

**2009 NATIONAL HCH
CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, DC**
*HOMELESS VETERANS &
ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE
WORKSHOP*



National Disgrace



- ❑ 131,,000 homeless veterans on any given night
- ❑ 300,000 homeless veterans during the year
- ❑ 23% of the total number of homeless people are veterans
- ❑ Vietnam era--97% are men ... 3% are women
- ❑ OEF/OIF –89% are men... 11% are women
- ❑ Vietnam era--51% are people of color – 46% Black, 5% Hispanic;
OEF/OIF –37% Black, 11% Hispanic
- ❑ 89% received an Honorable Discharge
- ❑ 1.5 million veterans live below the federal poverty level

Number of Homeless Veterans Beds by State

State	Funded Beds	Homeless Veterans
AK	0	600
AL	42	824
AR	40	850
AZ	199	3,970
CA	1,875	49,724
CO	102	1,203
CT	103	5,000
DC	43	2,500
DE	15	550
FL	430	18,910
GA	165	3,297
HI	118	800
IA	56	547
ID	10	500
IL	136	2,197
IN	108	1,200
KS	47	601
KY	115	425
LA	150	9,950
MA	378	1,700
MD	241	3,300

Continued

<u>State</u>	<u>Funded Beds</u>	<u>Homeless Veterans</u>
ME	0	100
MI	139	3,513
MN	23	523
MO	82	3,325
MS	60	1,579
MT	17	232
NC	182	1,659
ND	0	1,000
NE	12	770
NH	36	257
NJ	142	6,500
NM	30	860
NV	201	4,715
NY	274	21,147
OH	261	1,710
OK	27	500

Continued

<u>State</u>	<u>Funded Beds</u>	<u>Homeless Veterans</u>
OR	159	5,891
PA	332	2,784
RI	23	175
SC	110	1,375
SD	42	170
TN	241	2,844
TX	233	15,967
UT	145	530
VA	86	870
VT	10	30
WA	167	6,800
WI	209	828
WV	41	347
WY	31	98
PR	12	80
TOTAL	7,700	195,827

Health, Mental Health, Employment, Corrections & Housing Issues



Health and Mental Health



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD

- ❑ 20% or more than 300,000 veterans suffer from PTSD
- ❑ VA vastly underestimated the mental health needs of veterans serving in Iraq & Afghanistan- expected to treat only 2,900 – in 2007 they had diagnosed 52,00
- ❑ According to Col. Hoge, *Journal of American Medical Association*, over 1/3rd of troops returning from Iraq have sought treatment for PTSD
- ❑ According to 4/08 Rand Corporation study, those who sought treatment for PTSD, about 50% receive “minimally adequate care.”

Traumatic Brain Injury: TBI

- ▣ TBI is the signature wound of Iraq war – caused by blunt force injury and/or concussive explosions
- ▣ 20% of returning infantry and 10% of other returning troops have at least mild brain injury
- ▣ 11/07 USA Today: at least 20,000 service members who had brain injury were unaccounted for in official DOD casualty tallies



Suicide



- ▣ US Army reported in 2007 alone more than 2,000 active-duty soldiers attempted suicide
- ▣ 20 – 24 year old soldiers have highest suicide rate
- ▣ VA Mental Health Taskforce – “treatment for returning veterans suffering from suicidal ideation related to deployment is haphazard and spotty.”

High Costs of Health Care

- ▣ Over 30,000 troops have been injured since mid 2008
- ▣ Congressional Budget Office [2007] estimates the costs for treatment of veterans will total between \$7 Billion - \$9 Billion from 2008 - 2017
- ▣ The cost of treatment of US troops with brain injuries is expected to approach \$1 Billion [Rand, 2008]

Corrections: 2000 Bureau of Justice

Overall:

- ▣ 937 incarcerated veterans per 100,000 veteran residents.
- ▣ About 20% of veterans in prison reported seeing combat duty during their military service.
- ▣ In 1998, an estimated 56,500 Vietnam War-era veterans and 18,500 Persian Gulf War veterans were held in State and Federal prisons.
- ▣ Nearly 60% of incarcerated veterans had served in the Army.
- ▣ Among state prisoners, over half (53%) of veterans were white non-Hispanics, compared to nearly a third (31%) of non-veterans; Among Federal prisoners, the percentage of veterans who were white (50%) was nearly double that of non-veterans (26%).
- ▣ Among State prisoners, veterans (32%) were about 3 times more likely than non-veterans (11%) to have attended college.

Continued:

Veterans are more likely than others to be in prison for a violent offense but less likely to be serving a sentence for drugs

- ▣ About 35% of veterans in State prison, compared to 20% of non-veterans, were convicted of homicide or sexual assault.
- ▣ Veterans (30%) were more likely than other State prisoners (23%) to be first-time offenders.
- ▣ Among violent State prisoners, the average sentence of veterans was 50 months longer than the average of non-veterans.
- ▣ At the year-end 1997, sex offenders accounted for 1 in 3 prisoners held in military correctional facilities.

Continued:

Veterans in State prison reported higher levels of alcohol abuse, lower levels of drug abuse, than other prisoners :

- ❑ Veterans in State prison were less likely (26%) than other State prisoners (34%) to report having used drugs at the time of their offense.
- ❑ Nearly 60% of veterans in State prison had driven drunk in the past, compared to 45% of other inmates.
- ❑ About 70% of veterans, compared to 54% of other State prisoners, had been working full-time before arrest.
- ❑ Incarcerated veterans were as likely as non-veterans to have been homeless when arrested.

Employment:

Administrative Nightmare

- ❑ Nationally, unemployment rate among veterans ages 20 – 24 is 15% - 3 times the national average for this age group
- ❑ Federal law [USERRA] requires employers of any size to re-employ Guard and Reserve veterans after active duty. *But – many are returning to find jobs no longer exist or employers have folded, down-sized or relocated – no recourse under USERRA*
- ❑ California [with 50,000 homeless veterans] less than 10% of the Workforce Investment Act [WIA] in 2007 was designated for Veterans Employment Assistance Programs [VEAP]



Housing:

The Need for Affordable Housing



California:

- ☐ Veterans who are renters [74,000] pay 50% or more of their income for rent
- ☑ Housing burden increases if the veteran is disabled and/or unmarried
- ☑ 36% of those are a senior and 39% are disabled

Nationally: [Government Accounting Office - GAO]

- ☑ 48% of the 236,000 veteran households are low-income households
- ☑ Only 11% receive HUD assistance

Obama Administration & Homelessness



"It is simply unacceptable for individuals, children, families, and our nation's Veterans to be faced with homelessness in this country. I am confident that the Interagency Council on Homelessness, under Secretary Donovan's leadership, will have a renewed focus on coordinating efforts across federal agencies and working closely with our state, local, community-based, and faith-based partners to address these serious issues."

President Obama, June 18, 2009

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In conjunction with June 18, 2009 meeting of USICH, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki also announced the allocation of \$75 million to local public housing authorities across the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam to provide permanent supportive housing and dedicated VA case managers for an estimated 10,000 homeless Veterans, including families. This innovative joint initiative is called Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH).



For more information:



California Association of Veteran
Service Agencies [CAVSA]

www.californiaveterans.org



National Coalition for Homeless
Veterans

www.nchv.org