

# Get the Facts...

## TRANSGENDER VETERAN HEALTH CARE

### Birth Sex and Self-Identified Gender Identity

Your Birth Sex and Self-Identified Gender Identity are important parts of who you are that should be shared with your health care provider. By sharing this information with your provider, you are helping to ensure that you receive the highest quality care. VA understands that Veterans with transgender and related gender identities face increased health risks and unique challenges in health care, and is committed to promoting a welcoming environment that is inclusive of all Veterans.

Previously, your medical record had only one place for your sex and gender. Now, you can have both your Birth Sex and your Self-Identified Gender Identity in your medical record. If you wish to change your Birth Sex information after talking with your health care team, this is your right in the VA system. However, it is important that you understand the safety risks of changing your Birth Sex field in your medical record.

#### What are the Self-Identified Gender Identity and Birth Sex fields?

**Self-Identified Gender Identity** is a new field in VA records. It is how you think about yourself. Options are male, female, transman, transwoman, other, or choose not to answer. This field will be blank until you update it and can be changed as needed.

**Birth Sex** is the box that was checked on your original birth certificate. Options are male or female. If you were born intersex, this field indicates the sex assigned to you at birth.

#### How is Self-Identified Gender Identity used?

Self-Identified Gender Identity helps VA staff and providers know your identity and use respectful terms during interactions when delivering personalized care.

#### How is Birth Sex used?

Birth Sex is used to guide medical care. Ways this field is used include:

- The medical record system uses Birth Sex to automatically determine your lab ranges, for example hormone levels and kidney function.
- Birth Sex is used to automatically remind your provider what health screenings are due, such as prostate screening and pap smears.
- Birth Sex along with height, weight, and age are used to determine doses for your medication(s).

*For the reasons above, medical advice is that your Birth Sex should be the same as what appears on your original birth certificate.*

#### How can I be sure the information about my Self-Identified Gender Identity and Birth Sex is correct?

The new Self-Identified Gender Identity field will be blank until you provide the information and it can be updated at any time. New enrollees can provide that during their enrollment process, and previously enrolled Veterans can add it at their local VA facility by checking with clerical staff in a clinic or eligibility office.

#### What if I already changed my Birth Sex field information?

Complete and accurate information is necessary to care for you. When you changed your Birth Sex field it changed the information that your providers receive to guide your care including computer-generated lab values on blood work and reminders for health screenings. Talk to your provider to understand how this affects your care.

#### What if I previously changed my Birth Sex field and now want my VA records to show the sex listed on my original birth certificate?

If you previously changed your Birth Sex field and now want your records to show the sex listed on your original birth certificate, you need to complete a form with your facility VA Privacy Officer. You do not need any supporting documentation.

#### What if I want to change my Birth Sex field in the VA records for the first time?

To change your Birth Sex field from what was listed on your original birth certificate, you will need to complete a form with your facility VA Privacy Officer. In addition, you will need two types of supporting documents, one of which can be a letter from your provider. You may contact your local LGBT Veteran Care Coordinator or local Patient Advocate to assist you with the process.

#### Does Self-Identified Gender Identity affect my VA benefits?

No, Self-Identified Gender Identity will not change service connection or benefits eligibility.

#### Is information about Self-Identified Gender Identity shared with the Department of Defense?

No, Self-Identified Gender Identity is not shared with the Department of Defense.