Women Veterans in VHA

Susan Frayne MD, MPH
VA Palo Alto Health Care System
Stanford University

2017 National Women Veterans Summit
Overview

- Who are women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)?

- What primary care workforce does VHA have in place to care for them?

- Epilogue

  A strategy for eliciting women Veterans’ preferences, to inform ongoing VHA primary care systems improvement
Data from the VA Women’s Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) Partnership of national VA Office of Women’s Health Services and VA researchers in Palo Alto

In the Veterans Health Administration:

160,000 women Veterans in 2000

440,000 women Veterans in 2015

Nearly a 3 fold increase!

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press
Estimated # of Women Veterans in the U.S., FY00 and FY15

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran patients in VHA and in the United States in each year.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY00-FY15, VetPop and U.S. Census data
# of Women Veteran VHA Patients, out of all U.S. Women Veterans, FY00 and FY15

Of U.S. women Veterans, more than 1 in 5 now uses VHA

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran patients in VHA and in the United States in each year.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY00-FY15, and U.S. Census data
Age Distribution of Women Veterans in VHA, FY15

Cohort: Women Veteran patients with non-missing ages 18-110 years (inclusive) in FY15. N=439,791.

Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

- 18-44 years: 43%
- 45-64 years: 46%
- 65+ years: 12%
# Top conditions, Women Veteran VHA Patients, by Age Group (FY15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran VHA patients with non-missing ages 45-64 years (inclusive) in FY15. N=201,688.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Back</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press*

Cohort: Women Veteran VHA patients with non-missing ages 45-64 years (inclusive) in FY15. N=201,688.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15
## Top conditions, Women Veteran VHA Patients, by Age Group (FY15)

Cohort: Women Veteran VHA patients with non-missing ages 45-64 years (inclusive) in FY15. N=201,688.

Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lipid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Extremity Joint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Back</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low Back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>18-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>Hypertension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lipid</td>
<td>Lipid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Extremity Joint</td>
<td>Cataract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Back</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low Back</td>
<td>Eye - Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran VHA patients with non-missing ages 45-64 years (inclusive) in FY15. N=201,688.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15
Proportion of Women Veteran Outpatients with Any VHA Primary Care Encounters, FY15

Cohort: Women Veteran outpatients in FY15: N= 433,525.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press
Proportion of Women Veteran Outpatients with Any VHA Mental Health/SUD Encounters, FY15

41% saw Mental Health

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran outpatients in FY15: N= 433,525.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15
Proportion of Women Veteran Outpatients with Any Purchased Care Services, FY15

37% received some health care services purchased by VHA (care in the community)

Sourcebook Volume 4, Women’s Health Services, VHA, In Press

Cohort: Women Veteran outpatients in FY15: N= 433,525.
Source: WHEI Master Database, FY15
Women’s Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCPs)

- Mandated per VHA policy (VHA Directive 1330.01) since 2010

- Effort to improve women Veterans’ experiences of VA care
Increase in Women’s Health Primary Care Providers, at VA Medical Centers (VAMC) and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC)

Over 5 years, # of WH-PCPs grew by nearly 1,000: a 50% increase
• Women Veterans who saw a WH-PCP were more satisfied, and were more likely to receive appropriate gender-specific services like pap smears.\(^{(1)}\)

• Women Veterans new to VA were less likely to leave VA if they saw a WH-PCP.\(^{(2)}\)

\(^{(1)}\) Bastian 2014; Bean-Mayberry 2015
\(^{(2)}\) HSR&D CRE 12-019 (S. Frayne, A. Hamilton)
Systems Improvement in VHA Primary Care: 

Hearing Women Veterans’ Voices
60 VHA facilities joining together to improve care for women Veterans through research and quality improvement efforts
Veteran Feedback Project

- Pathway for rapidly collecting women Veterans’ perspectives relevant to practice innovations
- Anonymous patient feedback forms in primary care
Veteran Feedback Project: Complementary and Integrative Health

- With just 2 weeks of data collection at each participating site, over 1,000 women Veterans nationally shared their perspectives
More than 6 out of 10 women preferred women-only groups for yoga, mindfulness/meditation, and Tai Chi/Qigong
Caring for Women Veterans

Section 5: Unique Health-Care Needs (What You Can Do)

Program Modules
- Introduction
- Becoming Aware
- Common Questions
- Privacy Issues
- Injury of Women in the Military and VA
- Unique Health-Care Needs (What You Can Do)
- Resources
- Acknowledgments

Watch the following scenario and think about how you might handle the situation:

View transcript

she wore these.
It's our job to give her the best care anywhere.

Department of Veterans Affairs

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE