

Veteran: NW

VA Facility: Togus, Maine /LEWISTON CBOC

BACKGROUND

US Navy 1992-1999 – E-5 final Rank 3rd Duty Sta on Sea School Parris Island – Sexual Assault Harassment from Commander, physical injury from Commander: TBI, strangled with marks witnessed by Corpsman – 13 guilty charges against Commander with Dishonorable Discharge.

2019

Ruth Morris said I (NW) was the patient she(Hastings) was to create the boundaries. She (Hastings) made it seem like I could date her she constantly asked me out for coffee and was texting me as a friend not a provider.

Hastings asked me to take off my shirt to give me a flu shot. I told her I wasn't gonna remove my shirt cause I had nothing underneath. Hastings said "I'm gonna see it eventually ever anyway" sexualizing the medical procedure

Hastings Hugged me after every appointment, forcing physical contact, and had me come in to help me in her office off hours to help with my therapy.

I can't even grieve my dad because she put in the record she was at work, when she was actually at home telling me OUR plans TOGETHER for New Year's (my mom was a witness) – Note: Hastings new the grief and continued to harass and sexualize NW during the Funeral and Grieving Process

2020 – VA Hotline Complaint about "Sexual Harassment" "Unwanted Advances" and "Hastings bragging about being a physician" –

- Patient Advocate notified
- Immediately Hastings falsified a VAMC Police Report accusing Patient NW of stalking, harassing, bullying, intimidating,
- Restraining Order Requested – Dawn M Hasting – VA Employee Nurse Practitioner– Medication Management

Attorney Referral to Internity a non Profit helping Women Veterans in Maine

Reason for Referral:

On 9 March 2020, the client was referred to this organization by a partner attorney and policy advisor in another state, who felt that there may be a case for sexual harassment.

Client met with the principal at INTERNITY on 11 March 2020, and alleges she was sexually harassed by a provider and suffered retaliation in both VA facilities and state courts when she reported it.

She believes that she was inappropriately flagged for disruptive behavior, and denied access to medical and mental health care unless law enforcement was present or she had checked into the Law Enforcement Barracks.

Timeline: 7 years from 2018 to present

History:

1. Client is a survivor of Military Sexual Assault and has a diagnosed history of traumatic brain injury, physical injuries, and past, complex substance abuse. To date, she experiences multiple medical and mental health issues that require treatment from licensed care providers.
2. In 2018, client sought treatment and entered into a treatment relationship with Dawn Hastings, NP, PhD., a nurse practitioner employed by Togus.
3. Client admitted to making an inappropriate comment to provider, then apologized in person after the fact. The provider documented that she “counseled” the client after the incident about boundaries, however, the client refutes this. Moreover, the client provided substantial documentation to the opposite effect.
4. Throughout the entire period, the client stated that the provider began to act differently toward her, changed her appointment times to the end of the day for “perks”, accepted personal gifts of chocolate covered cherries in 2018, before the inappropriate comment, and throughout 2019 Hastings coordinated opportunities to have “friendly contact” and conversations in hallways, dressed provocatively when the client had appointments and accepted a coffee cup NW gifted Hastings in an effort to make Peace with the Provider.
5. Nurse Practitioner Hastings represented herself as a doctor after completing her Ph.D. and the client was informed by Kathy Russen that she needed to use the honorific of “Doctor,” because Hastings was now a doctor.
6. The client reported these issues to Dr. Greenleaf and the Patient Advocate, Angela McKenney and felt that she did not receive assistance from the VHA facility. She also sought help from her peers on her private social media page – asking for insight and help from others who may have experienced similar situations.
7. The client reported that she was then stalked by the provider and the provider’s adult daughter off VHA property, and her social media account was used by both the provider and her daughter to obtain a protection from harassment order to cease and desist all comments about them.
8. Finally, the client reported that because of her reporting these issues and trying to self-advocate, she was flagged by the Disruptive Behavior Committee in Togus, and now needs to check in with VA Police. Because of this, she is now denied access to emergency care.

Evidence:

Multiple Documents through client’s personal files, Social Media Account, Protection from Harassment Order, and VHA record.

Research:

1. Client has sought assistance from multiple entities. Using the Peer to Peer network of the Military Sisterhood Initiative in Michigan, she obtained a referral to contact this organization.
2. Upon reviewing documentation and restraining orders, this organization contacted Baldacci Law in Bangor and discussed this case in brevity. No advice was given by Baldacci Law; however, they noted that the restraining order was “heavily defended” and recommended the veteran contact the Veterans Legal Initiative.
3. The issues that this veteran allege to have occurred in Togus are not uncommon; rather they are a widespread cultural problem in multiple VHA facilities and is strongly evidenced via OIG records, popular media reports, and VA records:

a. A House of Representatives aide using the VADC reported an assault by another veteran, whereby VHA employees who witnessed it, failed to intervene or protect the veteran, and she had to go through four to 5 levels of reporting before police were called.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/26/us/politics/women-veterans-sexual-assault-harassment.html>.

b. A VHA employee was sexually harassed by a coworker and the supervisor failed to act or protect the employee.

<https://www.wbtv.com/2019/10/07/salisbury-vamc-chief-staff-removed-amid-ongoing-sexual-harassment-scandal/>

c. The official VHA position statement on Sexual Harassment of Patients and Staff:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/64559/va-our-responsibility-end-harassment/>

d. Veteran Comments on the VA.GOV Blog (#3 above).

Ronald Pitzen August 23, 2019 at 4:29 pm “I am a 61 year old male veteran who was sexually harassed by a male nurse who is openly gay. When I reported it I was told they could not do anything because it was done by an employee of the Gulf Coast Med Center in Biloxi Mississippi. The manager of the nurses said all they could do was talk to the employee and let him know it was inappropriate. Slap on the wrist.”

Brian August 21, 2019 at 12:06 pm “I was sexually assaulted by a male mental health counselor at the VA in Louisville, KY and the Va did nothing to him after a formal complaint.”

e. The narrative that the veteran has presented is equivalent with the findings of Attorney Ben Krause and a national investigative report. <https://www.disabledveterans.org/2014/07/29/senior-va-employees-retaliate-sick-veterans/>

Synopsis:

1. Based on the veteran's narrative and supporting written documentation, evidence exists to support the possibility of:
 - A. Sexual Harassment having occurred on multiple occasions.
 - B. Ethic violations of malfeasance, autonomy, and lack of informed consent.
 - C. Professional Misconduct by multiple providers in failure to protect the veteran.
 - D. Retaliation for Whistleblowing
 - E. Potential violations of the 1st and 4th Amendments
 - F. Exacerbation of existing mental health conditions and Retraumatization with subsequent trauma.

Recommendations:

1. Submit a Confidential Report to Togus VA Director, Ryan Lilly, the VA OIG, and the Maine Legislators to ask for Congressional Oversight of the Investigation and Protection under the Whistleblower protections.
2. File a complaint with the Maine Board of Nurse Practitioners / and Medical Oversight.
3. Establish a Meeting with Togus VA Director and Veteran, for the Veteran to ask for the flag in the veteran's record to be removed. The veteran's wishes are to continue her necessary and emergent care in place.

REPORT VAMC POLICE FINDINGS

♣ suicidal ideation

MARCH 15, 2020 TO PRESENT

- "So in New England, I can't go to anything I used to go to. My name is just destroyed and tell me how therapist is saying the same things the cops are." NW

Hastings gets access to NW's phone specifically the icloud.

- Each time NW resets Security Hastings sends another hack to open the icloud
- "She's definitely deleted all of the notes from my Evernote account because I have nothing to look at and I remember everything I am just not sure on the exact dates of it and I'm sure we can prove it is definitely been hacked by her" NW re: Hastings
- "I'm being constantly stalked by her and she keeps doing this and this is like the 5th me and police have been ignoring my 3 robberies in 1 week it has to be her because she was in my maps and I have reported her and I am ignored and she called my phone number and I have been ignored and I am scared of my safety NW re Hastings

- " She is a dangerous woman and a criminal. She has been in prison for assault and viola out on parole for stalking at Maine general mental health. She got fired for the same reason(Sexual Harassment & False Reporting) dr Greenleaf told me because she had a friend who worked with her" NW re: Hastings
- " She has already vandalized my car and I have it recorded and investigated"
- Billie Stone her daughter is involved also (On Line Harassment)
- I'm worried about going into a bot: o Hastings/Stone created a Facebook using my old name, then added a restaurant in a group that I am in
- Billie Stone sent threatening Facebook Messenger Messages