rule change.

My deadline is Tuesday. Please let me know if you have any questions. I've attached a screenshot of the rule below.

Executive Order Review Search Results

EO Review Search Criteria: Agencies=All; Review Status=Pending Review,Concluded; Terms= 2900-AS31;

Number Of Records Found: 1 New Search

Received Date	RIN	Agency	Rule Title	Status	Concluded Date	Conclusion Action
03/05/2025	2900-AS31	2900-VA	Reproductive Health Services	Concluded	07/24/2025	Consistent with Change

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Mon, 11 Aug 2025 17:55:17 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 11:52 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Pete – I'm a bit flummoxed on this one. We can hold, but it is confusing … or I am easily confused, which is already a given.

From: (b)(6)@theintercept.com <(b)(6)@theintercept.com>
Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 10:19 AM
To: Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Comment Request: Reproductive Health Rule

Hi Gary,

Thank you so much for sending this. I wanted to clarify two statements in the draft of proposed rule:

"Taken together, claims in the prior administration's rule that abortions throughout pregnancy are needed to save the lives of pregnant women are incorrect."

"For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed rule would make clear that the exclusion for abortion does not apply ""when a physician certifies that the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term""

Do these statements contradict each other, and if not, why?

Best,

(b)(6)

On Thursday, August 7th, 2025 at 2:32 PM, Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov> wrote:

Hi (b)(6) - Please see our VA statement below, attributable to a VA spokesperson.

From: Syrek, Christopher D.
Sent: Wed, 30 Jul 2025 19:33:25 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.; DAC
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Got it, thanks

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2025 3:27:08 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; DAC (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

FYI: https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/jul/30/department-veterans-affairs-shouldnt-funding-abortion/

Pre-decisional

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 7:43 PM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>; DAC (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

(b)(5)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 10:39:00 AM
To: DAC (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Ok. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: DAC (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 10:32 AM
To: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>

Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Will call from the car. Couple of questions

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 8:37:45 AM
To: DAC (b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir – Just following up on this. Thanks.

Pre-decisional

From: Cashour, Curtis E.
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 3:47 PM
To: DAC (b)(@va.gov>
Cc: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: for review: regulatory change holding statement

Sir – A draft holding statement is below. We would only use this in response to incoming media inquiries. Please let us know if you have any feedback or edits. Thanks.

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Mon, 28 Jul 2025 14:14:25 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.; Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Subject: Re: Let me know what you think of this

suggested edits

(b)(5)

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 10:05 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Let me know what you think of this

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wed, 16 Jul 2025 16:48:14 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: Fw: For Review: Press Release on Ab
Attachments: 06_ Press Release on Abortion_7_7.docx

From: Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 11:39 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: For Review: Press Release on Ab

Attached are changes—they are significant because the press release as written was legally inaccurate as to VA's position in AS31. Please let me know if it would be helpful to discuss.

Please also note:

(b)(5)

Ethan Kalett
Executive Director
VA Office of Regulation Oversight and Management
Office of the VA Chief of Staff
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Executive Assistant: (b)(6)@va.gov
Director: Sallie Massarsky (b)(6)@va.gov

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screening of this email by information officers or server administrators is not intended to be consent to any party to review the content of the email or a waiver of the attorney-client privilege and/or work product privilege.

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 10:10 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kalett, Ethan G. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: For Review: Press Release on Ab

(b)(6) and Ethan,

Can you please review the attached release on abortion? We want to make sure the language in the release is legally sound and does not conflict with the proposed reg? Thank you.

Best,

(b)(6)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July XX, 2025

(b)(5)

From: Kalett, Ethan G.
Sent: Mon, 7 Jul 2025 11:41:19 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; Cashour, Curtis E.; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Reg Comms Plan
Attachments: AS31 REG Passback July 2.docx, AS31 RIA Passback VA Response 7.2.docx

Got it. (b)(6) we have a meeting today at 1. New version is attached.

Any and all information in this email or attached, is **PRE-DECISIONAL**.
This electronic transmission may contain attorney work-product or information protected under the attorney-client privilege. Portions of this transmission may contain information also protected from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 USC §552. Do not release this information without prior authorization from the sender. If this has inadvertently reached the wrong party, please delete this information immediately and notify the sender. Any security screening of this email by information officers or server administrators is not intended to be consent to any party to review the content of the email or a waiver of the attorney-client privilege and/or work product privilege.

From: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 7, 2025 7:40 AM
To: Kalett, Ethan G. <ethan.kalett@va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <Curt.Cashour1@va.gov>; Porter, Macaulay V. <Macaulay.Porter1@va.gov>
Subject: Reg Comms Plan

Ethan/OPIA -

Please revisit the comms plan you were working on the Abortion Reg.

Pass back is due this Friday July 11, so this could move quick.

Thanks,
Chris

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Mon, 2 Jun 2025 19:56:52 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: For review
Attachments: 06_ Press Release on Abortion.docx

PRE - DECISIONAL

Curt - please see attached for a draft release and a potential comms plan below.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

25-XXX v1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June XXX, 2025

VA rescinds illegal Biden Administration abortion policy

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wed, 16 Apr 2025 20:45:57 +0000
To: Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: FW: Stat News: Abortion opponents expect reversal of Biden policy allowing the procedure at VA facilities
Attachments: NDC Letter on VA Abortion Services Rule Revision March 24 2025 (002).pdf, VSO Letter Endorsing Collins and Lawrence VA v13 Jan 25.pdf, NMVA Contact List v3 Apr 25.xlsx

Complete email from Mr. Carey for context.

/r

Sean

(b)(6)
VSO Liaison
Office of the Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairts
M: (b)(6)
O:

(b)(6)

Thanks for calling up. Happy to engage the Department on these issues.

As for the EO 12866 meeting, when I asked the OIRA reps if anyone from VA was on the call, I remember them saying no one was on, and then I remember commenting on how unfortunate it was not to have any reps from VA for their proposed regulatory action. But in the summary of the EO 12866 meeting (https://training.reginfo.gov/public/do/viewEO12866Meeting?viewRule=true&rin=2900-AS31&meetingId=861373&acronym=2900-VA), it lists a number of VA reps:

- (b)(6)
- Susan Blauert
- (b)(6)
- Elizabeth Patton
- Lauren Taub

That webpage also has the letter we submitted as part of our 12866 meeting (https://training.reginfo.gov/public/do/eoDownloadDocument?pubId=&eodoc=true&documentID=803342), but a copy is also attached. As you can see in our letter, we don't talk about any of the moral or civil rights issues regarding abortion access, but the legal and regulatory issues, such as:

- That the Health Care Act of 1992 (PL 102-585, § 106) applies universally to VA provided health care in prohibiting abortion services, and was not amended by the Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 to somehow now allow them; and
- That abortion services cannot, in almost every case, be tied to some medically necessary treatment associated with service-connected disabilities.

Moving on to other issues, here's my contact information for your information.

FYI, I am co-chair of the National Military & Veterans Alliance (www.NMVA.US), which has 46 members, and was a key group of organizations to which I reached out for the endorsement letter for Secretary Collins and Deputy Secretary Lawrence. Additionally, I'm working on a similar letter to Senator Thune encouraging him to push through Senator Gallego's holds on Jimmy Baehr and Sam Brown for their respective confirmation votes.

Attached is the endorsement letter referenced above, as well as the complete list of the NMVA membership for your distro lists.

I only have Marty Martinez' WWP email, but I do have his personal cell, so I'll tell him we talked and that I sent this stuff over to you, but if you can provide his VA email, that would be helpful as well.

Also, (b)(6), formerly of National Military Family Association, is now with National Defense Committee, so I've cc'd her as well.

There are a number of other issues which NDC and NMVA members have been engaged since January 20th on which we've sent correspondence, and I'll forward you copies of those as well by separate email.

(b)(6)
CAPT, USN (Ret)
Chief Bottle Washer
National Defense Committee
(b)(6)@NationalDefenseCommittee.com
(b)(6)
20 F St., NW, #703
Washington, DC 20001

NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 12:03 PM
To: (b)(6)@nationaldefensecommittee.com>

Subject: Fw: Stat News: Abortion opponents expect reversal of Biden policy allowing the procedure at VA facilities

---

From: Cashour, Curtis E. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 11:41 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Stat News: Abortion opponents expect reversal of Biden policy allowing the procedure at VA facilities

Stat News: Abortion opponents expect reversal of Biden policy allowing the procedure at VA facilities (7 April, John Wilkerson, Washington, D.C.)

Trump's VA secretary said he would review the policy, and a rule on reproductive health services is pending

WASHINGTON — Abortion opponents believe that a repeal is in the works for a Biden administration policy allowing abortions for veterans and their dependents in limited circumstances at Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

After the Supreme Court struck down the constitutional right to abortion in June 2022, the Department of Veterans Affairs began providing abortions, including in states that ban the procedure, when the life or health of a veteran or covered dependent is endangered by pregnancy, or when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest. The VA also started providing abortion counseling.

The Biden VA offered abortion services on an interim basis while working on a regulation, titled Reproductive Health Services, which it finalized as of April 2024.On March 3, the White House budget office received a VA interim final rule by the same title as the Biden Administration policy. There is no additional description of the regulation beyond the title.Neither the VA nor the White House responded to questions about the new regulation.

"I'm assuming that this is probably the Trump administration making an interim final rule to rescind or change the Biden interim final rule that came about after Dobbs," said Bob Carey, president of the National Defense Committee, a group that opposes the VA's abortion policy.

At least three groups opposed to abortion have met with White House budget and Veterans Affairs officials to make the case for using the new regulation to rescind Biden's policy. Carey's group was among them. He said government officials were in "listen only" mode and gave no indication of what the administration plans to do with the regulation.

But he said that given the Trump administration's position on abortion, he has little doubt about what's in store.

He added, though, that the rule could also deal with in vitro fertilization.

Trump is more sympathetic to abortion opponents than Biden, but his position has been difficult to pin down on some policies, such as regulation of mifepristone or how far states can go in banning the abortion pill. He has repeatedly said he wants to leave abortion policy up to the states.

However, the VA abortion policy, like the regulation of mifepristone, is a federal regulation.

At his confirmation hearing in January, VA Secretary Doug Collins said a 1992 law says the Veterans Affairs Department does not provide abortions.

"We will be looking at that issue when I get in there to confirm that the VA is actually following the law," Collins said at his confirmation hearing.

The Biden administration said a separate 1996 law does allow the VA to provide abortion services. Although the VA in 1999 excluded abortion services from its benefits package, the Biden administration said the VA did not justify the exclusion at the time, and law allows the VA to add needed medical services, including abortion services, to the benefits package. With abortion services no longer available in some states, the procedure is now needed, the administration argued.

"These State bans and restrictions on abortion presented a serious threat to the health and lives of over one hundred thousand veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries who relied, or may rely in the future, on VA health care," according to the Biden administration rule, referring to the VA's health coverage for dependents program.

NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Doug Collins
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Collins:

We appreciate the Department of Veterans Affairs review of the Department's previous Interim Final Rule (2022) and Final Rule (2024) on "Reproductive Health Services" (RIN 2900-AS31), and the opportunity for the National Defense Committee to discuss the regulatory review of that IFR through the Executive Order 12866 process, in which we participated today with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and a number of staff from the Department.

First, National Defense Committee wishes to endorse the letter provided on March 18, 2025 by the Ethics and Public Policy Center, and especially its arguments regarding the failure of the VA to establish the need for such Rules, and the inadequacy of the Department's arguments that the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* Supreme Court decision somehow threatens the life of a pregnant woman. Most notably, as the Ethics and Public Policy Center letter demonstrated, the Department failed identify a single case of a woman facing "urgent risks" (a term introduced by the Department in this rulemaking process which has no relevance to the *Dobbs* case nor to the issue of access to abortion services).

Furthermore, National Defense Committee endorses the arguments of the Ethics and Public Policy Center letter that the *Veterans Health Care Act of 1992* (PL 102-585, § 106) applies universally to VA provided health care, and was not amended by the *Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996* despite the Department's additionally imaginative legal concept that the 1996 law "effectively overtook" the 1992 law. As the Ethics and Public Policy Center eloquently argues, such legalistic legerdemains appear to be more about what the Department wished could be the case, but not what the law actually says.

Additionally, as a military and veterans advocacy organization, National Defense Committee is deeply concerned the abortion services provided by the Rules is not for treating service-connected disabilities, as the top three VA health care eligibility Priority Groups require. Unless the pregnancy is related to such service-connected disabilities, or where service-connected disabilities threaten the life of the pregnant woman by introducing specific service-related disability-related complications to the woman's health that can only be rectified by an abortion, then the Department should not be providing such abortion services, regardless of the status of State laws regarding abortion access.

Finally, given the significant problems the Department's experienced in providing VA Direct Medical Care to service-connected disabled veterans, especially with specialty medical care, providing such non-medically necessary abortion services through the Department will only exacerbate those VA Direct Care access problems, and the veterans the Department treats would be better served in focusing medical provider services to other than non-service-connected

abortion services. So long as the Department provides any non-service-connected abortion services, it cannot rationally make the case that it is short of medical providers for treating those service-connected disabilities that are not currently treated within the 20- and 28-day Direct Care access standards.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you rescind both Rules immediately.

Very Respectfully,

(b)(6)

CAPT, USN (Ret)
Chief Bottle Washer

Copy:

- The Honorable Steven Lieberman, Acting Under Secretary of Health
- Michael Shores, Director, Office of Regulation and Policy Management

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

Dear Chair Moran and Senator Blumenthal:

The below signing veteran and military advocacy organizations applaud President-Elect Trump's nominations of The Honorable Doug Collins as Secretary of Veterans Affairs and The Honorable Paul Lawrence as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We encourage the Committee to confirm these nominations and move them swiftly to the full Senate for a vote, when all due diligence requirements are met. We appreciate your leadership in ensuring these Department leaderships positions are confirmed so they can begin serving the veteran and military communities expeditiously on Inauguration Day of January 20, 2025.

We appreciate Representative Collins' military service, especially his reenlisting in the Reserve Component after the 9/11 attacks, and his combat-zone deployment to Iraq as a Chaplain in 2008. We also recognize his service on the Defense and Veterans Affairs Committees of the Georgia House of Representatives, and his strong advocacy for broad access to veterans health, newborn childcare, and oversight of VA executive personnel performance and awards while a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Further, we have all worked with former Under Secretary Lawrence when he served as the Under Secretary Benefits and look forward to doing so again. We recognize his steadfast leadership in implementing the *Appeals Modernization Act of 2017* (AMA, P.L. 115-55), especially to simplify the potentially complicated process of navigating the three different appeal options under the AMA's reformed appeals processes. We are especially appreciative of his leadership when he recommended that the U.S. Government would not appeal the District Court of Northern California's November 2020 ruling in *Nehmer v. Department of Veterans Affairs*. This small group of Vietnam-era "Blue Water Navy" veterans were previously denied retroactive benefits, and the norm would be for the government to continue to appeal as far as possible.

We look forward to Representative Collins' hearing tomorrow, and hopefully Mr. Lawrence's hearing soon thereafter. The Committee's confirmation is the important first step in securing the full Senate's support in fulfilling its advice and consent requirements.

Very Respectfully,

National Defense Committee
Hunter Seven Foundation
Burn Pits 360
Wounded Paw Project
Mission Roll Call
Armed Forces Retirees Association
Heroes Athletic Association
Mission: POW/MIA
Grunt Style Foundation
Reserve Organization of America
American Military Society
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Ranger Leadership Policy Center
American GI Forum
75th Ranger Regiment Association
Military Order of the Purple Heart
America's Warrior Partnership
WiseHealth/VeteranCaregiver.com
TREA: The Enlisted Association
Stronghold Freedom Foundation
Operation First Response

From: Syrek, Christopher D.
Sent: Thu, 3 Apr 2025 18:47:23 +0000
To: Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC); Kasperowicz, Peter I.; Cashour, Curtis E.
Subject: Re: reporter asking about abortion policy

Do not respond.

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC) (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 2:46:17 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6) @va.gov>; Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) .@va.gov>
Subject: RE: reporter asking about abortion policy

Concur.

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) .@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 2:17 PM
To: Syrek, Christopher D. (b)(6) @va.gov>; Hoffman, James A. (Jim) (OGC) (b)(6) @va.gov>; Cashour, Curtis E. <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FW: reporter asking about abortion policy

Flagging, no plans to respond

From: (b)(6) @statnews.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 12:22 PM
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6) .@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] reporter asking about abortion policy

I'm a reporter at the health and science publication STAT, owned by the Boston Globe.

The VA is working on an interim final rule, titled Reproductive Health Services and with the RIN: 2900-AS31.

That was also the title of both an interim final and final rule that allowed the VA to provide abortions in certain circumstances. Does the new interim final rule reverse the current abortion policy or seek to amend it in some way?

Thank you for considering my request.
--
(b)(6)
Washington Correspondent
Pronouns: he/him
Twitter: (b)(6)
Mobile: (b)(6)

From: Shores, Michael P. (OGC)
Sent: Tue, 4 Mar 2025 21:57:07 +0000
To: Syrek, Christopher D.; Cashour, Curtis E.
Cc: Burch, Jennifer A.; Hoffman, James A.; Lieberman, Steven; (b)(6)
Office of Regulation Policy & Management (00REG); Manuel, Howard L.
Subject: FW: AS31(IF) Reproductive Health Services - Reg package to OMB
Attachments: (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Pre-Decisional

Chief,

(b)(5)

Curt,

(b)(5)

Happy to answer any questions.

----------PLEASE CLOSE HOLD ALL ATTACHED DOCUMENTS AND DO NOT SHARE OUTSIDE OF VA----------

Thanks everyone!

v/r Mike

Michael P. Shores
Michael P. Shores
Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG)
Department of Veterans Affairs
(b)(6)

PRE-DECISIONAL

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS **8320-01**

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900-AS31

Reproductive Health Services

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Interim final rule.

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

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PRE-DECISIONAL

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of General Counsel
Washington DC 20420

In Reply Refer To: **00REG**

(b)(5)

Approved by:

(b)(6)

Chief Economist
Office of Regulation Policy & Management (00REG)
Office of General Counsel

PRE-DECISIONAL

(Attachment)

Regulatory Impact Analysis for RIN 2900-AS31(IF)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

PRE-DECISIONAL

PRE-DECISIONAL

(b)(5)

Submitted by:
Steven L. Lieberman
Veteran Health Administration
March 4, 2025

PRE-DECISIONAL

Plain Language Summary Document

RIN: AS31, Reproductive Health Services

(b)(5)

PLANNED REGULATORY ACTION (PREGA)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Primary Contact: Dr. Steven L. Lieberman, Acting Under Secretary of Health, Department of Veterans Affairs, (202) 461 – 0373.

Date: March 4, 2025

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Fri, 21 Feb 2025 22:23:20 +0000
To: Reed, Ernest
Cc: Brazell, Karen L.; Cashour, Curtis E.; Tallman, Gary; Johnson, Lyndon (VA)
Subject: OPIA Contracts
Attachments: OPIA Contract review.xlsx

Ernest,

Please see attached for OPIA's 3 contracts with the details outlined in Column Y.

Additionally, I've included the descriptions below.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

ORIGINAL MESSAGE

[URGENT]

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Please provide all answers back to Dr. Ernest Reed @ (b)(6) @va.gov, so he can compile for the review. Again, it is imperative that we have a solid justification for each program prior to a final decision.

Thank you for your support.

Best regards,

Karen L. Brazell, PMP
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs

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From: Kunich, Gary J
Sent: Mon, 8 Sep 2025 15:42:46 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; (b)(6)
Cc: Carter, Susan
Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW & APPROVAL - RE: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Ah! Want me to send that to Spectrum, too?

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 10:39 AM
To: Kunich, Gary J (b)(6) @va.gov>; Stapleton, John O. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW & APPROVAL - RE: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

You can send him this, and any others asking for an update (like the Spectrum one that just came in):

Hi (b)(, you can attribute this to a VA spokesperson:

Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

VA is following the established rulemaking process, including reviewing all public comments in response to the proposal. No changes will be made to VA services until the rule is finalized.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

From: Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 8:58 AM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: FOR REVIEW & APPROVAL - RE: MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Pete – You want me to send this or will you handle with something else?

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) @christianpost.com>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 7:31 AM
To: VA Public Affairs <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MEDIA REQUEST: INTERVIEW FOR NEWS STORY

Greetings,

I am a reporter with The Christian Post, an online news publication based in Washington, D.C.

Today, I am working on an article about the United States Department of Veterans Affairs possibly rescinding a policy from the Biden administration that allows tax-payer funded abortions at VA hospitals under certain circumstances.

For my news article, I would like to know if the VA is indeed planning to rescind the policy and, if so, what is the current status of that change in policy.

A response today by 2:00 PM Eastern Time would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Fri, 17 Apr 2026 16:26:52 +0000
To: (b)(6) VACO Media Requests; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6) Kunich, Gary J; Carter, Susan
Subject: RE: Media Query: El Paso Matters/El Paso VAMC/Abortion Services

Thank you!

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2026 11:26 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; VACO Media Requests <VACOMediaRequests@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action <VHA10BCOM2MediaRelationsAction@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6)@va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Re: Media Query: El Paso Matters/El Paso VAMC/Abortion Services

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for flagging. No need to respond. We've given our statement.

Thank you,
(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2026 12:24 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; VACO Media Requests (b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6)@va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: El Paso Matters/El Paso VAMC/Abortion Services

From the reporter:

Thank you. The answer to my first two questions is still unclear though. The first question was a yes/no question.

Yes or no?: Between "Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022" and when "Department of Justice last year issued an opinion that states VA is not legally authorized to provide abortions" -- did the VA clinic in El Paso begin offering abortion services or counseling in cases of rape, incest and life endangerment from pregnancy?

If the answer is yes: What services were provided?

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2026 7:08 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; VACO Media Requests (b)(6) @va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6) @va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: El Paso Matters/El Paso VAMC/Abortion Services

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for flagging. Please send this attributable to me.

"The Department of Justice last year issued an opinion that states VA is not legally authorized to provide abortions, and VA complied with that opinion immediately.

DOJ's opinion is consistent with VA's final rule on this matter."

Background Information
Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- VA maintains the ability to provide care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Thank you,
(b)(6)
Press Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 5:34 PM
To: VACO Media Requests (b)(6) @va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6) @va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Media Query: El Paso Matters/El Paso VAMC/Abortion Services

REQUEST/STORY PREMISE: Health reporter with El Paso Matters is working on a story about reproductive health services and is asking the following:

1. Prior to this interim rule in 2025 and final rule end of 2025 banning abortions, did the VA Health Clinic in El Paso provide abortion services and counseling in cases of rape, incest or endangerment of the patient's life? https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/docs/Abortion-Services-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf

2. What abortion services were provided through the VA health care system in El Paso? (example: medication abortion, d&c, d&e, etc.)

3) Where does the VA clinic in El Paso or William Beaumont Army Medical Center refer patients seeking abortion services or counseling now?

FACILITY: El Paso (Texas) VAMC

OUTLET: El Paso Matters

REPORTER: (b)(6) Health Reporter, Cell: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @elpasomatters.org

CONTACT: Email below

DEADLINE: Friday, April 18, 11:00 a.m. (ET)

BROADCAST/PUBLICATION DATE: TBD

RECOMMENDATION: Defer to VHA/OPA

From: (b)(6) @elpasomatters.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2026 1:31 PM
To: ELP Public Affairs (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MEDIA REQUEST - abortion services

Hello,

I'm working on a story about reproductive health services and wanted to confirm a few things:

1) Prior to this interim rule in 2025 and final rule end of 2025 banning abortions, did the VA Health Clinic in El Paso provide abortion services and counseling in cases of rape, incest or endangerment of the patient's life?

https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/docs/Abortion-Services-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf

2) What abortion services were provided through the VA health care system in El Paso? (example: medication abortion, d&c, d&e, etc.)

3) Where does the VA clinic in El Paso or William Beaumont Army Medical Center refer patients seeking abortion services or counseling now?

If you could please respond by Friday, 4/17 at noon, I would appreciate it.

Kind regards,

--

(b)(6)

Health Reporter at El Paso Matters

Cell: (b)(6)

Signal: (b)(6)

(b)(6) @elpasomatters.org

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wed, 10 Sep 2025 22:03:39 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; VACO Media Requests; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action
Cc: Carter, Susan; Kunich, Gary J; (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

And more:

###
I missed that one, thank you for pointing it out! Do you have the numbers on how many of those VA-provided abortions were provided in Texas?

Thank you again for your help, and for working with me through this back and forth,

(b)(6)
Health Reporter
(b)(6)
The Dallas Morning News
###

Proposed Response: (b)(5)

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 11:41 AM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; VACO Media Requests (b)(6) @va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

Thanks... tell her everything she needs should be in our proposed rule:

https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-14687.pdf

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 12:29 PM

To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>; VACO Media Requests <(b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

Reporter came back with following:

###
Thank you, this is helpful! One thing I'm a little confused on: As of right now, what is the VA's policy (and, if it differs, practice) on abortion care? Does the VA currently provide abortion care, particularly outside of life-threatening situations?

I'm also a bit confused on whether the 2022 change under the Biden administration actually led to any policy changes within the VA. After that 2022 change, did the VA actually begin providing abortion care?

I'm also happy to talk on the phone about this, and that might be easier since this is a complex topic. I'm currently mostly interested in a background conversation so that I can understand the context.

Best,
(b)(6)
Health Reporter
(b)(6)
The Dallas Morning News
###

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 5:32 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; VACO Media Requests <(b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

Thanks... fine to give her this from a VA spokesperson:

Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

VA is following the established rulemaking process, including reviewing all public comments in response to the proposal. No changes will be made to VA services until the rule is finalized.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 5:32 PM
To: VACO Media Requests <VACOMediaRequests@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action <VHA10BCOM2MediaRelationsAction@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <Susan.Carter2@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <Gary.Kunich@va.gov>; Northstar, Jan <Jan.Northstar@va.gov>; Roy, Jennifer A. <Jennifer.Roy@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

From reporter (see attached):
Right now the scope is all Texas VA facilities, but I'm still in the early stages of reporting, so that could change! I wish I could give more solid answers right now, but I try not to determine the full scope/focus ahead of time, and instead follow the focus that makes the most sense based on the interviews and research.

She is requesting a written response by Thursday, Sept. 11 to provide context to her questions:

- what type of care they have been providing
- how the proposed rule change could shift that care, etc.

From: Jacobsen, Jessica B.
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:15 PM
To: VACO Media Requests <VACOMediaRequests@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action <VHA10BCOM2MediaRelationsAction@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <Susan.Carter2@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <Gary.Kunich@va.gov>; Northstar, Jan <Jan.Northstar@va.gov>; Roy, Jennifer A. <Jennifer.Roy@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

*Reporter also reached out to Central Texas VA Health Care System – same request.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 12:06 PM
To: VACO Media Requests (b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: Carter, Susan <(b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: Media Query: Dallas Morning News/abortion care at San Antonio VAMC

REQUEST/STORY PREMISE: Reporter requests information about abortion care at San Antonio VAMC. Requesting a phone/video call.

She states she wants the basics:

- what type of care they have been providing
- how the proposed rule change could shift that care, etc.

FACILITY: San Antonio VAMC

OUTLET: Dallas Morning News

REPORTER: (b)(6) health reporter, (b)(6)@dallasnews.com
CONTACT: Email below

DEADLINE: TBD

BROADCAST/PUBLICATION DATE: TBD

RECOMMENDATION: Refer to VACO for updated statement.

From: (b)(6)@dallasnews.com>
Sent: Friday, August 29, 2025 4:03 PM
To: STX Media <(b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DMN: Media request

Hi there!

My name is (b)(6) I'm the health reporter at The Dallas Morning News.

I'm reaching out to see if I could chat with someone about abortion care at the VA South Texas. I'm mostly just hoping to talk through the basics -- what type of care y'all have been providing, how the proposed rule change could shift that care, etc.

Could I schedule a time for a phone/video call with someone in the next couple weeks?

Let me know,

(b)(6)
Health Reporter
(b)(6)
The Dallas Morning News



From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Thu, 28 Aug 2025 21:15:49 +0000
To: Stapleton, John O.
Subject: attached is my mega set of talking points
Attachments: TALKING POINTS.docx

New stuff on top... (b)(5) . Labeled pretty clearly for the most part.

(b)(5) Curt. But again I don't expect any immediate need queries coming in late tomorrow.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

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From: (b)(6)
Sent: Mon, 25 Aug 2025 15:23:40 +0000
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I.; VACO Media Requests; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action
Cc: (b)(6); Carter, Susan; Kunich, Gary J
Subject: RE: Media Query: Copper Courier (Phoenix, AZ) - Abortion Care Ban For Veterans

Will do.

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 10:22 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>; VACO Media Requests (b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Media Query: Copper Courier (Phoenix, AZ) - Abortion Care Ban For Veterans

Thanks, fine to send this along, from a VA spokesperson:

Here's a link to the proposed regulation: https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-14687.pdf

VA Spokesperson Statement
Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 11:18 AM
To: VACO Media Requests <(b)(6) @va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6) @va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J <(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Media Query: Copper Courier (Phoenix, AZ) - Abortion Care Ban For Veterans

REQUEST/STORY PREMISE: Reporter is writing about the "Trump administration's decision to ban abortion care for all veterans, even in cases of rape, incest, or to protect the health of the pregnant patient."

She is looking for the following information:

- A statement in response to the Trump administration's decision
- Will Arizona VA providers be complying with this ban?
- Data on the number of veterans in Arizona who received abortion care over the past decade

FACILITY: Phoenix VA HCS

OUTLET: Cooper Courier, https://coppercourier.com/about-us/

- Launched in 2019, the Copper Courier is a Phoenix, Arizona based newsroom owned by Courier Newsroom, a civic media company with 10 state-based newsrooms across the country.

REPORTER: (b)(6) @couriernewsroom.com

CONTACT: Email below

DEADLINE: Tuesday, August 26, 2025

BROADCAST/PUBLICATION DATE: TBD

From: (b)(6) @couriernewsroom.com>
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2025 4:31 PM
To: PublicAffairs - Phoenix (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Media request: Abortion Care Ban For Veterans

Hello,

My name is (b)(6), I am a journalist at The Copper Courier/Courier Newsroom in Phoenix. I'm writing about the Trump administration's decision to ban abortion care for all veterans, even in cases of rape, incest, or to protect the health of the pregnant patient. I'm looking for the following information:

A statement in response to the Trump administration's decision
Will Arizona VA providers be complying with this ban?
Data on the number of veterans in Arizona who received abortion care over the past decade

I'd like to receive this information by Tuesday, considering my deadline. Thank you!

Besst,
(b)(6)

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(b)(6)
Reporter, The Copper Courier
(b)(6)@couriernewsroom.com
(b)(6)

From: Kasperowicz, Peter I.
Sent: Thu, 14 Aug 2025 20:00:13 +0000
To: (b)(6); VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action; (b)(6)
Cc: VACO 80E1; VACO Media Requests; Northstar, (b)(6) Susan; Kunich, Gary J
Subject: RE: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

Thanks... facility can send this comment from a VA spokesperson:

VA Spokesperson Statement
Prior to the Biden Administration's politically motivated change in 2022, federal law and longstanding precedent across Democrat and Republican administrations prevented VA from providing abortions and abortion counseling.

VA's proposed rule will reinstate the pre-Biden bipartisan policy, bringing the department back in line with historical norms.

Background Information

- In passing the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992, Congress mandated that VA is not to provide abortions in most instances.
- Starting in 1999, VA's medical benefits package expressly excluded abortions and abortion counseling in most instances.
- The infrequency with which VA has been performing the procedure since the Biden Administration's VA abortion mandate was instituted in 2022 has raised safety concerns, contributing to VA leaders' decision to revert to the department's longstanding pre-Biden bipartisan policy regarding abortion and abortion counseling.
- VA's new policy will not prevent the department from providing care to pregnant women in life-threatening circumstances.

Pete Kasperowicz
Press secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Pre-decisional

From: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 3:26 PM
To: Kasperowicz, Peter I. (b)(6)@va.gov>; VHA 10BCOM2 Media Relations Action (b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: VACO 80E1 (b)(6)@mail.va.gov>; VACO Media Requests <(b)(6)@va.gov>; (b)(6)@va.gov>; Carter, Susan (b)(6)@va.gov>; Kunich, Gary J (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

Good afternoon,

Please see a query from a Virginian Pilot reporter about abortion services, specifically at the Hampton VAMC. The facility has proposed a response below. Deadline TBD.

Regards,

(b)(6)
Public Affairs Specialist
New York Office of Public Affairs (OPIA)
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 3:23 PM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>, VACO 80E1 <(b)(6) @mail.va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>, (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>, (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

Looks like a typo from the reporter. I will ask John to touch base with the reporter to get the deadline, which is probably noon tomorrow.

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 3:22 PM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; VACO 80E1 <(b)(6) @mail.va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Re: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

Thank you, can you please ask for more time? The deadline stated below was noon today.

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 3:15 PM
To: VACO 80E1 (b)(6) @mail.va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>, (b)(6) (b)(6) @va.gov>, (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

One update from the site.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 3:02 PM
To: VACO 80E1 <(b)(6) @mail.va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>;

(b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: RE: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

For your teams review.

From: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 2:56 PM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>; (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: Virginian Pilot Online Media Inquiry

Please review prior to (b)(6) **approval.**

FACILITY: VA Hampton Healthcare System
REQUEST/STORY PREMISE: Reporter from the Virginin Pilot Online emailed Public Affairs Officer questions below:
I'm following up with a few questions for my story about the VA's proposed rule to end most abortion services:

1. Would the Hampton VA Healthcare System be willing to comment on how this proposed rule might impact veterans and their families locally in the Hampton Roads region?

2. Does the Hampton VA currently provide abortion services, and has it offered them since the 2022 policy change?

3. How many veterans are currently served by the Hampton VA Healthcare System?

OUTLET: Virginia Pilot Online

- **Name:** (b)(6)
- **Coverage Area:** Hampton Roads
- **Media Market Number:**
- **Relevant Link:** https://www.pilotonline.com/
- **JOURNALIST:** (b)(6)
- **Beat:** Military Reporter
- **Link to Bio:** Link

CONTACT PHONE/E-MAIL: (b)(6) @virginiamedia.com
DEADLINE: Friday Aug 14m 1200pm
BROADCAST/PUBLICATION DATE:
Unknown
(b)(5)

RECOMMENDATION:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) @virginiamedia.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2025 2:03 PM
To: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @va.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: test

Hi (b)(6)

It was nice speaking with you. I'm following up with a few questions for my story about the VA's proposed rule to end most abortion services:

1. Would the Hampton VA Healthcare System be willing to comment on how this proposed rule might impact veterans and their families locally in the Hampton Roads region?

2. Does the Hampton VA currently provide abortion services, and has it offered them since the 2022 policy change?

3. How many veterans are currently served by the Hampton VA Healthcare System?

Thank you for your time and assistance. I'd greatly appreciate a response by my deadline—**noon tomorrow, August 14**.

Best,
(b)(6)

On Thu, Aug 14, 2025 at 1:42 PM (b)(6)
(b)(6) @va.gov> wrote:

Best regards,

(b)(6)
Public Affairs Officer
Congressional Liaison
Hampton VA Healthcare System
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office (b)(6)