



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Fargo VA Health Care System Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Fargo VA raising awareness of Military Sexual Trauma during Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

**FARGO, N.D.** – The Fargo VA Health Care System will host a “Clothesline Project” to increase awareness, honor and support survivors of Military Sexual Trauma, April 25-29.

The Clothesline Project, held at the Fargo VA Medical Center in the University of North Dakota Atrium, features shirts decorated by Veterans with phrases, symbols, and images of their story of Military Sexual Trauma. The Clothesline Project will be displayed throughout the week.

In conjunction with the Clothesline Project, on April 27 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the Fargo VAMC UND Auditorium, a survivor of Military Sexual Trauma will share her story. On April 28 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the third floor auditorium of the Fargo VAMC, Fargo Police Department Detective Sara Gunther will speak on the status of sexual assault in the Fargo Moorhead area. The public is welcome to attend.

“The Clothesline Project expresses the pain, heartache, and healing of Veterans who have endured Military Sexual Trauma,” said Susan Thompson, LICSW, Fargo VA HCS Military Sexual Trauma Program Coordinator. “Our goal is to illuminate the experiences of sexual trauma survivors and the challenges they face in their healing process and highlight the variety of services and treatments for physical and mental health conditions related to Military Sexual Trauma.”

VA is continually working to improve the Military Sexual Trauma programming accessible to both male and female Veterans, offering services and treatments at every VA facility free of charge, regardless of Veterans’ service-connection status. About one in four women and one in one hundred men seen in VA medical facilities report they experienced Military Sexual Trauma. Military Sexual Trauma is defined as sexual assault or repeated threatening sexual harassment that occurred during military service.

For more information related to Military Sexual Trauma, contact Susan Thompson, LICSW, Fargo VA HCS Military Sexual Trauma Program Coordinator at (701) 239-3700 extension 9-4523, or visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp)

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