

## ELIGIBILITY AND BILLING FOR TREATMENT RELATED TO MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

This document summarizes information about eligibility and billing for treatment related to military sexual trauma (MST). Citations are provided to relevant US Code, Public Law, VHA Directive, and other policies that should themselves be consulted for specific language when necessary. For more information and copies of documents cited, please visit the Policies and Treatment Benefits section of the MST Resource Homepage (<http://vaww.mst.va.gov>).

**Veterans\* may be eligible for free counseling and treatment for conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST) even if they are not eligible for other VA care.**

VA provides **free care** (including medications) for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST – that is, sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment a Veteran experienced while on active duty or active duty for training. (For more information, please see Title 38 US Code 1720D, as modified by Public Law 103-452 and Public Law 108-422; VHA Directive 2010-033; VHA Directive 2009-052; and VHA Handbook 1160.01)

**Neither individuals nor health insurance plans are billed co-payments** for MST-related inpatient, outpatient, or pharmaceutical treatment. Applicable co-payments may be charged for services not related to MST. (VHA Directive 2010-033; VHA Directive 2009-052 and VHA Handbook 1160.01)

There are **no limits on the duration of this free care** and it is **available to both female and male Veterans**. (Title 38 US Code 1720D as modified by Public Law 103-452)

**The provider of services makes the determination of whether the care provided is related to MST.** This is indicated by checking the MST checkbox on the encounter form for the visit. (Title 38 US Code 1720D; VHA Directive 2010-033; and VHA Handbook 1160.01)

The screenshot shows a medical encounter form for a patient named CHARLIE. The form is titled "Encounter Form for BACKE ALBINSKICH (Apr 16, 2007 12:21)". It includes fields for patient name, date of birth, and visit type. A section titled "Modifiers for PROBLEM FOCUSED" contains several checkboxes, with "MST" checked. A red arrow points to this checkbox. Below this section, there is a list of "Available providers" and a section for "ESTABLISHED PATIENT PROBLEM FOCUSED" related to MST. The form also includes a "Cover Sheet" section with tabs for Problems, Orders, Notes, Consults, Surgery, DIC Summ, Labs, and Reports.

\*Because eligibility for MST-related care accrues as a result of events experienced in service and is not dependent on length of service, some individuals may be eligible for free MST-related care even if they do not have Veteran status. The use of the term "Veteran" in this document is intended to be inclusive of these individuals.

### **To receive this care, Veterans...**

- do not need to be service connected.  
*(VHA Directive 2010-033 and Under Secretary for Health Information Letter 10-97-037)*
- do not need to have reported the incident(s) when they happened or have other documentation that they occurred.  
*(VA Directive 2010-033)*
- do not need to have sought help within a certain period of time since discharge.  
*(Title 38 US Code 1720D as modified by Public Law 103-452)*
- do not need to have a specific diagnosis.

This benefit extends to Reservists and members of the National Guard who were activated to full-time duty status in the Armed Forces.

*(Under Secretary for Health Information Letter 10-97-037)*

### **Veterans may be able to receive free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care.**

- There are **no length of service, income, or other standard eligibility requirements** to receive this benefit. *(VHA Directive 2010-033; VHA Handbook 1160.01; Under Secretary for Health Information Letter 10-97-037; and Office of General Counsel MST Eligibility Guidelines, June, 2006)*
- Veterans who are otherwise deemed ineligible for VA healthcare benefits based on length of military service requirements or due to placement into Priority Groups 8e or 8g **may be provided MST-related care only**. *(Office of General Counsel MST Eligibility Guidelines, June, 2006)*
- Even **Veterans who received an other than honorable discharge may be able to receive free MST-related care** with VBA Regional Office approval. *(Office of General Counsel MST Eligibility Guidelines, June, 2006)*

**Fee basis is available** when it is clinically inadvisable to provide counseling in a VA facility, when VA facilities are geographically inaccessible, or when VA facilities are unable to provide care in a timely manner.

*(VHA Handbook 1160.01)*



Summary prepared July, 2010  
MST Support Team, VHA Office of Mental Health Services