

# Justice-Involved Veterans

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# 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

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

# 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

# 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: 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

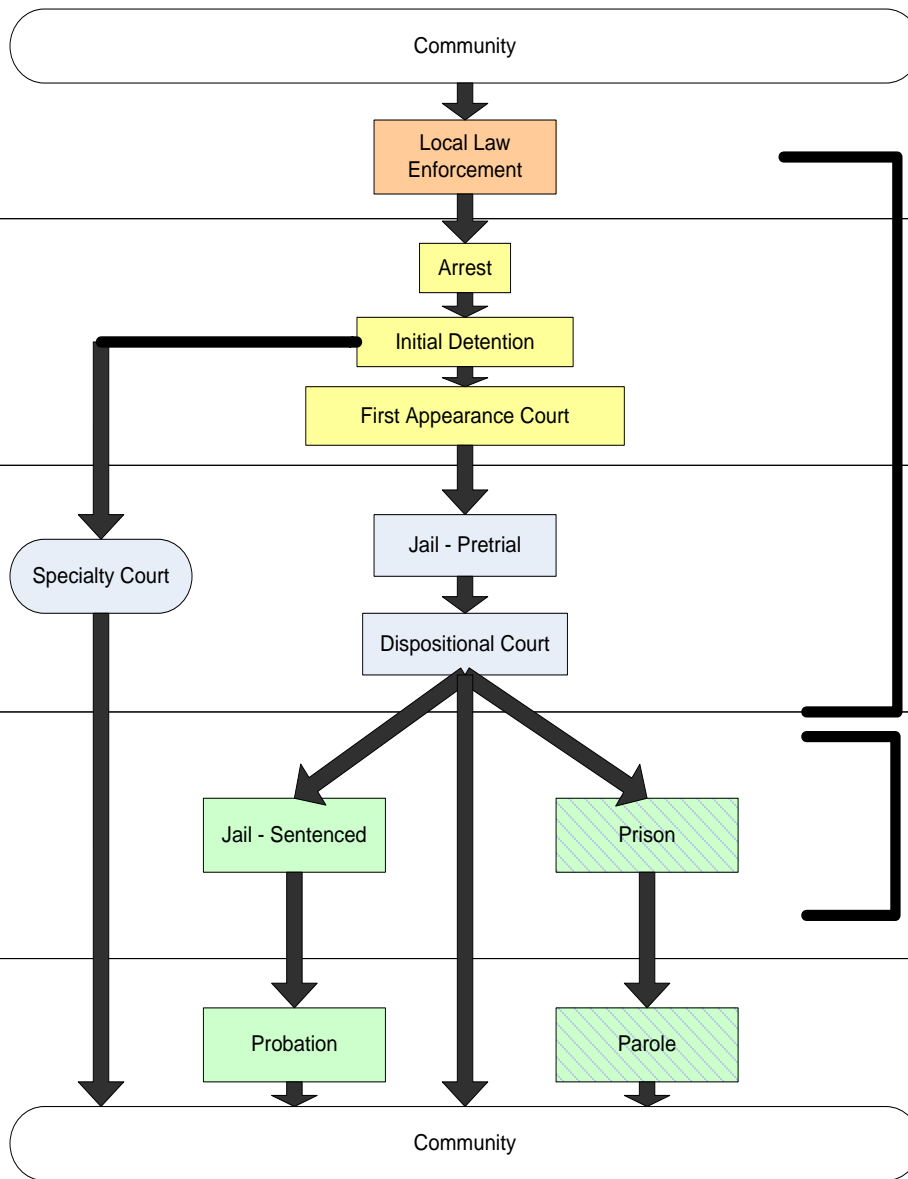
Intercept 1  
Law enforcement/  
Emergency Services

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)**

# VA Partnership with Veterans Treatment Courts

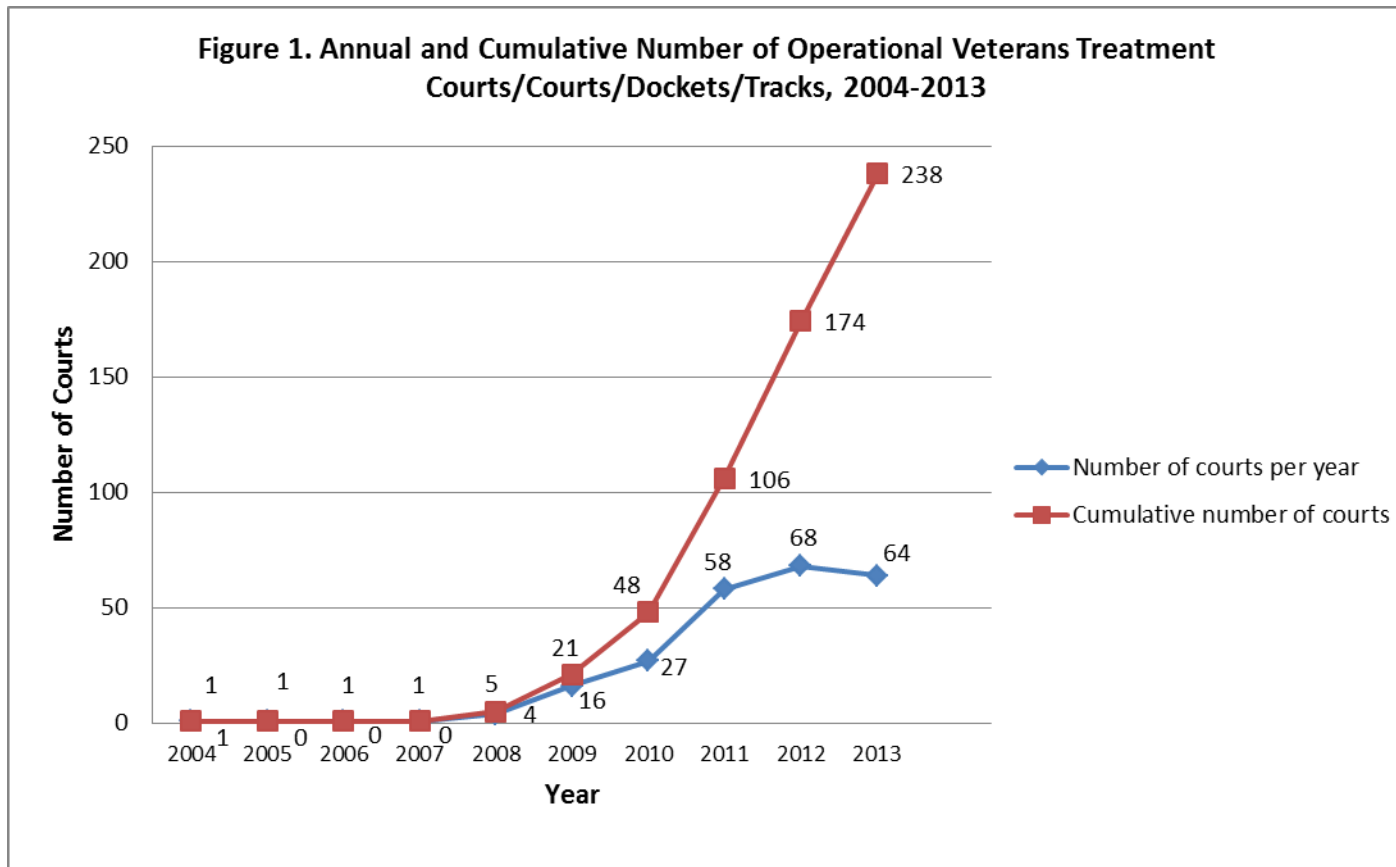
## Veterans Treatment Courts:

- 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



# 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

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



# 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

# Newer Initiatives

# 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>)
- 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
  - State prison: Colorado, Florida, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia
    - In development Maryland, Ohio, Texas
  - Local jail: Arizona, California, Georgia



# Discussion

Comments or Questions?