Justice-Involved Veterans

Jessica Blue-Howells, LCSW
National Coordinator, Health Care for Reentry Veterans
National Program Manager, Project CHALENG
Agenda

• Who are justice involved Veterans

• Why is VA doing these programs

• What is VA doing

• Outcomes

• Newer initiatives
Who are Justice Involved Veterans
# National Estimates from Bureau of Justice Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criminal justice involvement</th>
<th>Number of U.S. residents, 2007</th>
<th>Percent reporting prior military service</th>
<th>Estimated number of military veterans, 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probation supervision(^a)</td>
<td>4,293,200</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>399,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parole or supervised release(^a)</td>
<td>824,400</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local jail custody(^b)</td>
<td>780,600</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>72,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State prison custody(^c)</td>
<td>1,315,300</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>136,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal prison custody(^c)</td>
<td>197,300</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>19,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, correctional supervision(^d)</td>
<td>7,328,200</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>703,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adults Arrested\(^e\)**: 12,078,000 with 9.6% estimated to have served in the military, totaling 1,159,500.

---

**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; \(^b\) percentage of veterans based on SAM HSA’s National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007; \(^c\) 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; \(^d\) State and federal prison population counts based on BJS National Prisoners Statistics program, 2007; \(^e\) 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.

Source: Mumola and Noonan, BJS
Incarcerated Veteran Offense Type
(sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000 [Jails], 2004 [Prisons])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offense</th>
<th>State Prison</th>
<th>Federal Prison</th>
<th>Jail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Offenses</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Offenses</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Offenses</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-order Offenses</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/unspecified</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
Why is VA Working with Justice Involved Veterans

- Secretary’s commitment
  - “If we are to end Veterans homelessness, we must disrupt the cycles that have come to dominate the lives of justice involved Veterans.”
  - “I ... seek your support in a cooperative effort to ensure we never leave behind justice involved Veterans who have the potential to change their futures.”

- Homelessness Prevention
  - One of VA’s Top 3 priorities – ending Veteran homelessness
  - Risk of being homeless is 3½ greater for males with a history of incarceration
  - CHALENG indicates legal needs are among the most UNMET for homeless Veterans

- Recidivism: two-thirds rearrested in 3 years; three-quarters re-arrested in 5 years
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: 249
- Number of 3,365 local jail facilities served: Not yet known
- Number of Veterans receiving VJO services (Oct. 2009 – Sept. 2013): 66,074

**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 served: 998 (81%) of 1,231 US prisons
- Number of incarcerated Veterans receiving reentry services (Aug. 2007-September 2013): 56,294
### Sequential Intercept Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercept 1</th>
<th>Law Enforcement/ Emergency Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept 2</td>
<td>Initial detention/ Initial court hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept 3</td>
<td>Jails/Courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept 4</td>
<td>Reentry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept 5</td>
<td>Community Corrections/ Community Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Key Steps:

- **Local Law Enforcement**
- **Arrest**
- **Initial Detention**
- **First Appearance Court**
- **Specialty Court**
- **Dispositional Court**
- **Jail - Pretrial**
- **Jail - Sentenced**
- **Prison**
- **Probation**
- **Parole**

### Outcomes:

- **Community**

### Agencies:

- **LAW ENFORCEMENT-COURTS-JAILS:** VA Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)
- **PRISONS:** Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV)
VA Partnership with Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts:
- Hybrid Drug and Mental Health Treatment Courts, serving Veteran defendants
- Volunteer Veteran Mentors
- 238 courts operating

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
Veterans Courts, 2004-2013

Figure 1. Annual and Cumulative Number of Operational Veterans Treatment Courts/Courts/Dockets/Tracks, 2004-2013

- **Yearly Number of Courts per Year**
- **Cumulative Number of Courts**
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
Outcomes
### Demographics and Clinical Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>HCRV</th>
<th>VJO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIF/OEF/OND</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless/imminent risk</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year or more in prison/jail in lifetime</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any income, past 30 days</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need psychiatric treatment</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need substance abuse treatment</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need medical treatment</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need case management</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need assistance with family problems</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes for Veterans in VTCs

Characteristics* of Veterans seen by VHA in VTCs:
- 93% had spent time in jail or prison (21% of these had spent a year or more)
- Average: 7 prior arrests; average age at first arrest: 27
- Average age when seen: 44
- 64% charged with drug or public order offenses
- 40% homeless at least once

Outcomes* when Veterans in the courts receive VA care...
- 88% reduction in arrests (year post- vs. year pre-court participation)
- 30% increase in stable housing (from baseline to year post-court participation)

*source: VHA Homeless Operations and Management and Evaluation System (HOMES), April 2011 through October 2013
Criminal Justice and Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan

- Examined data from a national sample of Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans

- Post-deployment arrests were associated with: younger age, male gender, witnessing family violence, prior history of arrest, alcohol/drug misuse, and recent homelessness.

- Combat exposure, posttraumatic stress disorder, and traumatic brain injury were not related to arrests

- Mental health treatment may be necessary but not sufficient to reduce criminal recidivism

- The data provide some empirical support for diverting veterans from jails to mental health services, particularly for those with substance abuse disorders.

- Because veteran arrests are also linked to broader general population factors, addressing issues such as living stability and criminality may be equally important for reducing arrest recidivism among Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans.

Source: Eric B. Elbogen, Ph.D., ABPP (Forensic), UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine, Criminal Justice Involvement among Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans: Risk Factors and Barriers to Care, 2012
Access to Legal Services

• VHA Directive 2011-034: VA medical centers making office space available for legal service providers to work with Veterans (55 providers serving Veterans in 53 VAMCs)

• Legal services for homeless and at-risk Veterans through VHA Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program

• Stand Downs (81 percent of Stand Downs reported legal services participation in 2012 and 2013)
**Video Outreach**

- “A Second Chance for Veterans” – for VA leadership/staff and community partners (includes an introduction by Secretary Shinseki)

- “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](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
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)

- **The Challenge for all of us:** Identifying all justice-involved Veterans
  - The gap: self-report of military service (2-4%) vs. Bureau of Justice Statistics (9-10%)

- **Why important?**
  - 80% of Veterans in the Justice system are likely eligible for comprehensive high quality VHA healthcare

- **The solution:** Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS)
  - VA has daily updated copy of Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS); >30 million Servicemembers
  - Track record:
    - 38 active systems users (21 state Corrections systems, 13 county jails, 4 court systems)
    - VRSS identification rates average 8-9%
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
    • In development Maryland, Ohio, Texas
  – Local jail: Arizona, California, Georgia
Discussion

Comments or Questions?