

Clark, Jon

From: Flynn, Katy
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 11:56 AM
To: HVAC - Republicans
Subject: FW: RFI Response: Guardian Article

Importance: High

FYI

From: Owens, Darrell R. <Darrell.Owens@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 11:52 AM
To: Owens, Darrell R. <Darrell.Owens@va.gov>
Cc: Bergin, Donald J. <Donald.Bergin@va.gov>; Katz, Joel N. <Joel.Katz@va.gov>; Lauder, Jon M. <Jon.Lauder@va.gov>
Subject: RFI Response: Guardian Article
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Staff Directors -

There have been a lot of inquiries and questions regarding the recent Guardian article. The sensational allegations in the article are false. The official VA response is below.

Thanks! Very respectfully,

- Darrell

Darrell Owens
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
(202) 436-2003 – mobile
(202) 461-6458 – office
darrell.owens@va.gov

VA RESPONSE: The Guardian story is false, VA has asked the outlet to retract it, and the Guardian is now conducting an internal investigation into the article. See here for more info:

<https://x.com/SecVetAffairs/status/1935063451182731455>

Here are the facts:

- VA recently updated its medical center bylaws to ensure compliance with White House executive orders, such as the order on [Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism And Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government](#).
- These updates will have no impact whatsoever on who VA treats or employs.

- The Guardian’s premise that simple changes made to VA bylaws – changes that are entirely consistent with longstanding existing federal laws and VA policies – are “extremely disturbing and unethical” is a specious argument that is not only false, but defamatory.
- The fact that the Guardian is misrepresenting these changes as anything more than a formality underscores its extreme liberal bias and steadfast commitment to spreading disinformation.

Q: What prohibits VA from doing what the Guardian story alleges?

A: 5 U.S.C. sec. 2302, for example, prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status or political affiliation; 5 USC 7102 governs union participation rights, including barring interference with those rights. Health care eligibility is based on 38 U.S.C. secs. 1710 and 1705, not on categories such as political affiliation or marital status. Thus, on that statutory basis, VHA Directive 1019, which governs all medical services provided by VA, prohibits discrimination in the provision of services on the basis of marital status or political affiliation.

Guardian Allegation: “Doctors at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals nationwide could refuse to treat unmarried veterans and Democrats under new hospital guidelines imposed following an executive order by Donald Trump.”

Response: False. Federal law and VHA Directive 1019 prohibit that. All eligible Veterans will always be welcome at VA and will always receive the benefits and services they’ve earned under the law.

Guardian Allegation: “But individual workers are now free to decline to care for patients based on personal characteristics not explicitly prohibited by federal law.”

Response: False. Federal law and VHA Directive 1019 prohibit that.

Guardian Allegation: “Doctors and other medical staff can also be barred from working at VA hospitals based on their marital status, political party affiliation or union activity, documents reviewed by the Guardian show.”

Response: False. Federal law and VHA Directive 1019 prohibit that.

Guardian Allegation: Similarly, the bylaw on “decisions regarding medical staff membership” no longer forbids VA hospitals from discriminating against candidates for staff positions based on national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, membership in a labor organization or “lawful political party affiliation”.

Response: False. Federal law and VHA Directive 1019 prohibit that.

Guardian Allegation: “Under the new policy, some may have to register at a hospital in another region and travel more than a hundred miles to see a doctor.”

Response: False. Federal law prohibits that, and VA will always follow federal law. All eligible Veterans will always be welcome at VA and will always receive the benefits and services they’ve earned under the law.

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