



## LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, has supported military veterans for nearly 100 years. We've advocated for key legislation like The PACT Act and The Brandon Act to ensure service members receive the care and benefits they deserve. LULAC is committed to advancing the wellbeing of all veterans by advocating for access to education, affordable housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

# DOD Chaperone Policy for Sensitive Medical Exams

## Background

In response to high-profile cases of sexual abuse by military physicians that exposed gaps in patient protections and oversight, the Department of Defense updated its policy to make patients' right to a chaperone more visible and require providers to actively offer chaperones for certain sensitive exams.



## Issues of concern

- Chaperones are offered, not required, so exams may still occur without one.
- No clear enforcement, training standards, or accountability measures are outlined.
- Narrow definition of "sensitive exams" leaves gaps for other intimate procedures.
- Victim advocates cannot serve as chaperones, limiting patient-centered support.

## What the policy does

- **Standardizes chaperone use for sensitive exams**
  - Requires chaperones to be offered for gynecological, breast, and pelvic exams across military facilities.
- **Improves patient awareness**
  - Facilities must post signage informing patients of their right to request a chaperone for any medical encounter.
- **Expands eligible chaperones**
  - Chaperones may include licensed clinicians, nurses, medics, technicians, residents, and trained volunteers.
- **Respects patient preferences**
  - Staff should attempt to provide a chaperone of a requested sex.
  - Exams may be rescheduled if a requested chaperone is unavailable.
- **Strengthens documentation and provider guidance**
  - Patient decisions to decline a chaperone must be documented.
  - Providers may decline to perform sensitive exams without a chaperone present.
- **Clarifies pediatric and adolescent care**
  - Routine pediatric exams do not require a chaperone if a parent/guardian is present.
  - Chaperones must be offered for non-routine pediatric exams.
  - Adolescents ages 11–17 follow adult chaperone guidance.

## Current Status

Issued by the Defense Health Agency and now applies across military medical and dental facilities; implementation is underway, but no new enforcement or training mandates have been announced.

***The DOD Chaperone Policy for Sensitive Medical Exams is a strong step forward, but chaperones must be mandatory, trained, and enforced. Patient safety cannot rely on discretion alone.***