

VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS: FACTS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES



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DATA ON VETERANS



- Currently 22.3 million living Veterans in USA
- Total number of living Veterans peaked in the early 1980s (28.5 million)
- 10-year projection predicts 18.9 million in 2022.

MORE ON VETERANS

- Largest group is Vietnam era
- Numbers of female veterans rising (now apx. 9% in MH; active duty 15%)
- WWII and Korean Veteran cohorts are aging quickly



NEWLY RETURNING VETERANS



- Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan
- Common for them to have already served several tours
- Dealing with Post-Deployment readjustments of all kinds

PRE-EXISTING ISSUES

- ⦿ Uncertain deployment duration
- ⦿ Rushed pre-deployment marriages or life decisions
- ⦿ Other stressors already existing related to work or family
- ⦿ Pre-existing mental health issues

DEPLOYMENT ISSUES

- ⦿ Constant threat to life
- ⦿ Prolonged separation from loved ones and normal life
- ⦿ Job stress (long hours, fast pace, few personal boundaries, uncertainty)
- ⦿ Financial stresses
- ⦿ Demanding physical environment



POST-DEPLOYMENT ISSUES

- ⦿ Returning to non-military life
- ⦿ Family/Home environment has changed
- ⦿ Problems with relationships, work, etc.
- ⦿ Awareness that re-deployment is likely
- ⦿ Psychiatric symptoms (PTSD, depression, substance abuse, severe illnesses)

WHAT VETERANS NEED

- Recovery from physical and mental conditions
- A functional family, stable work and finances
- Assistance with general Post-Deployment reintegration



MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

TOP 5 CONDITIONS

- ⦿ Adjustment Reaction (PTSD)
- ⦿ Depressive Disorders
- ⦿ Mood Disorders
- ⦿ Neurotic Disorders
- ⦿ Substance Abuse Disorders



“POLYTRAUMA”

- ⦿ Physical and Mental injuries that present with complicated issues.
- ⦿ Technology allows for higher survival rate, but TBI and other injuries still occur.



ACCESSING CARE FOR VETERANS



MANY “VETERAN” AGENCIES

- Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)
 - Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
 - Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
 - National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
- State Department of Veteran Affairs (e.g., ODVA, Veteran homes)
- Regional or city government departments
- TriCare (Dept. of Defense healthcare)
- Non-profit organizations such as Veteran Service Organizations (VSO)

VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (VSO)

- ◉ Forty-six chartered VSOs
- ◉ Many other non-chartered groups
- ◉ Mission is to support and help Veterans (file claims, scholarships, information, advocacy)
- ◉ Examples:
 - American Legion
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
 - Wounded Warrior Project*
 - Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

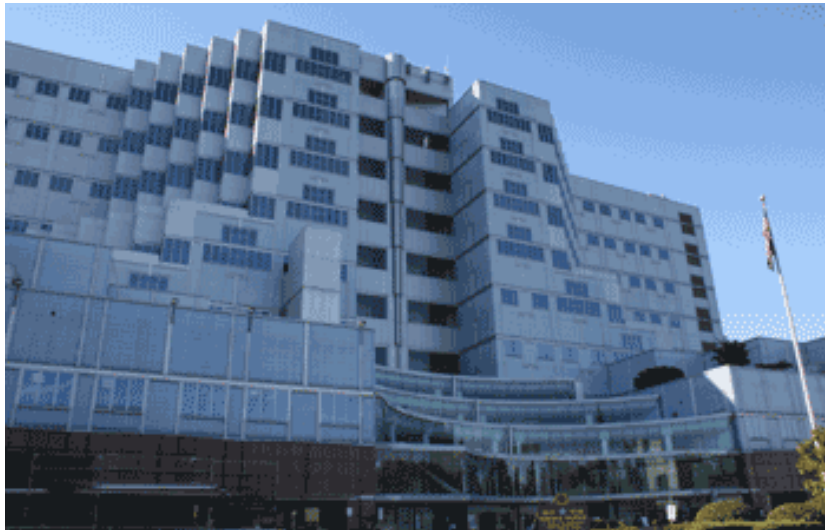


WHO ACCESSES VHA CARE?

- ◉ Must be enrolled
- ◉ Almost any Vet eligible for VA services, but most would have to pay or use personal insurance.
- ◉ Low income and those with “service connected” conditions get free care
- ◉ Others conditions allow for services



VETERANS ACCESSING THE VA



- Not all Veterans seek services through Federal VA
- 8.7 million enrolled in system (39%)
- 5.4 million receive VA healthcare. (62%,24%)
- 1.4 million receive mental health care at VA (25%)

HEALTHCARE IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE FOR VET SERVICES

- ◉ Health Care
- ◉ Home Loans
- ◉ Education & Training Benefits
- ◉ Burial Benefits
- ◉ Life Insurance
- ◉ Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- ◉ Dependents and Survivors Benefits
- ◉ Disability Benefits

DISABILITY COMPENSATION RATES (2013)

Disability Rating	Monthly Benefit
10%	\$129
20%	\$255
30%	\$395
40%	\$569
50%	\$810
60%	\$1120
70%	\$1293
80%	\$1503
90%	\$1689
100%	\$2816

**MENTAL HEALTH
RESOURCES
FOR VETERANS
THROUGH THE VHA**

MYTHS ABOUT VETS AND MH

- ⦿ “All Vets struggle with mental health issues”
- ⦿ “Only Veterans who have been in combat can develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder”
- ⦿ “The military discourages soldiers from seeking mental health care.”
- ⦿ “The VA healthcare system provides sub-par mental health care for Veterans.”

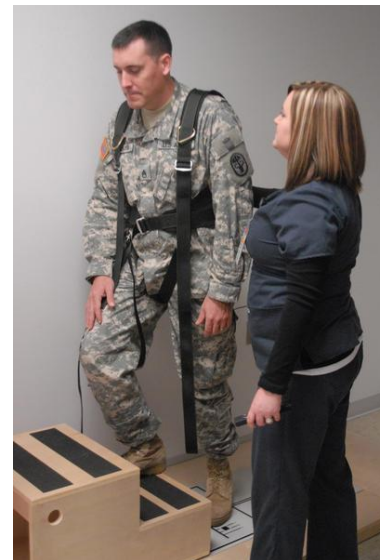
NATIONALLY ORGANIZED VA RESOURCES

☉ Hotlines

- Suicide:
1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
- Homelessness:
1-877-424-3838



- ☉ Regional VA Centers for TBI, transplant, rehab, etc.
- ☉ Regional Centers of Excellence



VA MEDICAL CENTERS

- Over 150 facilities nationwide
- Different Sizes/complexities
- Community based outpatient clinics (CBOC) associated with most facilities
- Services may include inpatient, urgent care, residential, and outpatient services



“INTEGRATED CARE”

(MENTAL HEALTH AND PRIMARY CARE)

- ⦿ Promoted at all VAs
- ⦿ Embedded MH providers, offering quick responses to basic MH needs.
- ⦿ Episodic MH relationship with Veteran



STANDARD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- ⦿ Medication management
- ⦿ Group and individual therapy
- ⦿ Case Management of persistent conditions
- ⦿ Assessments



SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

- ◉ Substance use disorder (SUD) treatment
- ◉ PTSD programs
- ◉ Homelessness services
- ◉ Vocational Rehabilitation
- ◉ Recovery programs (for SPMI)



SERVICES FOR THE AGING VETERAN

⦿ Challenging concerns:

- Mental Health Treatment
- Housing or placement
- Cognitive issues/dementia
- Caregiver distress



VET CENTERS

- ⦿ “Storefront” clinics focusing on trauma
- ⦿ Built-in firewall between Vet Centers and VAs
- ⦿ Primarily offer counseling services



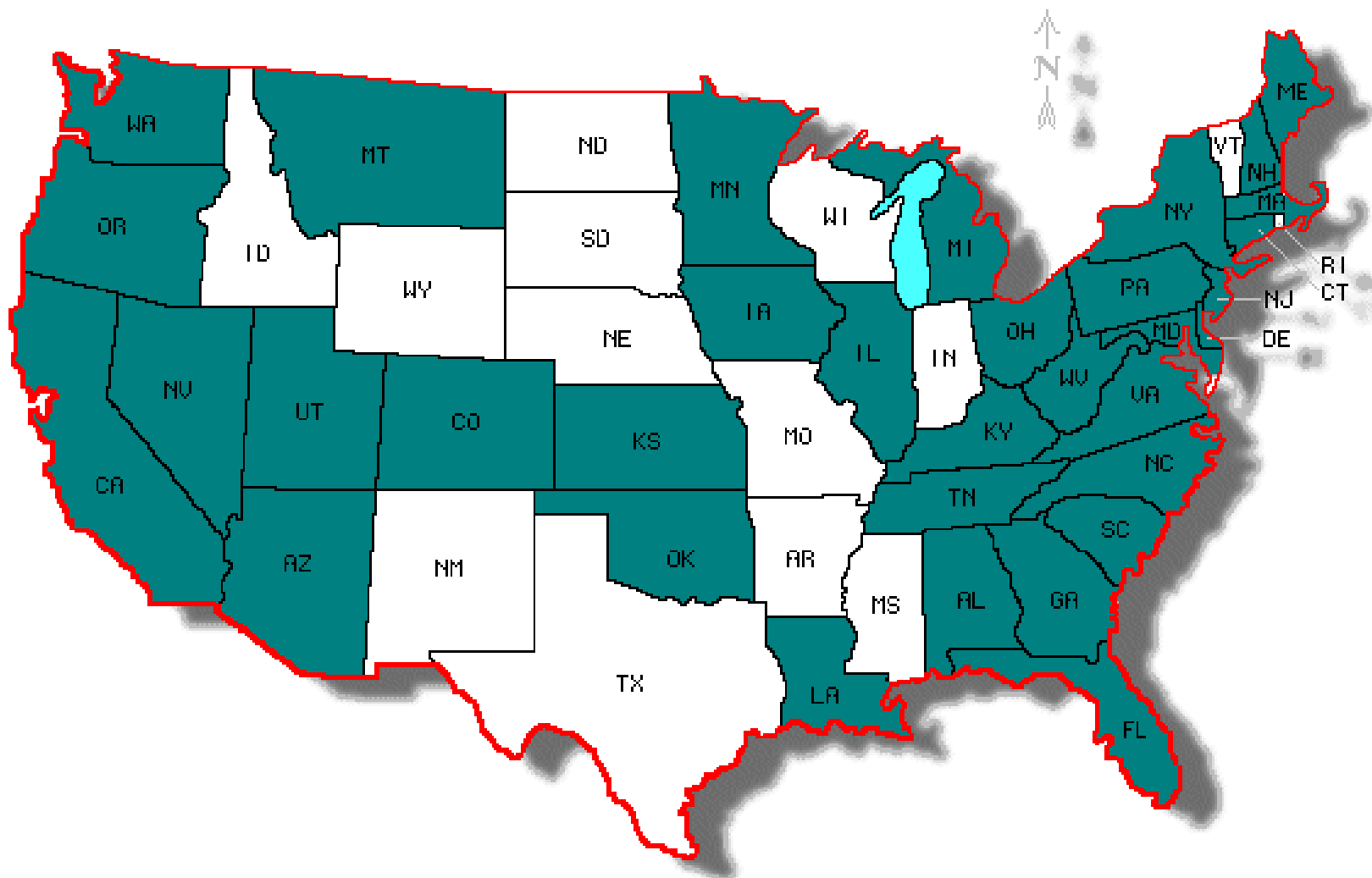
FEE BASIS SERVICES

- ⦿ The VA may purchase care in the community for Veterans as appropriate. Examples:
 - Type of service not offered at the local VA but clearly indicated for Veteran
 - Veteran location makes it unreasonable to come to closest clinic
 - Clinical needs of the area overwhelm the local clinic
 - Special cases deemed appropriate for purchased care

SAMHSA: SMVF TA CENTER

- ◉ “Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance Center”
- ◉ Helps states develop effective, responsive behavioral health systems
- ◉ Process: public/private collaboration among federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies.
- ◉ <http://www.samhsa.gov/MilitaryFamilies/tacenter/>





RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◉ Get to know your local Veteran Service Officer
- ◉ Learn about processes for enrollment in VA system
- ◉ Learn how Veterans can access MH care at the VA in your community
- ◉ Learn about other agencies in the community that help Veterans

FINAL THOUGHTS

