

Veterans

FACT SHEET

Veteran Statistics:

- There are approximately 25 million veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces alive today (7.5 % are women).
- Some 7.2 million of those veterans are enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system; approximately 5.5 million receive healthcare and 3.4 million receive benefits.
- Since October 2001, approximately 1.6 million members of the Armed Forces have served in Iraq or Afghanistan. As of December 31, 2007, more than 800,000 veterans of these conflicts were eligible for VA healthcare.
- There are about 37 million dependents (spouses and dependent children) of living veterans and survivors of deceased veterans. Together they represent 20% of the U.S. population.
- Most veterans living today served during times of war. The Vietnam Era veteran, about 7.9 million, is the largest segment of the veteran population.
- There are approximately (as of October 2007) 2,911,900 WWII veterans alive, but they are passing away at a rate of 1,000 per day (approx. total today 2,583,400)
- In 2007, the median age of all living veterans was 60 years old, 61 for men and 47 for women.
- Median ages by period of service: Gulf War, 37 years old; Vietnam War, 60; Korean War, 76; and WW II 84.
- The percentage of the veteran population over 65 is 39.1%.
- Sixty percent (60%) of the nation's veterans live in urban areas and six states account for about 36% of the total vet population. They are California, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, respectively.
- Veteran Population by Race:
 - White 80.0%
 - Black 10.9%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander 1.4%
 - Hispanic 5.6%
 - American Indian/Alaska Natives 0.8%
 - Other 1.3%
- Approximately 150,000 of our nation's veterans are homeless.

Suicide Rates:

- Veterans are more than twice as likely as non-veterans to commit suicide and the “Katz Suicide Study,” dated February 21, 2008, found that suicide rates among veterans are approximately 3 times higher than in the general population.
- The VA’s own data indicate that an average of four to five veterans commit suicide each day.
- A document from the VA Inspector General’s Office, dated May 10, 2007, indicates that the suicide rate among individuals in the VA’s care may be as high as *7.5 times the national average*.
- According to internal VA emails, there are approximately 1,000 suicide attempts per month among veterans seen in VA medical facilities.
- The VA has hired suicide prevention counselors at each of its 153 medical centers to help support the national suicide prevention hotline.

PTSD:

- Approximately 300,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – nearly 20% of the returning forces – are likely to suffer from either PTSD or major depression, and these numbers continue to climb.
- An *additional* 320,000 of the returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan may have experienced traumatic brain injuries during deployment.
- By fiscal year 2005, the VA’s own statistics indicated that PTSD was the fourth most common service-related disability for service members receiving benefits.
- While there is no cure for PTSD, early identification and treatment of PTSD symptoms may lessen the severity of the condition and improve the overall quality of life for veterans suffering from this condition.