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of Veterans Affairs**RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

News Release

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Providence VA Medical Center, RI Office of Veterans Affairs Team Up to Celebrate, Honor Women Veterans

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Providence VA Medical Center and the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Affairs joined together at the new Rhode Island Veterans Home in Bristol, R.I., last Thursday to honor women who have served our nation.

“Women’s history month is an ideal time to recognize the sacrifices women Veterans make in service to their country, and provide information about the benefits and services they have earned,” said Tonya Maselli McConnell, Providence VAMC Women Veteran Program manager.

During the event, a panel of women Veterans participated in a discussion about their experiences while serving in uniform and after they transitioned from military service. Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea provided the keynote address, which was preceded by remarks from Kasim Yarn, Rhode Island’s Director of Veterans Affairs; Dr. Susan Mackenzie, director of the Providence VA Medical Center; and Maj. Gen. Christopher Callahan, The Adjutant General of the Rhode Island National Guard.

“As Secretary of State, I am committed to encouraging all Rhode Islanders to play an active role in our state's future, especially our women Veterans,” said Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea. “As one of the fastest growing segments of our Veteran population, we must make sure their perspectives are heard, their talents leveraged, their sacrifice recognized, and their contributions to our nation’s security honored.”

“We are so thankful for our women warriors,” said Kasim J. Yarn, the state’s Director of Veterans Affairs. “Hosting this program with the Providence VA Medical Center was an honor. The stories we heard reflect the courage, sacrifice and patriotism of these heroes.”

Several organizations dedicated to providing services for Veterans attended the event, providing information and resource materials, and answering questions about the services available to women Veterans. For more information on the Providence VA Medical Center’s Women Veterans Program, contact Tonya Maselli McConnell, LICSW, BCD, at (401) 273-7100, extension 6191.

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