

# The Five Year Plan to End Homelessness Among Veterans: Actions for FY 2010



Pete Dougherty  
Paul Smits

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# Overview of Homelessness

- 131,000 Veterans estimated to be homeless on any given night\*
- Homelessness is often a consequence of multiple psychosocial factors, including unstable family supports, job loss, inadequate job skills, health problems, substance use disorder, or other mental health concerns.
- Homeless services cannot be provided in isolation.
- Homeless services must be comprehensive
  - recovery-oriented,
  - support physical and mental health stabilization and treatment,
  - provide substance use disorder treatment,
  - enhance independent living skills,
  - address vocational rehabilitation and employment maintenance,
  - assist with housing searches and placement.

# Defining Homelessness

## A Homeless Veteran:

- Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
- Or resides in a public or privately operated shelter or institution;
- Or resides in a place not designed for use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.



## A Chronically Homeless Veteran:

- Has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has had at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.



# Health and Mental Health Needs of Homeless Veterans

- **66% Alcohol Abuse**
- **51% Drug Abuse**
- **54% Serious Psychiatric Diagnosis**
- **39% Dual Diagnosis**
- **58% Health/Physical**



# VA Five-Year Comprehensive Plan to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

- **VA will expand existing programs and develop new initiatives to prevent Veterans from entering into homelessness and to treat those who are currently homeless.**
  - Increase the number and variety of housing options including permanent, transitional, contracted, community-operated, and VA-operated
  - Provide more supportive services through partnerships to prevent homelessness, improve employability, and increase independent living for Veterans
  - Improve access to VA and community based mental health, substance abuse, and support services

**These program enhancements will provide housing, VA health care and benefits, gainful employment and residential stability to more than 500,000 Veterans**

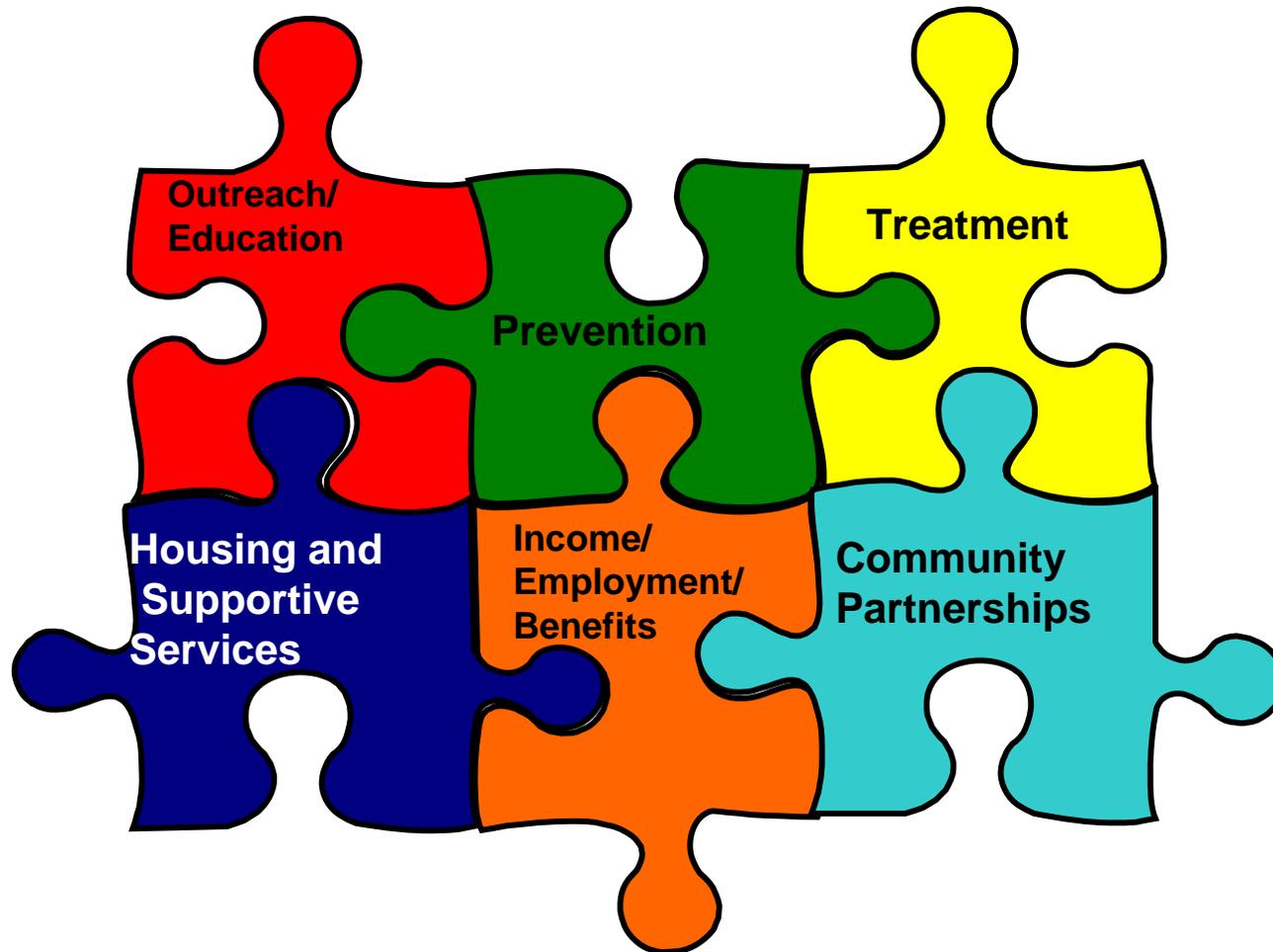
# VA's Strategy to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

- VA's philosophy of "no wrong door" means that all Veterans seeking to prevent or get out of homelessness must have easy access to programs and services. Any door a Veteran comes to – at a Medical Center, a Regional Office, or a Community Organization – must offer them assistance.
- Built upon 6 strategic pillars:
  - Outreach/Education,
  - Treatment,
  - Prevention,
  - Housing/Supportive Services,
  - Income/Employment/Benefits and
  - Community Partnerships.

# VA Five-Year Comprehensive Plan to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

- The provision of safe housing is fundamental. However, programming must include:
  - mental health stabilization; substance use disorder treatment services; enhancement of independent living skills; vocational and employment services; and assistance with permanent housing searches and placement.

# Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans





# Homeless Prevention Services

## Types

- **Universal Prevention**
  - Public information regarding the availability of resources/services
  - Medical Treatment
  - Mental Health Treatment
  - Substance Use treatment
  - Economic Benefits
- **Targeted Prevention-**
  - Supportive Services for Low Income Families
  - Homelessness Prevention Pilot (HUD-VA)
  - Relapse prevention services
  - Justice Involved Veterans



# Homeless Prevention Services

FY 2010

- **Programs for Justice-Involved Veterans**

- Transitional planning for Veterans discharging from the justice system
- Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists at each VA medical center
- Outreach and education for law enforcement
- Linkage to VA services for Veterans in treatment courts, including Veterans Courts
- FY 09: 4,500 aided by 39 VHA Re-entry Specialists
- FY 10: 7,500 Veterans served (HCRV and VJO); staffing enhancements for VJO

- **Supportive Services for Low-Income Veteran Families**

- Grants to provide case management and supportive services for low-income Veteran families
- Services include financial assistance to prevent Veterans falling into homelessness
- FY 09: Program development
- FY 10: Award Grants; 5,000 Veterans served



# Homeless Prevention Services

FY 2010

- **HUD-VA Prevention Pilot**

- Collaboration with HUD to provide housing and intensive case management
- OEF/OIF focus
- Targeting areas with large numbers of returning Veterans
- FY 09: Program planning
- FY 10: 200-250 Veterans and families served

- **Health Care for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Care**

- An immediate resource at each VA medical center to realize the commitment to “no wrong door”
- Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing
- FY 09: 1,600-2,000 Veterans expected to be served
- FY 10: 4,800 Veterans served



# Outreach & Education

- Outreach by VA and community partners
  - Shelters
  - Soup Kitchens
  - Street Outreach
  - Stand Downs
  - Justice Outreach and Re-entry Services
- VA National Homeless Call Center



# Outreach & Education

FY 2010

- **Homeless Registry**
  - Database to track and monitor prevention and treatment outcomes
  - Dual focus: Program performance and outcomes for Veterans
  - FY 09: No registry exists
  - FY 10: 200,000 Veterans entered into registry
- **National Call and Referral Center**
  - Resource for homeless Veterans and advocates seeking immediate assistance
  - Linkage to wide array of VA and community resources
  - FY 09: No formal system exists
  - FY 10: 15,000 Veterans served



# Treatment

- **Access, Access, Access and the “no wrong door policy”**
- **Assessment, Comprehensive Treatment and Rehabilitative Treatment includes:**
  - **Medical care**
  - **Mental Health Care**
  - **Substance Abuse Care**
  - **Dental Care**
- **Assessment and development of comprehensive treatment plans for:**
  - **Psychosocial Issues**
  - **Family Issues**
  - **Legal Issues**
  - **Vocational Issues**



# Treatment

## FY 2010

- **VA Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs**
  - VA-operated residential care programs
  - Access to full spectrum of available services, plus in-house programming
  - FY 09: 2,000 residential beds; 5,000 Veterans served
  - FY 10: 5,300 Veterans served
- **Dental Care**
  - Enhanced effort to promote dental care for homeless Veterans
  - FY 09: 11,000 Veterans served
  - FY 10: 20,000 Veterans served



# Housing and Supportive Services

- Provision of transitional and permanent housing with supportive services in collaboration with Federal and Community Partners.
- Provision of Community based Residential Treatment



FY 2010

# Housing and Supportive Services

- **HUD-VASH Program**

- Nation's largest supported permanent housing initiative; combines permanent housing with case management and supportive services that promote and maintain recovery and housing stability
- HUD Housing Choice vouchers
- VA dedicated case management services
- FY 09: 20,000 vouchers allocated
- FY 10: 30,000 vouchers allocated; 22-24,000 Veterans housed

- **Grant and Per Diem**

- Transitional housing (up to 24 months) and supportive services for homeless Veterans
- Enhancement will allow grantees to provide 1500-2000 additional beds
- FY 09: 18,000 Veterans served
- FY 10: 20,000 Veterans served



# Income, Employment & Benefits

- Employment assistance
- Entitlement assistance
  - Expanded GI Bill
  - Social Security Benefits
  - Veteran's Compensation and Pension
- Short-term financial assistance
  - Shallow subsidies through HUD-VASH
  - General Assistance (GA)
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Supportive Employment/CWT



# Income, Employment & Benefits

FY 2010

- **Supportive Employment/Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)**
  - Employment program targeted at Veterans with significant health problems
  - Access to full spectrum of available services, plus in-house programming
  - FY 09: Approximately 5,000 Veterans served
  - FY 10: 5,500 Veterans served
- **Expedited Claims for Homeless Veterans**
  - Collaboration with VBA
  - Ensure timely processing of homeless Veterans' benefits claims
  - FY09: 1,900 Veterans served
  - FY10: 3,500 Veterans served
- **Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP)**
  - Collaboration with Department of Labor
  - Provide Veterans with gainful employment
  - FY 09: 15,000 Veterans served
  - FY 10: 20,250 Veterans served

# Three P's to Go Forward

1. **Prevention-** Providing services to prevent Veterans and their families from experiencing the first night of homelessness
2. Expanding **Partnerships-** Building on the successful strategy that has made it possible to reduce Veteran homelessness
3. **Perseverance-** Staying the course along with our community partners until the last homeless Veteran is off the street

