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[For Immediate Release]

SWAN Releases New Data on the Financial Costs of Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

[SWAN](#) has released new data on the monetary costs of MST. This previously unreported data was gathered from The Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Administration (VA) reports and shows the financial impact that the MST epidemic has on US taxpayers.

- In 2009, the VHA treated 65,264 patients for MST related conditions. 60% of survivors were women, 40% were men.
- The VA spends approximately \$10,880 on healthcare costs per military sexual assault survivor. This means that in 2009 alone, the VA spent approximately \$820 million dollars on sexual assault- related healthcare expenditures.
- The DoD estimates that legal expenses that result from military sexual assault cases average \$40,000 per case. With 181 sexual assault-related courts-martial in 2008, legal expenses totaled more than \$7 million dollars.
- Of women seeking VA disability benefits for PTSD, 62.9% of combat veterans and 74.5% of non-combat veterans reported an in-service sexual assault. According to a 2008 Rand Corporation study, PTSD will cost the US an estimated \$4 to \$6 billion dollars over the next 2 years.
- Sexual harassment increases retention turnover risk by up to 32%. The cost of attrition per service member in 2010 ranges from \$34,621 to \$53,251.

"The Department of Defense has demonstrated little concern about the issue of Military Sexual Trauma, both in terms of the protection and welfare of survivors and in pursuit and prosecution of perpetrators," Anu Bhagwati, Executive Director of the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) stated. "Perhaps when the Pentagon and Congress realize that this issue amounts to millions of dollars of taxpayer money that could be better spent on warfighting, they might decide to finally do something to curb the epidemic sexual assault and harassment in the military."



Military Sexual Trauma, or MST, is defined as military rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Even by conservative standards MST can be considered an epidemic. While MST affects both men and women in uniform, servicewomen are at much higher risk for sexual assault and harassment. MST often leads to debilitating conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and major depression. MST is a systemic problem exacerbated by inadequate enforcement of military law and equal opportunity policy as well as an institutional failure to protect victims from retribution.

SWAN's new MST Quick Facts sheet and all other publications can be downloaded from the web at: <http://www.servicewomen.org/SwanPage.asp?PLink=1026&Hding=Media>

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The Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) supports, defends, and empowers today's servicewomen and women veterans of all eras, through groundbreaking advocacy initiatives and innovative, healing community programs.

SWAN's vision is to transform military culture by securing equal opportunity and the freedom to serve in uniform without threat of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or assault. SWAN also seeks to reform veterans' services on a national scale to guarantee equal access to quality health care, benefits and resources for women veterans and their families.

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