



Combating Homelessness Among Our Nation's Veterans: A Collaborative Effort Between VA and Community Agencies

**Deborah R. Walls, MSW, LCSW, CCDVC, COR
Community Rehabilitation Section
Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center**

Battlemind Symposium 2014







Presentation Overview

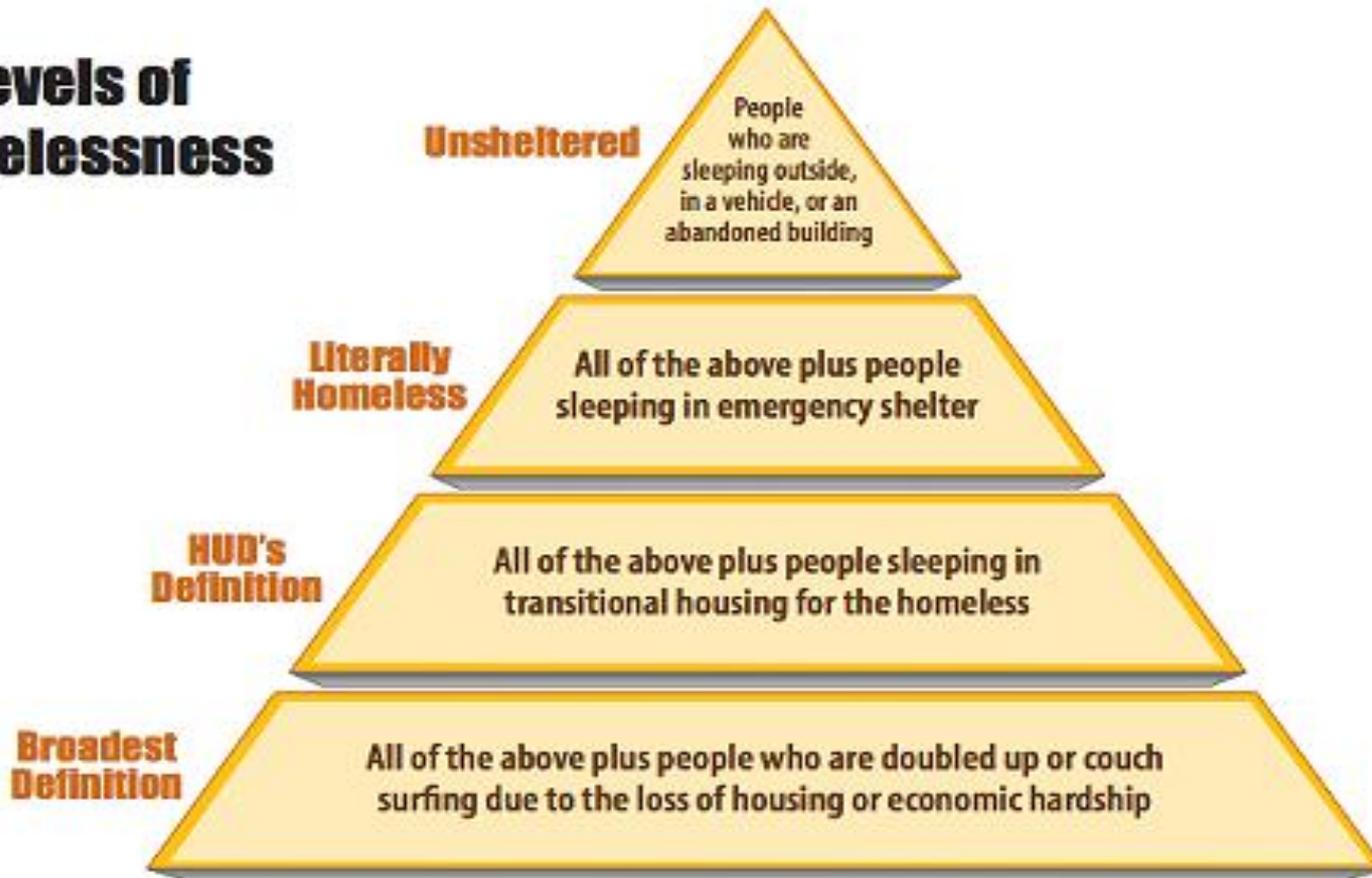
- **Current population demographics**
- **Administration's goals**
- **Five Year Plan**
- **A Veteran's Story**
- **Wrap-up**







Levels of Homelessness



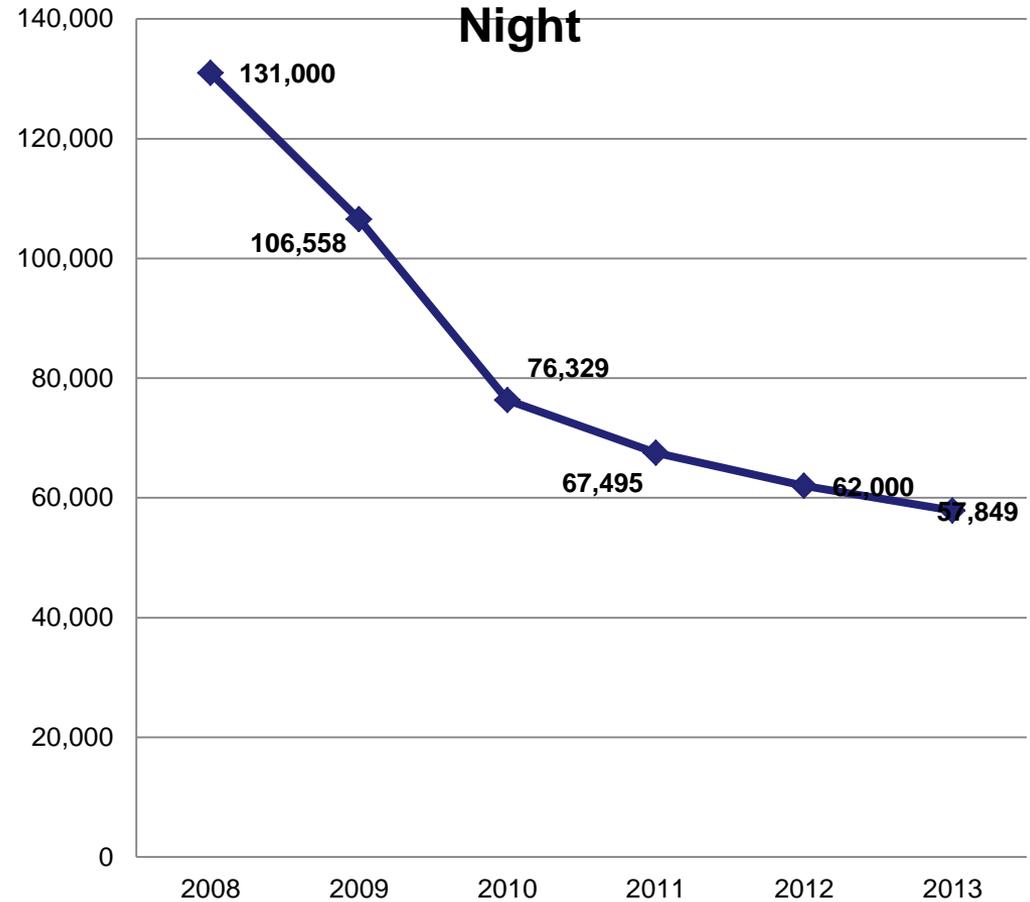


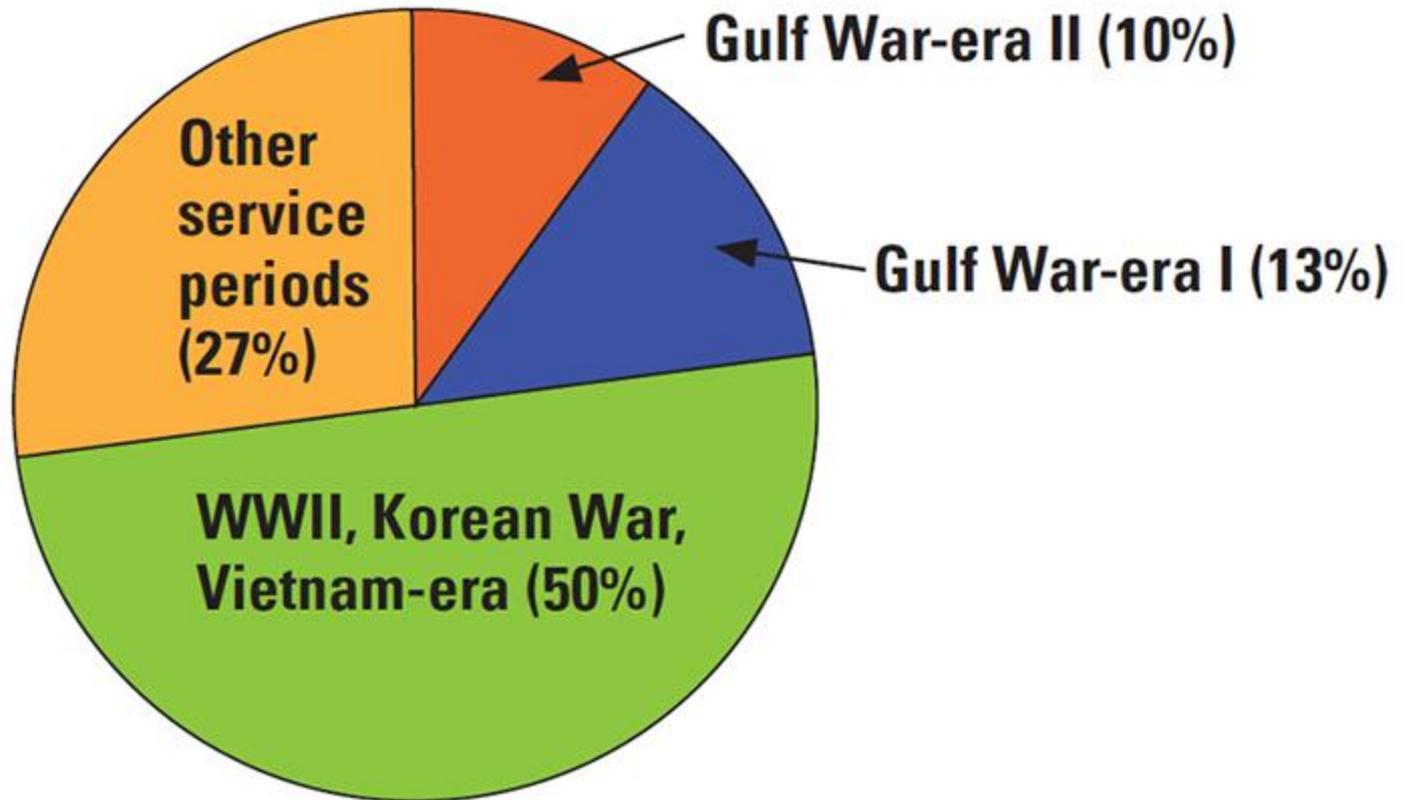
Homeless Veterans Numbers FY 2014 (YTD)

Where are we right now:

- A little over 57,000 Veterans are estimated to be homeless; higher numbers are at risk
- Mean age is 51.7
- 93% are not married
- 10% are female

Homeless Veterans on a Single Night





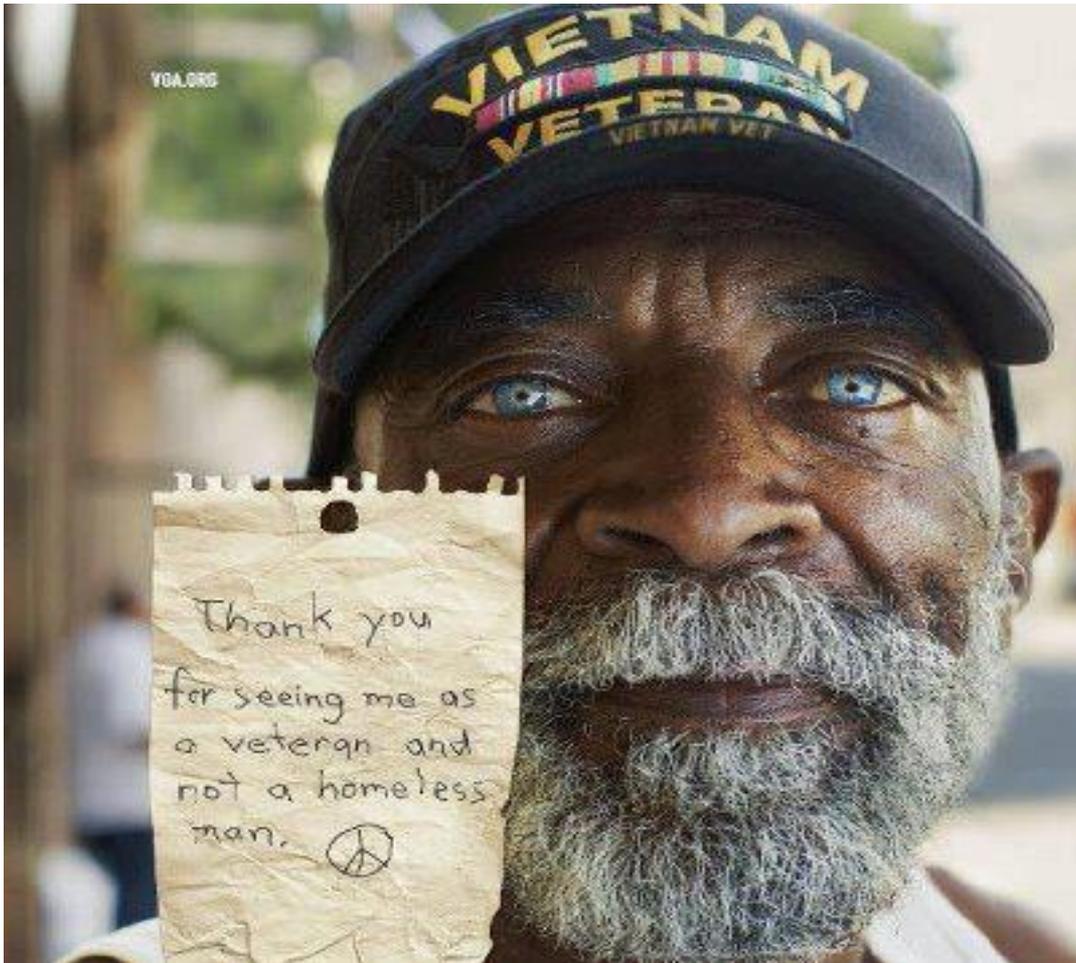


Homeless Veteran Demographics

- **Mental Health Diagnosis**
 - 50% Serious Psychiatric
 - 70% Substance Dependence
 - 35% Dually Diagnosed
- **Medical Diagnosis**
 - 51% of individual homeless Veterans have disabilities
 - 58% Serious Medical Condition
 - 66% Past Psychiatric or Substance Abuse Hospitalization
- **Residence Prior to intake**
 - 7.0% Own apt.
 - 19.9% Doubled up
 - 14.0% Institution/Jail
- **Length of Time Homeless**
 - 22.0% Greater than 2 years
 - 9.0% 1 – 2 years
 - 11.0% 6 mos. – 1 year
 - 26.0% 1 mos. – 6 mos.
- 68% reside in principal cities
- 32% reside in suburban/rural areas

A photograph of a handwritten sign on a piece of cardboard. The text on the sign reads: "1 out of 4 Homeless MEN Have Served our Country in the military".

1 out of 4 Homeless
MEN Have Served
our Country
in the military





The President's Charge

- **Combat Homelessness among our Nation's Veterans**
- **Establish zero tolerance policy – goal is to end homelessness among our Veterans**
- **VA believes one homeless Veteran is one too many**
- **Addressing and preventing homelessness is one of the VA's top priorities**





Five Year Plan

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

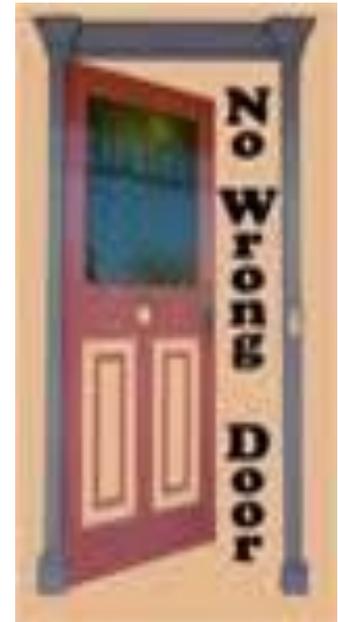




VA's Strategy to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

No Wrong Door

- **Built upon 6 strategic pillars:**
 - Outreach/Education
 - Treatment
 - Prevention
 - Housing/Supportive Services
 - Income/Employment/Benefits
 - Community Partnerships





Strategy to End Homelessness Among Veterans

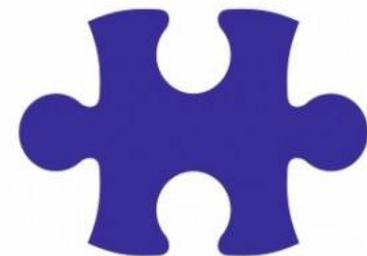
In-Reach/Outreach
Contract
Grant & Per Diem
HUD-VASH
Domiciliary
Employment/Benefits





In-Reach & Outreach

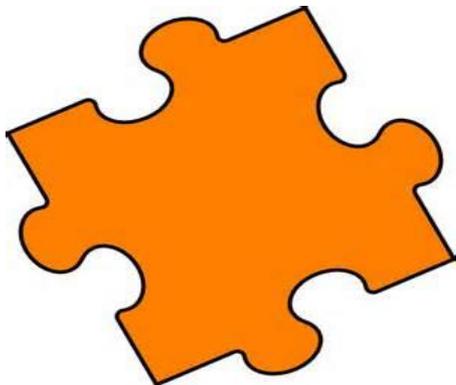
- Housing Clinic
- Homeless Reminders
- Self Referrals
- National Homeless Hotline
- Street Outreach
- Community Education





Contract

- **Transitional Housing**
- **Targets Chronically Mentally Ill**
- **Six Month Stay or Less**
- **Provides therapeutic treatment**





Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD)

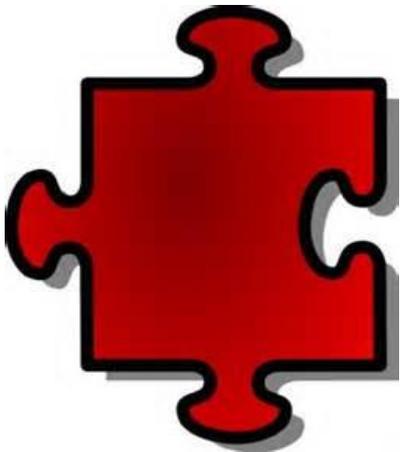
- **Transitional Housing**
- **Up to two years**
- **Average 158 days, length of stay**
- **47% treatment stays determined successful**
- **34% that complete are employed**
- **71% housed at discharge**





HUD-VASH

- **The HUD-VASH Program is a proven program in assisting VA meet this goal**
- **HUD-VASH is now the Nation's largest supported housing initiative that targets homeless Veterans**





HUD-VASH

- **Program Goal: To move Veterans and their families out of homelessness**
- **Program Objectives**
 - Permanent independent community-based housing
 - VA case management services, designed to improve the Veteran's health and mental health, and to enhance the Veteran's ability to remain stable, housed, and community-integrated

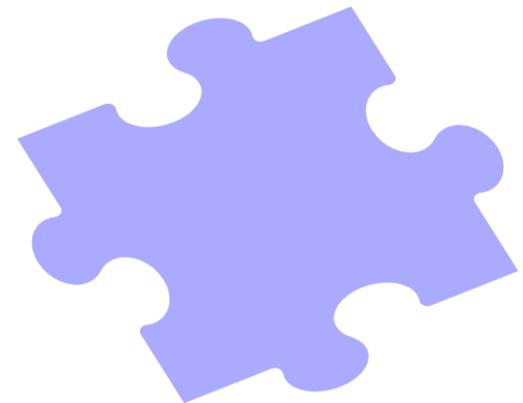




Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV)

- 2146 Operating beds
- Over 5,900 Veterans served
- ALOS: 109 Days
- 72% Successfully completed Program
- Average age: 44 years old
- 5.0% Women

- 92% Substance Abuse
- 64% Suffer Mental Illness
- 59% Dually Diagnosed
- 40% Orthopedic Problems
- 34.3% Hypertension





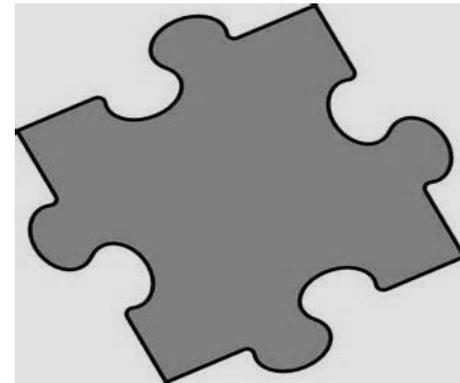
Employment And Benefits

Vocational Rehabilitation

Work Readiness Program

- Job Placement Assistance
- Mock Interview
- Employee Networking
- Computer Lab

Supportive Employment





VA Initiatives

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

**Supportive Services for Veteran
Families (SSVF)**





Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

- VA has programs in place to provide services to the Veteran who is re-entering society to readjust to life in the community, establish appropriate housing, and prevent a return to incarceration
- VA is working with the courts, prisons, and law enforcement agencies to offer treatment as an alternative to incarceration

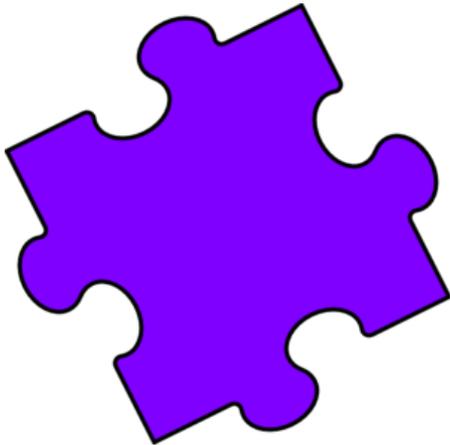




Health Care for Reentry Veterans Program (HCRV)

GOAL:

To assist Veterans being released from state and federal prisons to readjust to life in the community and to avoid behaviors resulting in re-incarceration





Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

Services Provided by Grant Recipient:

- Outreach
- Case management
- Limited financial support paid to third parties, up to 20% of grant award
- Assist or directly provide a range of other services for the veteran *and their family*



Financial Supports Available

All payments time-limited and are incorporated into a sustainability plan.

- Rent arrears
- Utility payments
- Security deposits
- Moving costs
- Child care





Homeless Call Center



1-877-424-3838

Call for yourself or someone else

Free and confidential

Trained VA counselors to assist

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**We have information about VA homeless programs
and mental health services in your area that can
help you.**





A Veteran's Journey





Veterans

“Heroes don’t always wear capes, badges, or uniforms. Sometimes they support those who do.”





Questions?

