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**Carl Vinson VA Medical Center**  
[www.Dublin.VA.gov](http://www.Dublin.VA.gov)

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### **VA provides free support to help Veterans heal from military sexual trauma**

Dublin, GA — As part of its annual campaign in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launches a new campaign to promote [Military Sexual Trauma \(MST\)](#) and invite Veterans who experienced MST into a community that listens, understands and believes in them.

This year, VA's message for Sexual Assault Awareness Month focuses on VA's support for MST survivors and confidence in their strength and resilience: "We believe you — and **we believe in you.**"

"We want MST survivors to know that we are here with free, private MST-related services that can help," said Carl Vinson VA Medical Center Director David L. Whitmer, FACHE. "It can be tremendously healing for survivors to learn that someone believes they have been through something difficult, takes their experiences of trauma seriously and is confident in their ability to heal. We are here to help Veterans through it, no matter how long it has been."

VA uses the term "MST" to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment experienced during military service. Even though significant numbers of Veterans of all genders and backgrounds have experienced MST, many survivors feel alone, ashamed, or unable to ask for help.

VA offers free counseling and treatment to Veterans for mental and physical health conditions related to MST. Veterans do not need to have a VA disability rating, have reported the MST or have other documentation of the experience to get this care. They may be able to receive services even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

VA encourages everyone to learn about MST to discover ways to foster the recovery of Veterans and help take practical action as part of the larger supportive community.

Veterans who have experienced MST and would like to learn more about VA support may call their [local VA medical center](#) at (478) 277-2827 and speak with MST Coordinator Margaret Dukes, LICSW or a VA health care provider at (478)277-1210. Information about MST and VA's MST-related services is available at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp).

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