

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



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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.

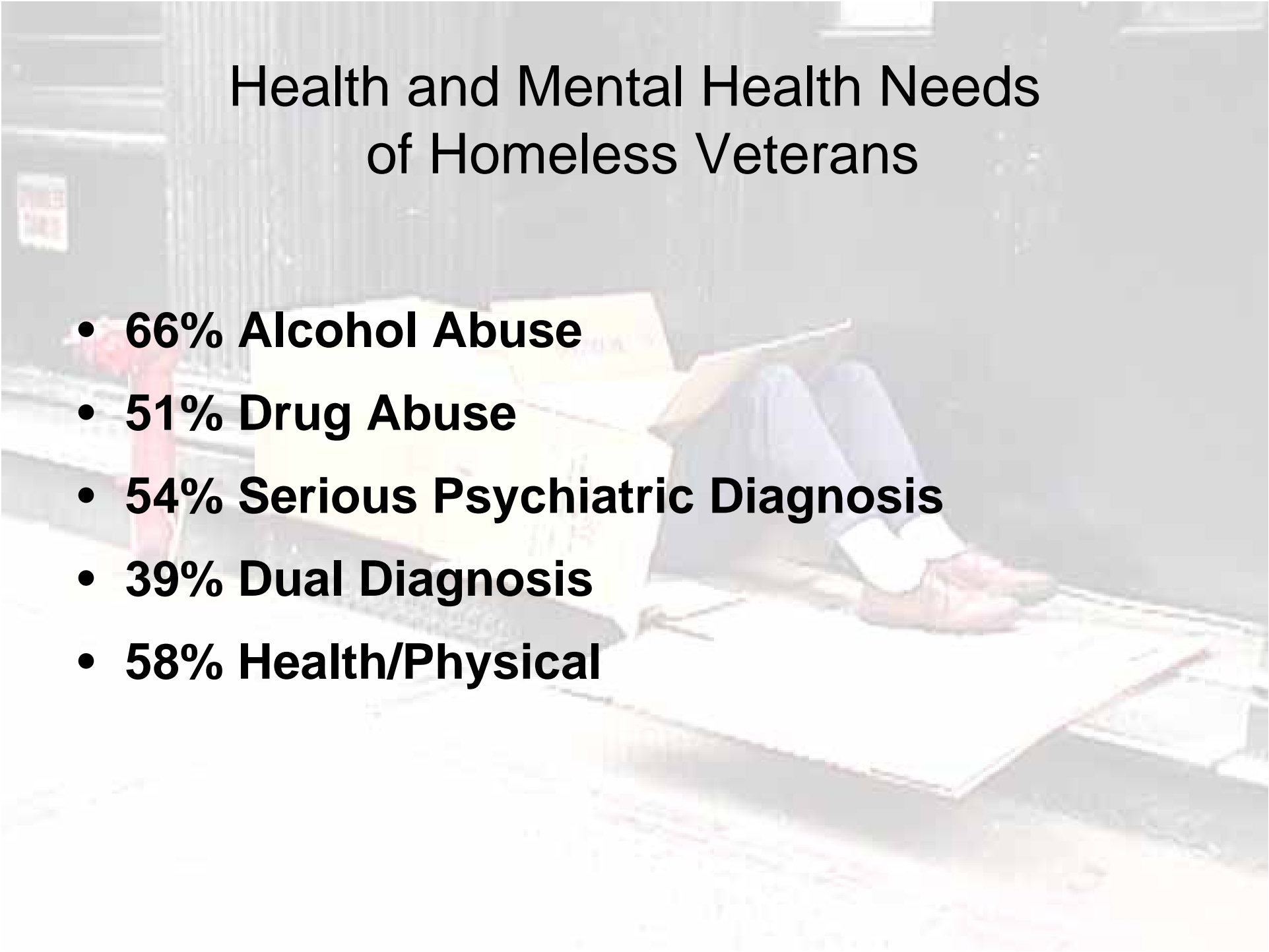


A Chronically Homeless Veteran:

- 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**
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- A photograph of a person sitting on a cardboard box on a sidewalk, illustrating homelessness. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, blue pants, and brown shoes. They are sitting on a large, flattened cardboard box. The background shows a dark, possibly metal, structure, likely a bus stop or a public building entrance. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting an urban environment.

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

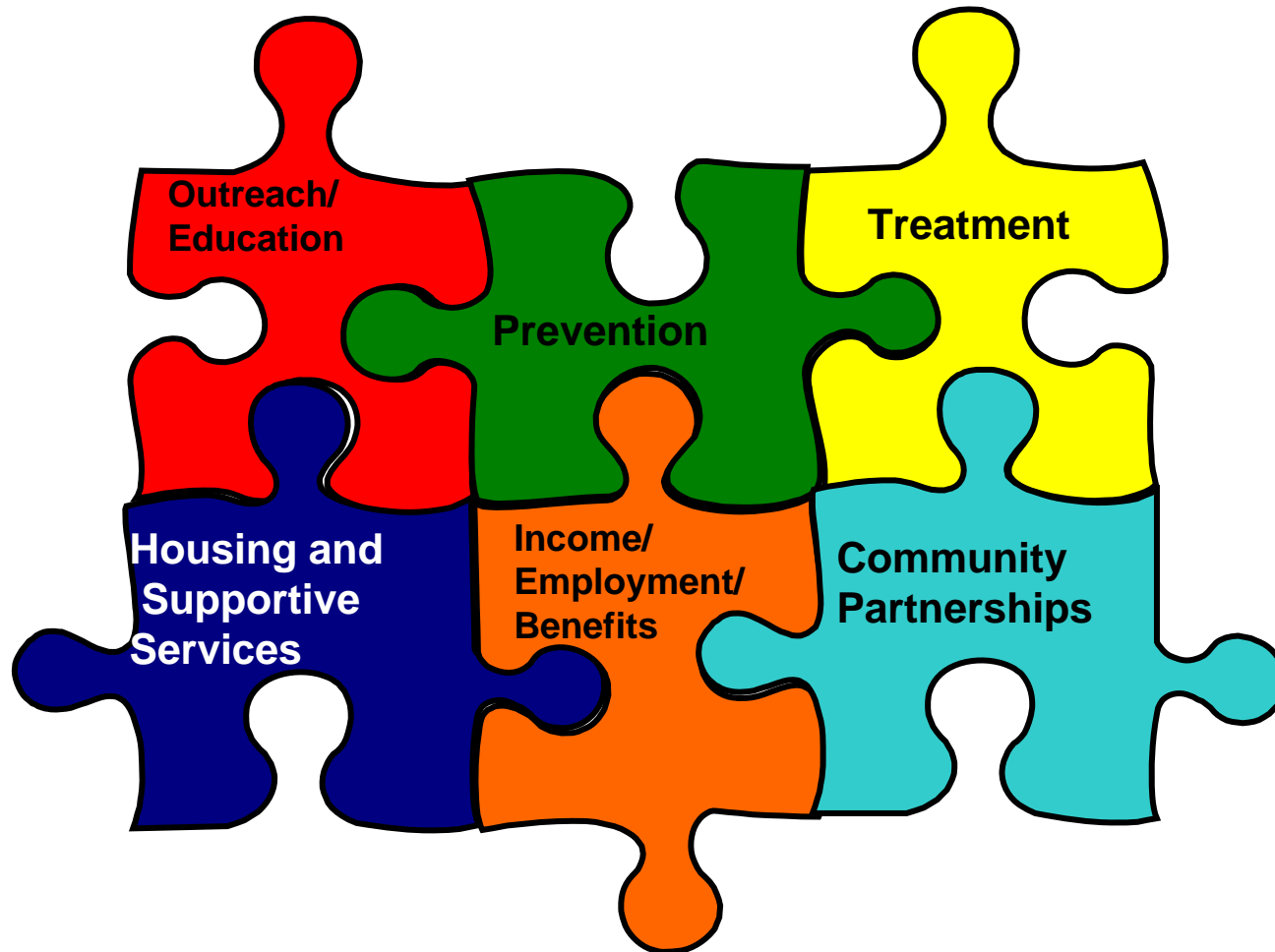
VA's Strategy to Eliminate Homelessness Among Veterans

- 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

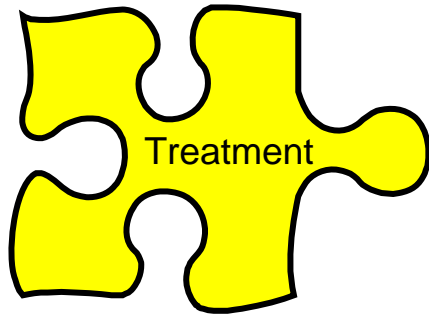
- Outreach by VA and community partners
 - Shelters
 - Soup Kitchens
 - Street Outreach
 - Stand Downs
 - Justice Outreach and Re-entry Services
- VA National Homeless Call Center



Outreach & Education

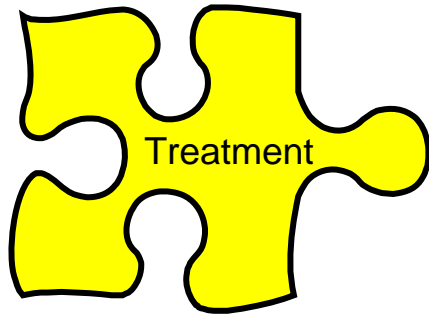
FY 2010

- **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

