



## **NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS**

*“Trust in Health Care Providers: Factors Predicting Trust Among Homeless Veterans Over Time.”*

Carissa van den Berk-Clark and James McGuire / [Full Report](#)

### Quick Takeaways:

- Increased trust in health care providers is associated with better health outcomes, increased use of primary care, and a reduction in the use of emergency services.
- Strong social support for treatment, satisfaction with care, continuity of provider, and race were associated with greater trust in health care providers.

### Study:

Researchers wished to understand which factors predict trust in health care providers by homeless veterans. They classified these factors into categories: predisposing characteristics, need measures, enabling characteristics, and primary care experience. Predisposing characteristics measured were age, race, and years of education. Need measures were factors related to physical health, mental health, and substance use issues. Enabling characteristics measured were service-connected disability status, level of social support, and competing needs (such as the need for survival over treatment). Primary care experience measured the continuity of and satisfaction with health care.

In 2001, the Los Angeles VA built a primary care clinic, which physically and programmatically integrated with their homeless social service and mental health programs. Researchers assigned a study group of 130 homeless veterans to receive care from this facility, with a control group of 130 homeless veterans receiving care from providers that existed before the construction of the new facility. They interviewed participants at the start of the study, and in six-month increments for a period of 18 months.

### Findings:

Researchers found that most of the studied factors were not associated with a change in provider trust. Factors that were associated with an increase in provider trust were: race, continuity with provider, satisfaction with care, and social support. Specifically, African-Americans veterans showed greater trust in providers. Service-connected disability status was associated with less trust in providers. Researchers also found that while trust in providers was high at the beginning and six-month mark, trust dropped below baseline measurements by the end of the study.

### Conclusion:

Researchers suggest that a homeless veteran has greater trust in a provider with whom they have a strong continuity of care, and who delivers good service. Similarly, a homeless veteran who is surrounded by friends and family who encourage care will also have greater trust in health care providers. Race was the only demographic factor that was associated with a positive change, researchers believe that this is because that African-Americans believe that they will get fairer care from the federal government. Veterans with service-connected disabilities were likely to have more experience with VA doctors, and that familiarity likely led to less trust.

van den Berk-Clark, C., & McGuire, J. (2014). Trust in health care providers: Factors predicting trust among homeless veterans over time. *Journal of health care for the poor and underserved*, 25(3), 1278-1290.