

# The Impact of Childcare Needs on Employment and Healthcare

## 2013 California Women Veteran Survey

A 2012 strategy report by the Women Veterans Task Force of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) identified childcare needs as an important factor in addressing issues associated with the healthcare and employment of women veterans.<sup>1</sup> This Short Subject presents results from the 2013 California Women Veteran Survey, which included a series of questions on childcare and the effects that childcare needs may have on employment and healthcare decisions.<sup>2</sup>

### CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE

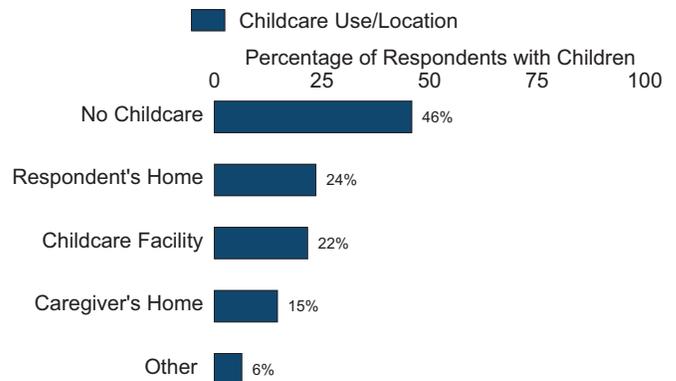
The childcare section of the 2013 survey asked respondents if they had a child under the age of 13 living in their household. About 20 percent of respondents indicated that they had a child under 13. The survey then prompted those respondents with a list of childcare options and asked them to identify all that applied to their situation. Figure 1 presents the results from these questions. About 46 percent of respondents with children under 13 reported that they cared for their children and that they used no additional childcare. The remaining 54 percent reported using at least one form of childcare. The most common childcare location among this group was the respondent's own home.

For those who indicated using childcare, the 2013 survey also included items on the average number of hours children were receiving care and the average cost. Responses on the average number of hours in childcare ranged from 0 hours a week (for those who rarely used it) to 100 hours a week with a mean of 27. The average cost of childcare was similarly varied, ranging from \$0 to \$3,000 a month with a mean of \$510. On average, those who reported using it spent about 8 percent of their monthly household income on childcare, which is similar to the national average.<sup>3</sup>

### CHILDCARE NEEDS AND EMPLOYMENT

The need to provide childcare may affect choices made by women veterans with children. The 2013 survey

**Figure 1. About half of women veterans with children under 13 use childcare services**



provided respondents with lists of potential effects childcare needs may have had on their employment and healthcare-related decisions. Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents who identified the eight employment-related decisions with which they were prompted. Percentages for respondents with one child under 13 and more than one child under 13 are presented separately.

About 55 percent of respondents who indicated that they used some form of childcare identified at least one of the employment-related decisions. The most common, the location of the job, was identified by more than 50 percent of those with more than one child under 13. Almost 40 percent of this group reported that childcare needs were one of the reasons they left active duty service. Currently, neither the federal government nor the state of California provides veteran benefits tied to childcare needs and employment.

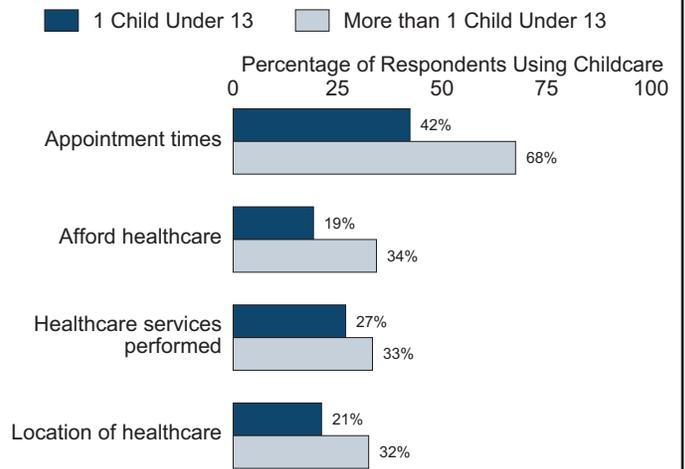
### CHILDCARE NEEDS AND HEALTHCARE

Figure 3 provides similar information but looks at the potential effects childcare needs have on healthcare-related decisions. Approximately 55 percent of respondents who indicated that they relied on some form of childcare identified at least one of the healthcare-related decisions included in Figure 3. About 68 percent of those respondents with more than

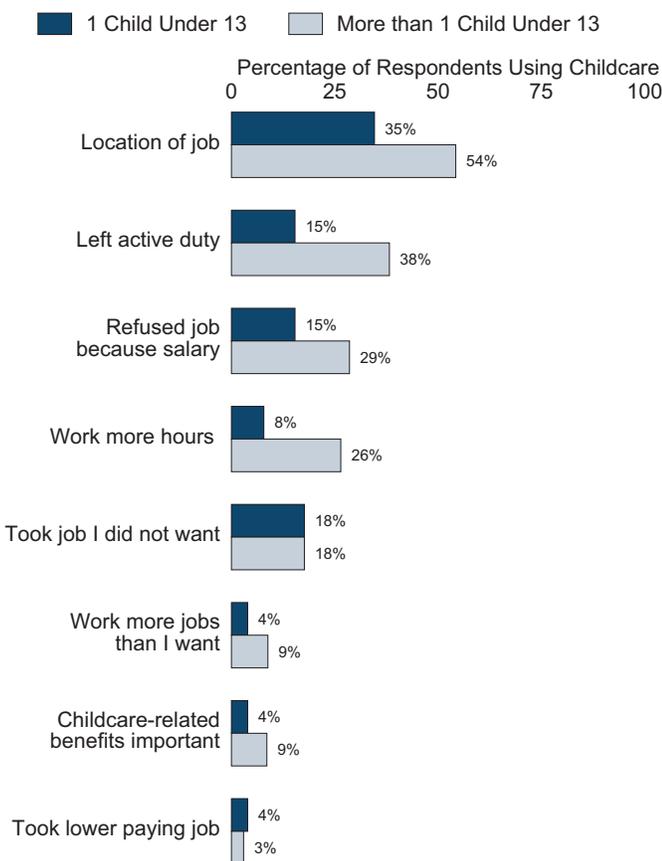
one child under 13 reported that childcare needs had affected the appointment times they could take. More than 30 percent indicated that childcare needs had influenced whether or not they could afford care, their decision to have certain healthcare services performed, and/or the location of the healthcare they received.

These results are consistent with a national survey of women veterans conducted in 2008-2009 which found that nearly 16 percent of respondents delayed or went without needed medical care in the past year because of childcare or other caregiver responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> Such research led to the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 which, among other things, required the VA to implement a veterans childcare pilot program to assess the feasibility of offering childcare to veterans receiving healthcare. At this time, the VA does not appear to have published a report on the program nor given any indication that it will pursue a broader childcare program going forward.<sup>5</sup> California does not currently provide any veteran benefits associated with childcare needs and healthcare.

**Figure 3. Many respondents reported that childcare needs affected their healthcare decisions**



**Figure 2. Many respondents reported that childcare needs affected their employment decisions**



## ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2012). "Strategies for Serving Our Women Veterans."
2. The 2013 California Women Veteran Survey was carried out between September and December of 2013. A total of 1,040 individuals volunteered to participate in the survey. Of these respondents, 96 indicated that they had one child under the age of 13 and 61 indicated that they had more than one child under the age of 13. The values reported here are estimates and subject to multiple sources of error. Because the sample is based on volunteers who self-selected to participate rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. The data have not been weighted to reflect the demographic characteristics of the California women veteran population.
3. U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). "Who's Minding the Kids? Childcare Arrangements: Spring 2011."
4. Washington, Donna L. et al. (2011). "Access to Care for Women Veterans: Delayed Healthcare and Unmet Need." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 26.
5. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2013). "Center for Women Veterans." <http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/cwv/index.asp>

*This Short Subject was requested by the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls ([www.women.ca.gov](http://www.women.ca.gov)) and the California Department of Veterans Affairs Women Veterans Division ([www.calvet.ca.gov/calvet-programs/women-veterans](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/calvet-programs/women-veterans)).*

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