

Bridging the Divide Between Social Services & Legal Services

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Objectives

1. Understand services offered by US Department of Veterans Affairs
2. Understand the components of Veterans Justice Programs
3. Expand awareness of the needs of justice involved Veterans

What is federal VA?

- United States Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Veterans Health Administration
 - 150 hospitals, 985 outpatient clinics, 370 Vet Centers
 - Veterans Benefits Administration
 - 57 Regional Offices
 - Life Insurance, Home Loan, Disability Compensation, Pension, Education, Vocational Rehabilitation
 - National Cemetery Administration
 - 131 National Cemeteries
- Veteran Population
 - 2013: estimated 21,973,000, median age 64 (male) 49 (female), 10% women (9/30/13)
 - 2013: VHA had 8.96 million enrollees

What Isn't federal VA?

- State Departments of Veterans Affairs
 - State Veterans Homes, Benefits, Outreach and Advocacy
- County Departments of Veterans Affairs
 - Benefits counseling, Outreach and Advocacy
- Veterans Service Organizations
 - Community organizations, Benefits, Benefits counseling, Outreach and Advocacy
- Non Profit Agencies
 - Some with VA grants or contracts, many other funding streams
- Other federal, state and county programs
 - Numerous grant funding streams serving Veterans
- Other community agencies serving Veterans
 - Private agencies, business efforts, church/faith programs

Veterans Health Administration: General

- Healthcare is the largest component of VA's services
- VA's medical system is comprised of a network of hospitals, outpatient clinics, Vet Centers, nursing homes, and residential treatment facilities
- VA offers comprehensive medical and mental health services to Veterans who qualify for medical benefits

Veterans Health Administration: Services

- Primary Care
- Specialty and Inpatient Care
- Preventive Health Care
- Pharmacy Benefits
- Emergency Care
- Diagnosis and Treatment for Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Surgical Care and Organ Transplantation
- Rehabilitation
- Nursing Home Care
- Respite and Hospice Care
- Readjustment Counseling
- Blind Rehabilitation Services
- Dental (with specific eligibility criteria)
- Maternity Care

Eligibility for VA Health Care

- Veterans who served in the active military, naval or air service and who were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
- Former Reservists who served full-time and for operational or support (excludes training purposes)
- Former National Guard members if mobilized by Federal order
- Most Veterans who enlisted in the Armed Forces after 9/7/80 must have completed:
 - 24 months continuous active service, or
 - The full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty
- A service-connected condition is NOT necessary to receive VA health care
- To receive VA health care, most Veterans must enroll in the VA health care system
 - Veterans are assigned to priority groups
 - Some priority groups require co-payment for services

Veterans Health Administration: Mental Health Services

- Assessment, diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues
- Services offered in inpatient, residential, and outpatient settings
- Evidence-based treatments offered for specific conditions and problems including:
 - Anxiety
 - Bipolar Disorder
 - Depression
 - Military Sexual Trauma
 - PTSD
 - Schizophrenia
 - Suicide Prevention
- Core principles: mental health care is an integral component of overall health care, mental health services must be recovery-oriented

Veterans Health Administration: Substance Use Disorder Services

- Case finding, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of Substance Use Disorders, including tobacco use
- Services provided in specialty clinics, primary care, and integrated into mental health services
- Includes medically supervised withdrawal management in both ambulatory and inpatient settings
- Intensive Substance Use Disorder services available in outpatient and residential settings
- Pharmacotherapy: opioid agonist treatment (methadone, buprenorphine) and for alcohol use
- Evidence based interventions: motivational enhancement therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy for relapse prevention, 12-step facilitation counseling, contingency management, SUD-focused behavioral couples counseling or family therapy.

Readjustment Counseling Service – Vet Centers

- Eligibility: Veteran or family member served in a combat zone and received a military campaign ribbon
- Services: Readjustment counseling for Veterans and their families
 - Individual and group counseling
 - Family counseling for military-related issues
 - Bereavement counseling for families who experience an active duty death
 - Military sexual trauma counseling and referral
 - Outreach and education at community events
 - Substance abuse assessment and referral
 - Employment assessment and referral
 - VBA benefits explanation and referral
 - Screening and referral for medical issues
- Organized as part of VHA, but separate from VHA health care system

Ending Veteran Homelessness

- One of VA's top priorities is ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015
- The goal is a systematic end to homelessness with no Veterans sleeping on the street and every Veteran with access to permanent housing.
- VA is the largest single provider of homeless services in the Nation
- VA offers a wide array of interventions designed to find homeless Veterans, engage them in services, find pathways to permanent housing, and prevent homelessness from occurring

VHA Homeless Programs

- Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)*
- Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC)
- Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)**
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)**
- Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)
- Housing and Urban Development-VA Supported Housing (HUD-VASH)
- Homeless-Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACT)
- Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)
- Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)
- Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups (CHALENG)

*At some sites HCHV includes contract residential treatment services with contracts funding community providers

**VA provides grants to eligible community providers; community providers offer services

VHA Justice Programs: Mission

To partner with the criminal justice system to identify Veterans who would benefit from treatment as an alternative to incarceration. VJP will ensure access to exceptional care, tailored to individual needs, for justice-involved Veterans by linking each Veteran to VA and community services that will prevent homelessness, improve social and clinical outcomes, facilitate recovery and end Veterans' cyclical contact with the criminal justice system.

VHA Justice Programs: Strategic Goals

1. Improve Veteran identification
2. Build staff capacity/skill
3. Match Veterans to appropriate treatment
4. Reduce stigma
5. Develop systems for evaluation, research and knowledge

VHA Justice Outreach Services

Justice Outreach

- Gain access to the jail
 - Identify Veterans and Determine Eligibility
 - Conduct outreach, assessment, and case management for Veterans in local courts and jails
 - Provide/coordinate training for law enforcement personnel
 - Linkage to VA and Community Services/Resources
-
- Number of VJO Specialists funded: 248
 - Number of local jail facilities serviced: 1284 (39%) of 3322 U.S. jails
 - Number of Veterans receiving VJO services (Oct. 2009 – present): 90,000+

Prison Re-Entry

- Gain access to the prison
 - Educate Veterans' groups about VA and VA services
 - Identify Veterans and Determine Eligibility
 - Reentry Planning
 - Linkage to VA and Community Services
-
- Number of HCRV Specialists funded: 44
 - Number of state and federal prisons serviced: 998 (81%) of 1,234 US prisons
 - Number of incarcerated Veterans receiving reentry services (Aug. 2007-present): 60,000+

Sequential Intercept Model

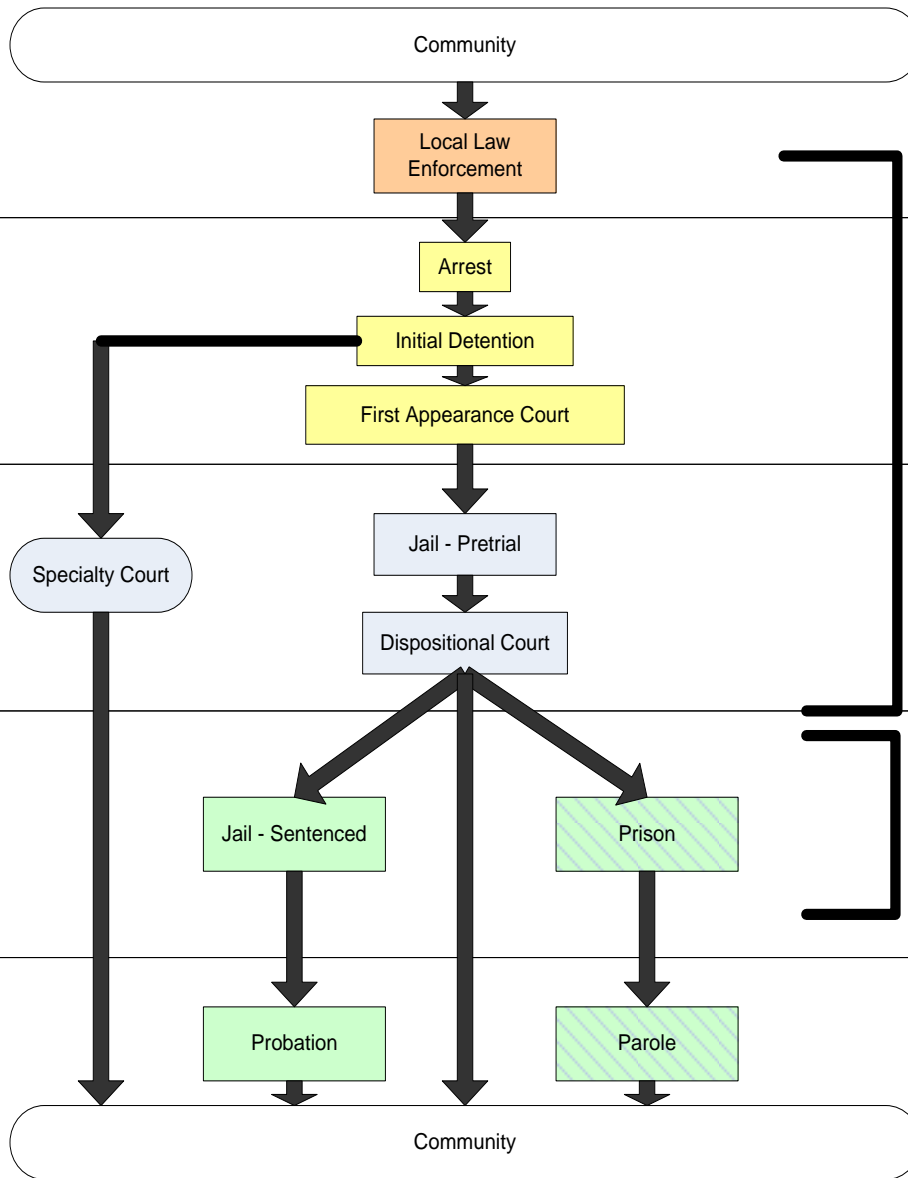
Intercept 1
Law enforcement/
Emergency Services

Intercept 2
Initial detention/
Initial court hearings

Intercept 3
Jails/Courts

Intercept 4
Reentry

Intercept 5
Community corrections/
Community support



**LAW ENFORCEMENT-
COURTS-JAILS:
VA Veterans Justice
Outreach (VJO)**

**PRISONS:
Health Care for Reentry
Veterans (HCRV)**

Justice-Involved Veterans: National Estimates from Bureau of Justice Statistics

	Number of U.S. residents, 2007	Percent reporting prior military service	Estimated number of military veterans, 2007
Criminal justice involvement			
Probation supervision ^a	4,293,200	9.3%	399,300
Parole or supervised release ^a	824,400	9.1%	75,000
Local jail custody ^b	780,600	9.3%	72,600
State prison custody ^c	1,315,300	10.4%	136,800
Federal prison custody ^c	197,300	9.8%	19,300
Total, correctional supervision ^d	7,328,200	9.6%	703,000
Adults Arrested ^e	12,078,000	9.6%	1,159,500



Veterans

Note: All counts are estimates, rounded to the nearest thousand.

a/ Probation and parole population counts based on BJS Annual Probation and Parole Surveys, 2007;

percentage of veterans based on SAM HSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007.

b/ Local jail population counts based on BJS' Annual Survey of Jails, 2007; percentage of veterans based on BJS' Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 2002.

c/ State and federal prison population counts based on BJS National Prisoners Statistics program, 2007; percentage of veterans based on BJS' Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2004.

d/ Because some offenders may have multiple statuses, this total is less than the combined populations.

e/ Arrest count is taken from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, 2007; percentage of veterans based on SAM HSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007.

Incarcerated Veteran Offense Type

(sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000 [Jails], 2004 [Prisons])

Type of Offense	State Prison	Federal Prison	Jail
Violent Offenses	57%	19%	27%
Property Offenses	16%	11%	25%
Drug Offenses	15%	46%	17%
Public-order Offenses	12%	23%	31%
Other/unspecified	0%	1%	1%

Important Context with BJS data

- Among adult males, the incarceration rate of Veterans (630 prisoners per 100,000) was *less than half* that of nonveterans (1,390 prisoners per 100,000)
- The calculated male violent offender rate for Veterans was 338 prisoners per 100,000 and for non-veterans was 595 per 100,000
- The non-veteran violent offender rate per 100,000 population is one and three quarters times higher than the Veteran rate
- This data DOES NOT support a view of Veterans as more violent population than non-veterans; in fact, the data supports the opposite view.

VA Partnership with Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts:

- Hybrid Drug and Mental Health Treatment Courts, serving Veteran defendants
- Volunteer Veteran Mentors
- 344 courts operating (up from 50 courts in January 2011)

VA Contributions:

- VJO Specialist on treatment team; in courtroom when in session
- Linkage to health care services at VA medical centers
- Benefits assistance: VBA participation (both in and out of court)
- Partner with National Association of Drug Court Professionals to spread the model and established best practices
- Clark, McGuire, Blue-Howells in Drug Court Review (2010) - Early Development of Veterans Treatment Courts: Local and Legislative Initiatives

Limits on VA Authorization

- Can provide:
 - Outreach, assessment, referral and linkage to services
 - Treatment for justice-involved Veterans who are not incarcerated
- Title 38 CFR 17.38 (c)(5) does not allow VHA to provide:
 - Hospital and outpatient care for a Veteran who is
 - Either a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency
 - If that agency has a duty to give that care or services

Homelessness Risk

Incarceration as an adult male is the single highest risk factor of ever being homeless (NSHAPC/Burt, 1996)

“Lengthy periods of incarceration in remote locations often attenuate the social and family ties that are crucial for successful reentry into the community.” (p. 9-5).

“...(E)ven short term incarcerations may disrupt lives and interfere with the ability to maintain employment and housing.” (p. 9-6).

(Metraux, Roman, and Cho on prison reentry/jail stays, National Symposium on Homelessness Research, 2007)

Developments: Access to Legal Services

- VHA Directive 2011-034: VA medical centers making office space available for legal service providers to work with Veterans
- Legal services for homeless and at-risk Veterans through VHA Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program
- Promoting legal service providers' participation in SSVF as subcontractors (example: DoJ Access to Justice Initiative webinar)

Developments: Video Outreach

- 1) “A Second Chance for Veterans” – for VA leadership/staff and community partners (includes an introduction by Secretary Shinseki)
- 2) “Suits: Support for Incarcerated Veterans” – direct outreach to incarcerated Veterans (includes a companion training video for correctional staff)
- Each is available online (<http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp>)
- National dissemination:
 - Veterans Justice Outreach and Health Care for Reentry Veterans Specialists use copies of “Second Chance” in presentations to VA and community audiences
 - Justice Programs staff are working with the Association of State Correctional Administrators and other partners to get “Suits” aired in correctional facilities nationwide

Developments: Police Training Initiative

- VA Police Training Initiative
 - Partnership between Veterans Justice Programs, VA Law Enforcement Training Center, VA mental health providers
 - Topics: verbal crisis de-escalation skills, mental health and other clinical issues, VA resources for justice-involved Veterans
 - Goal: train all VA Police officers by end of FY 2015

Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS)

Goal: Build a system to identify all Veterans currently incarcerated/in courts

Data source:

- VA/DoD Identity Repository (VADIR)
- Universal data source on Veterans (25 million + entries)

Status:

- 53 users, including 31 state prison systems
- VRSS identifying approximately 8% of inmates with history of military service; improvement over self-report response rates of 2-5%

Next Steps:

- Add jail and court system users
- National implementation

Veterans Dorms

- Units in prisons or jails designed to house Veterans together to deliver services effectively, prepare for reentry, and reconnect with pride from military service
 - Services delivered by multiple partners, including direct prison services, state and county Veterans Affairs, non-profit behavioral health providers, state and local employment services, Vet Centers, outreach provided by VHA
- At most recent inventory (year end 2013), Veterans dorms were active in:
 - Federal prison: West Virginia
 - State prison: Colorado, Florida, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia
 - In development Maryland, Ohio, Texas
 - Local jail: Arizona, California, Georgia

Discussion

Comments or Questions?