



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## **“Women Veterans”**

# **National Association of Women Judges The Forgotten Warrior Program**

**October 16, 2014**

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# Overview

- **Women Veterans  
Demographics/History/Usage**
- **VA, CWV & WVP Overview**
- **Are We Ready?**
- **Barriers to Care**
- **Quality/Gender  
Disparities/Satisfaction**
- **Where to Get Help**
- **Changing the Culture**
- **Final Thoughts**





# Demographics, History, and Usage



Source: America's Women Veterans: Military Service History and VA Benefits Utilization Statistics, Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Nov. 23, 2011;  
[http://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/Final\\_Womens\\_Report\\_3\\_2\\_12\\_v\\_7.pdf](http://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/Final_Womens_Report_3_2_12_v_7.pdf)

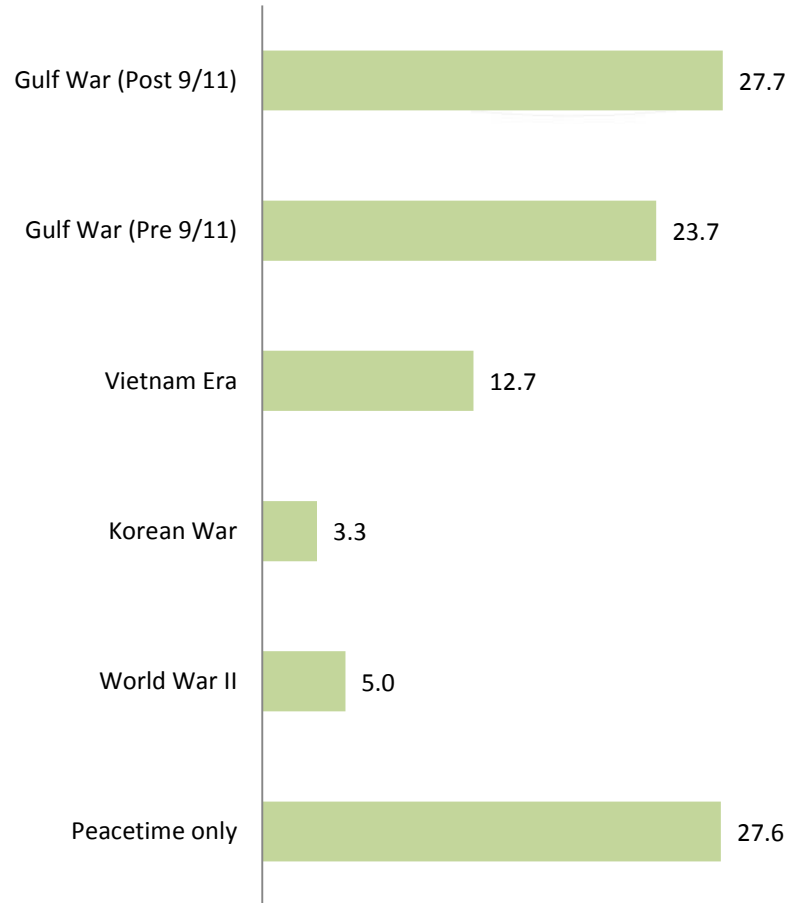


# Women Veterans Demographics

- Women are one of the fastest growing subpopulations of Veterans. Based on active duty and recruiting numbers, the percentage of female Veterans is projected to increase.
- 2,271,222 million women Veterans of the 21,972,964 million living Veterans, (VetPop as of 9/30/13) –10.4 percent of the total Veterans population.
- By 2020, they are estimated to be 12.4 percent the total Veterans populations.
- As women Veterans populations increases, total Veterans population decreases.
- Median female Veteran's age is 49 (male – 64, as of 9/30/12).



# Percentage of Women Veterans by Period of Military Service



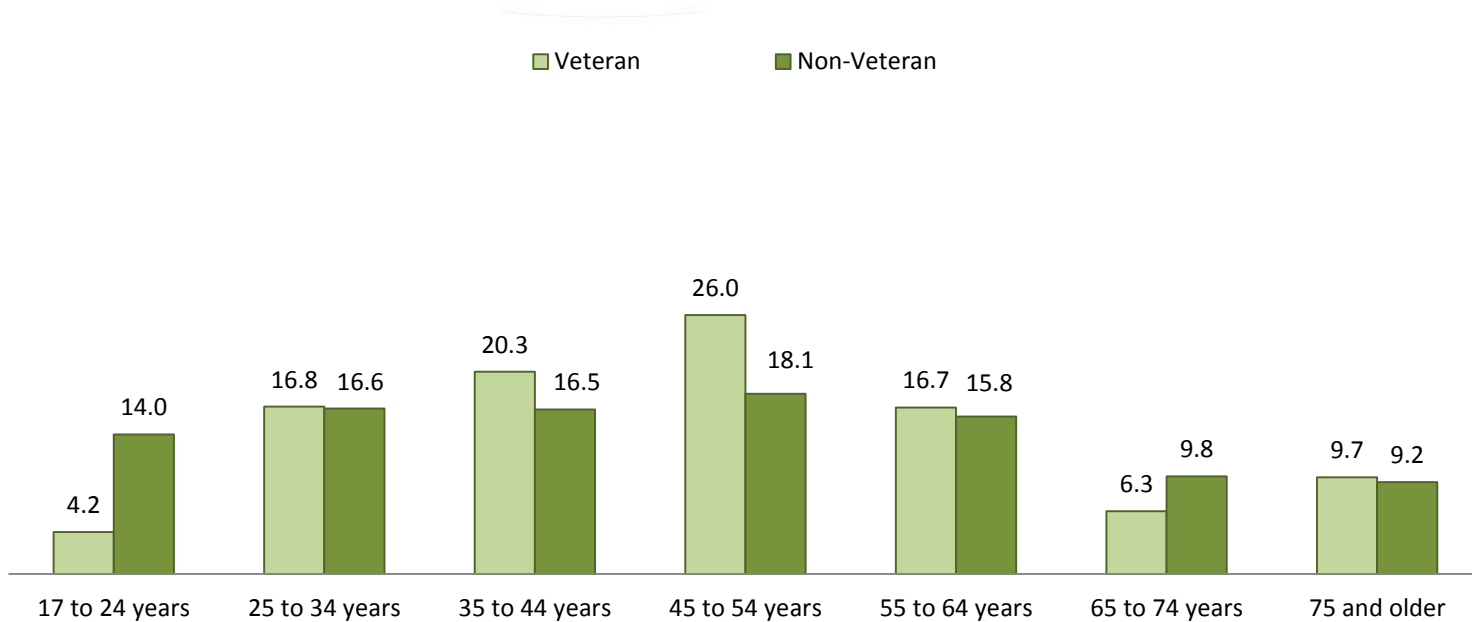
Most female Veterans alive today served during the Gulf War II and during peacetime. The largest peacetime period since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force was from May 1975 to July 1990. Large proportions of female Veterans also served during the Gulf War Era.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey PUMS, 2011  
Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

Note: Periods of military service shown here are coded with women who have multiple periods of service being placed into their most recent period of service.



# Percentage of Women by Age Distribution and Veteran Status



The lowest percentage of female Veterans is in the youngest age group, 17- to 24-year-old. These are the ages when most women would still be serving in the military and would not yet have become Veterans. The median age of female Veterans is 49 and female non-Veterans is 47 in 2011.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey PUMS, 2011  
Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

**Note: There was no statistical significant difference between female veterans and non-Veterans in the age 25- to 34-year-old group.**



# Women VHA Users Doubled Since 2000

**FY00: 159,000**



**FY12: 360,000**





# Growth Expected to Double Again Soon

- 12%** of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn(OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans
- 18%** of National Guard/Reserves
- 6%** of VA health care users

Women Veteran enrollment outpacing that of **men—29% increase since 2009**

**58% of OEF/OIF/OND women Veterans have used VA care**





# Younger Women's Needs



- ☑ Maternity Care
- ☑ Mental Health
- ☑ Service-Connected Disabilities
- ☑ Privacy, safety, convenience



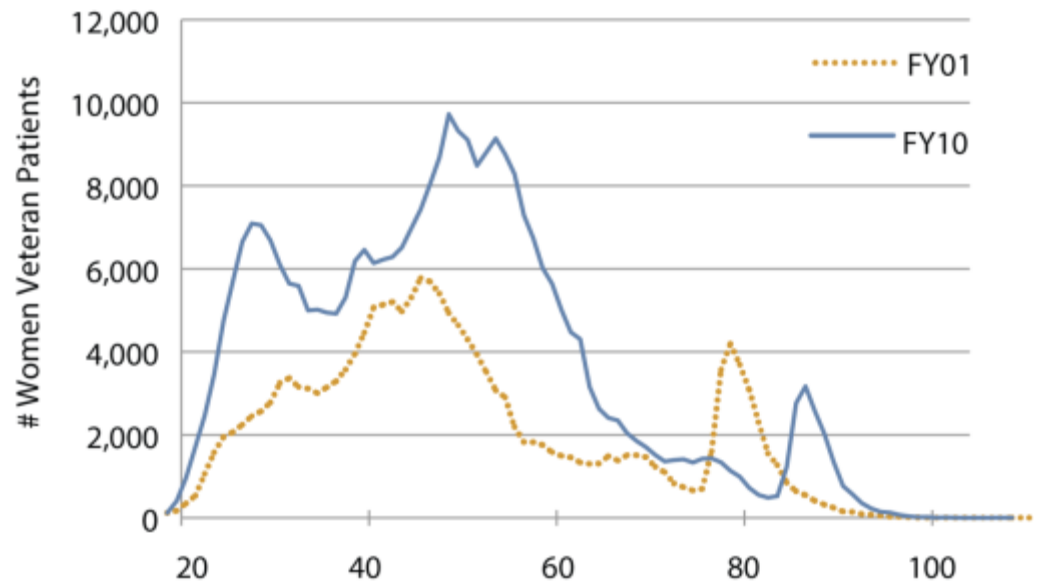
# Aging Population

## 58% of women VA users are 45+

- ✓ Menopausal Needs
- ✓ Geriatric Care
- ✓ Inpatient/Extended Stays

Next 20 years ... more intensive health care services and support as caregivers

Age distribution of women Veteran patients, FY01 and FY10



Source: Women's Health Evaluation Initiative and VHA Women's Health Services.  
Sourcebook: *Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration. Volume 2. Sociodemographics and Use of VHA and Non-VA Care Fee.* 2012.



## **VA, CWV & WVP Overview**





# Congressional Mandate

**November 1994, Public Law  
103-446 required VA to  
create**

**The Center for Women  
Veterans**

**to monitor and coordinate VA  
programs for women**





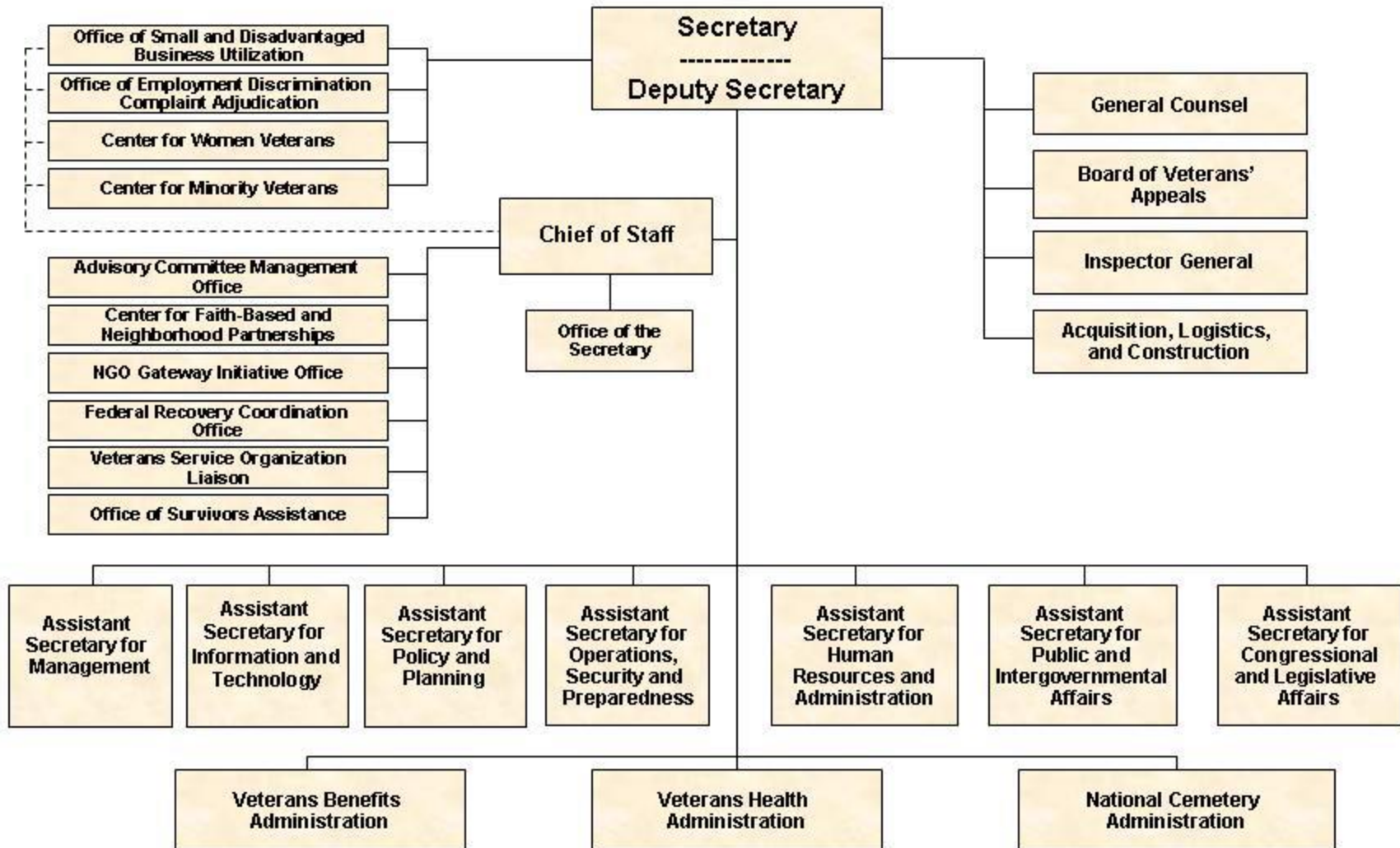
# Our Mission

- **Monitor and coordinate** VA's administration of health care and benefits services, and programs for women Veterans.
- **Serve as an advocate** for a cultural transformation (both within VA and in the general public) in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military.
- **Raise awareness** of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.



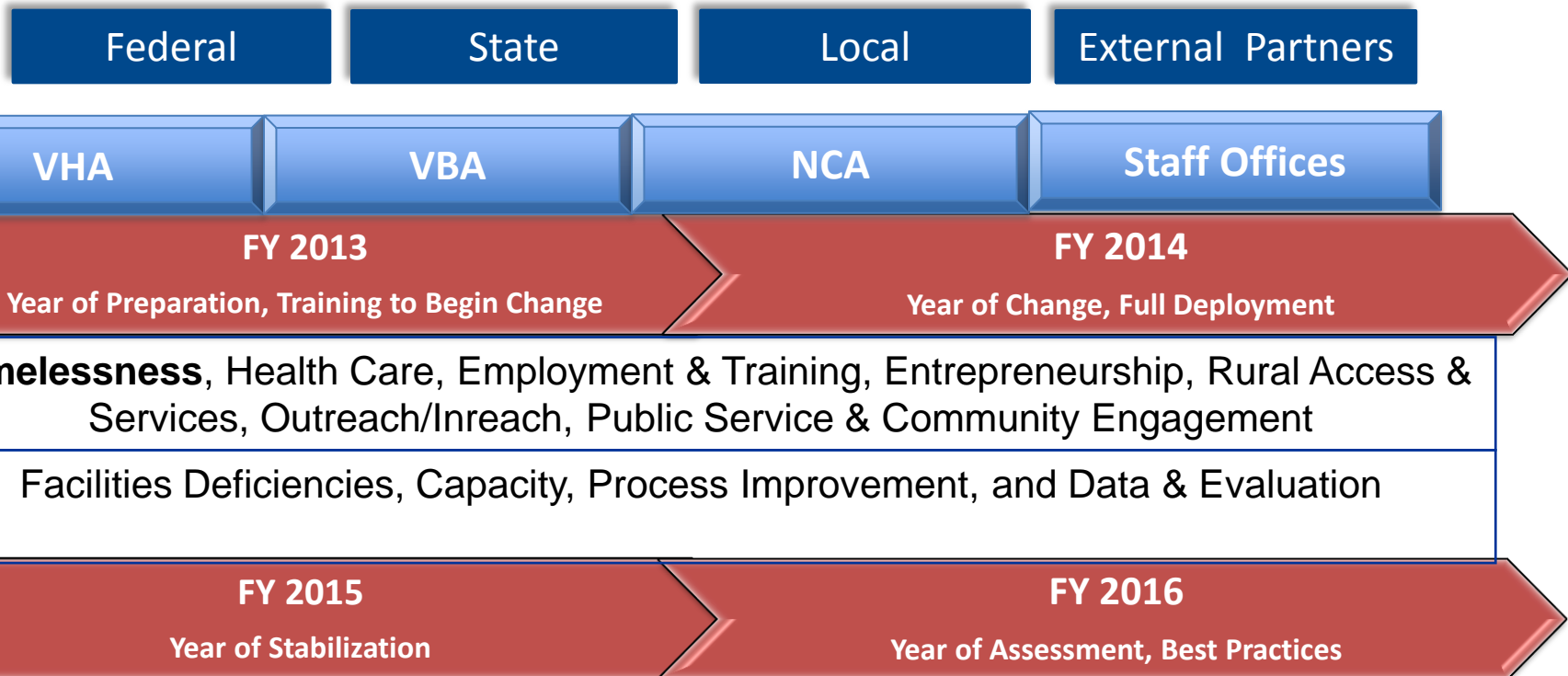
# VA ORGANIZATION CHART

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS





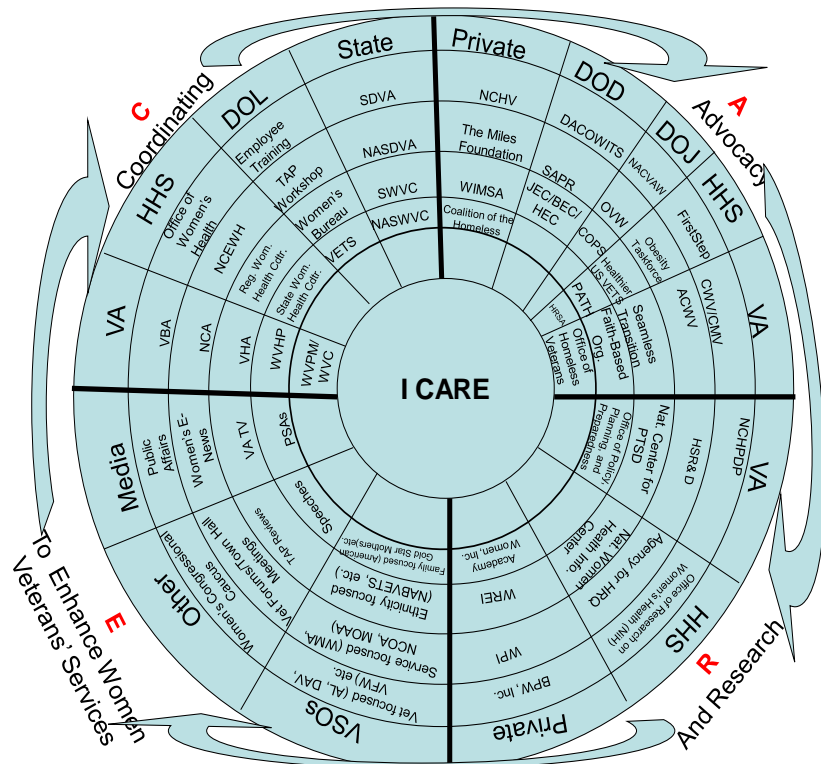
# CWV is implementing a Transformation Plan in a multi-year approach



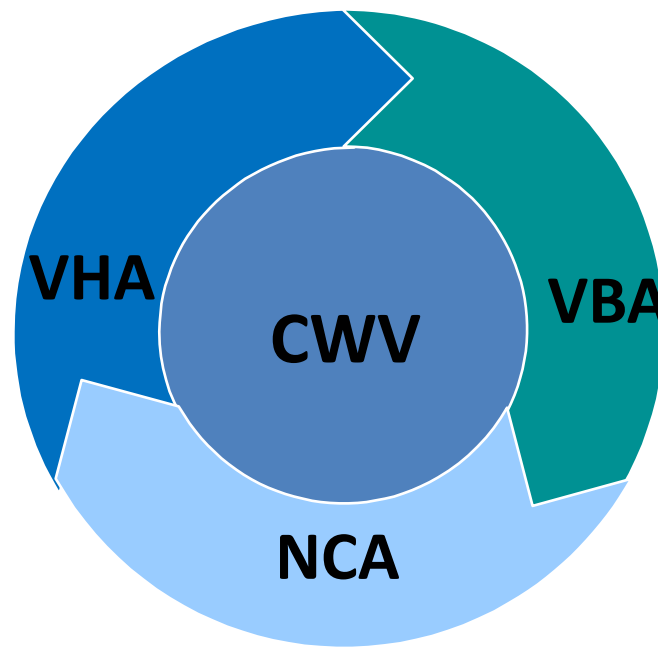
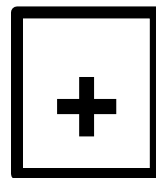


# Success Results through Collaboration

## External Partnerships



## Women Veterans Program



- **Women Veterans Program:** CWV leads in the collaboration and coordination with VA's three Administrations (VHA, VBA, NCA), and Staff Offices' on the delivery of benefits and services to women through the Women Veterans Program.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** CWV aggressively liaisons with other Federal agencies, state, local, and other external partners to build understanding of how we can collaborate to assist women Veterans.





# Collaborative Initiatives

**Women's History Month 2014:  
VA's Twitter Town Hall**  
*Character, Courage & Commitment, VA focused the month on "Women Veterans Make History"*



**White House/VA  
Champions of Change  
for Women Veterans**



**eBenefits Access 24/7  
Targeted Messaging**



# Collaborative Initiatives - Women @ Energy

Women @ Energy is a series of over 175 stories of women who work in STEM at the Department of Energy, sharing tips on starting energy careers, encouraging others, and their personal passion.

[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

[www.energy.gov/womeninstem](http://www.energy.gov/womeninstem)

[www.troopstoenergyjobs.com](http://www.troopstoenergyjobs.com)



“A career in STEM fields gives you the skills and direction to have an impact.”

Aliya Merali,  
Princeton Plasma  
Physics Laboratory

#WOMEN  
IN STEM

ENERGY.GOV



# Collaborative Concept Model: Addressing Women Veterans' Homelessness

- The **Collaborative Concept Model for Coalition of Providers** provides a framework for integrating the needs of Women Veterans within a coalition of service providers that can address those needs of focus (FY 2014 – Homelessness)
- This model may be used at the National, State or Local level
- It identifies the needs for addressing and preventing homelessness and drives identification of providers for the stated needs
- It also identifies what phase of the “lifecycle of ending homelessness” is addressed by the service or program
- Can be used to identify gaps where there are no services, programs or providers for an identified need



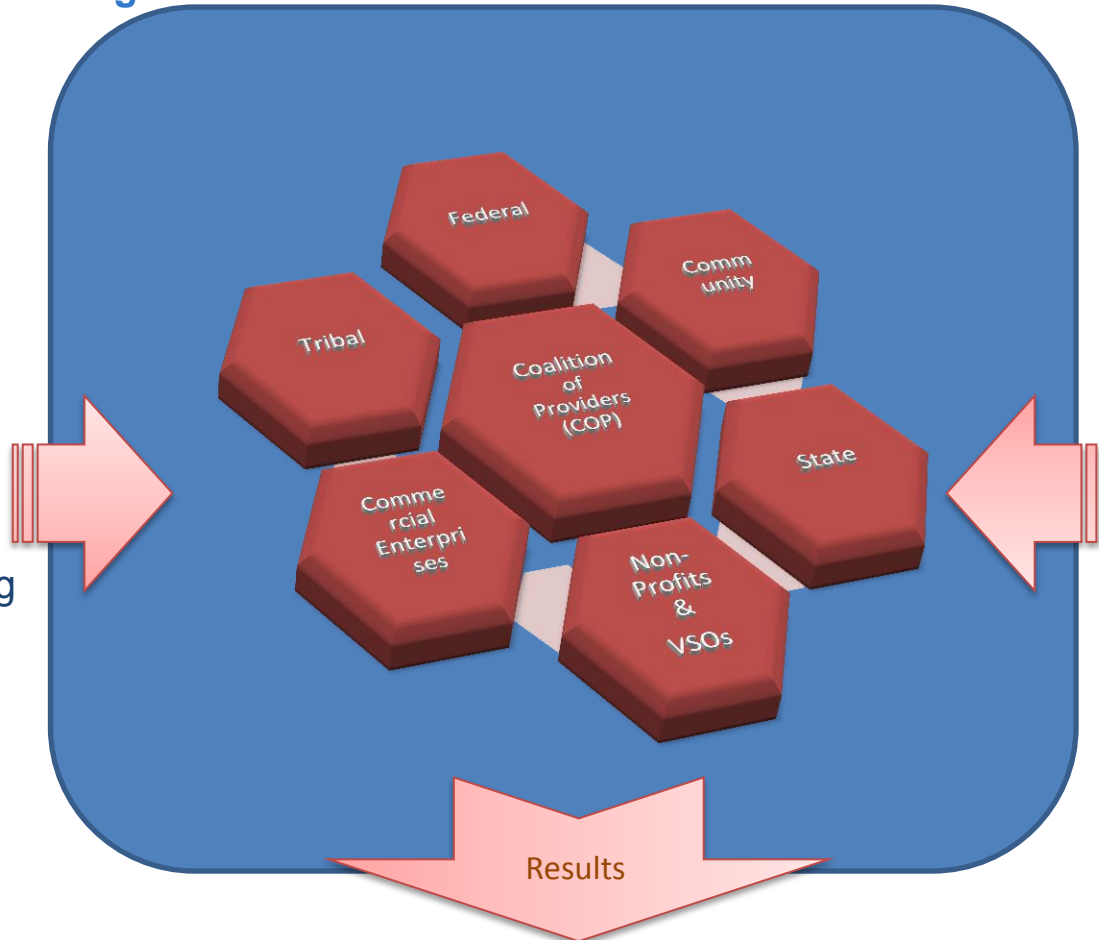
# Collaborative Concept Model for Coalition of Providers (COP)

National Framework

## Challenge: Prevention of Women Veterans' Homelessness

### Needs:

- Healthcare
- Housing
- Childcare
- Education
- Job Training
- Skills Training
- Employment
- Legal Counseling
- Transportation
- Transition Planning
- Financial Planning
- Support Groups



### National Programs/Policies:

- Networking
- Policy Making
- Legal Svcs
- Programs
- Data
- Research
- Jobs
- Training
- Education
- Assessment
- Regulations
- Grants
- Legislation



**National Goal: Empower Women Veterans to Improve Their Well Being and Economic Security**



**Are We Ready?**





## Ideal: Women Veterans Experience of VA

- High-quality, equitable care on par with that of men
- Care delivered in a safe and healing environment
- Seamless coordination of services
- Recognition as Veterans



## Barriers to Care





# Women Don't Identify Themselves as Veterans

*“We don't know if it's because they had different roles, because they felt like they didn't do the same thing as some of our male Veterans ... whatever it is, they are still not self-identifying.”*

General Allison Hickey  
VA Under Secretary for Benefits  
9/27/12







# Lack of Knowledge of VA Services

- 39% have zero or almost no knowledge of needed information about VA
- Misperceptions in all cohorts about who is eligible for VA care
- OEF/OIF/OND more knowledgeable than other cohorts about available women's health and readjustment services

Source: 2010 National Survey of Women Veterans, (D. Washington)



## **Quality/Gender Disparities/ Satisfaction**





# Quality

Gender-specific care to women Veterans in VHA facilities substantially exceeds that in other systems

## Cervical Cancer screening

<b>93.5%</b>	Vs.	<b>77%</b> private sector (2010)
VA average (2010-11)		<b>67%</b> Medicaid (2010)

## Breast Cancer screening

<b>86%</b>	Vs.	<b>71%</b> private sector (2010)
VA average (2010-11)		<b>69%</b> Medicare (2010)
		<b>51%</b> Medicaid (2010)

Source: VA Office of Analytics and Business Intelligence 12-19-2011



# Gender Disparities Progress!

- VA has significantly reduced gender gaps and exceeds private sector on most performance measures for both men and women
- [Gender Differences in Performance Measures, VHA 2008-2011](#), identifies best practices for eliminating gender gaps based on success in VA networks
  - Electronic 2013 update under development





# Satisfaction

Survey results for FY13 show overall satisfaction rating of VA inpatient/outpatient care similar for women and men

Age	Gender	Overall Rating
18-49	Male	55.5
	Female	55.7
50-64	Male	65.7
	Female	65.4
65-74	Male	70.8
	Female	71.3
75+	Male	74
	Female	78

Source: VHA Office of Analytics and Business Intelligence, Internal Analysis, February 21, 2014



## Where to Get Help





# Women Veterans Call Center

## Women Veterans Call Center

A call center aimed at increasing women Veterans' knowledge, enrollment, and utilization of VA services available to women Veterans



- Outgoing call center provides women Veterans with information on VA health care services, benefits and eligibility
- Incoming call center, 1-855-VA-WOMEN (**1-855-829-6636**), receives and responds to questions from Veterans, their families and caregivers about the many VA services and resources available to women Veterans



# eBenefits

## Reasons to File Electronically and to Have an eBenefits Account:

- Claims submitted online may be processed faster, helping VA meet the 125 day at 98% accuracy goal by 2015
- Veterans filing for disability benefits can initiate their claim online and preserve their date of claim. Veterans have up to 365 days to fully complete their claim, upload any supporting documentation and submit directly to VA
- Request and receive Official Military Personnel File including DD Form-214 within hours
- Search for state and county benefit programs for Veterans
- The Career Center enables Veterans to apply for federal and civilian jobs, build a resume and translate military skills to civilian jobs
- **Request representation and assistance from a Veterans Service Organization**





# Where to Get Help

- **Health care:** Full-time women Veterans program managers (WVPM) at VA health care facilities across the country to outreach to women Veterans and assist them with accessing VA's health care services.  
<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov>
- **Women Veterans Call Center:** Incoming and Outgoing at 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)
- **Benefits:** Designated women Veterans coordinators (WVC) at all VA regional offices (RO); [www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1)
- **Homeless:** Homeless Veterans coordinators: [www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm](http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm)
- **Minority:** Minority Veterans program coordinator at every VA healthcare facility, regional office, and national cemetery: [www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans/](http://www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans/)
- Other coordinators such as OIF/OEF, mental health, MST, Vet Center, etc.



# Overarching Goal: Changing the Culture





- VA-wide campaign to enhance the language, practice and culture of VA to be more inclusive of women Veterans
- Women Veterans Program and VA Center for Women Veterans
  - Tasked with developing strategies to reach women Veterans (inside and outside VA) and VA employees

**Outcome: Needs of women Veterans are always considered across program offices and in policy and key decisions**



# Culture Change Through Communications

- Women's Health Services is leading a VA-wide communication initiative to enhance the **language, practice and culture** of VA to be **more inclusive of women Veterans**



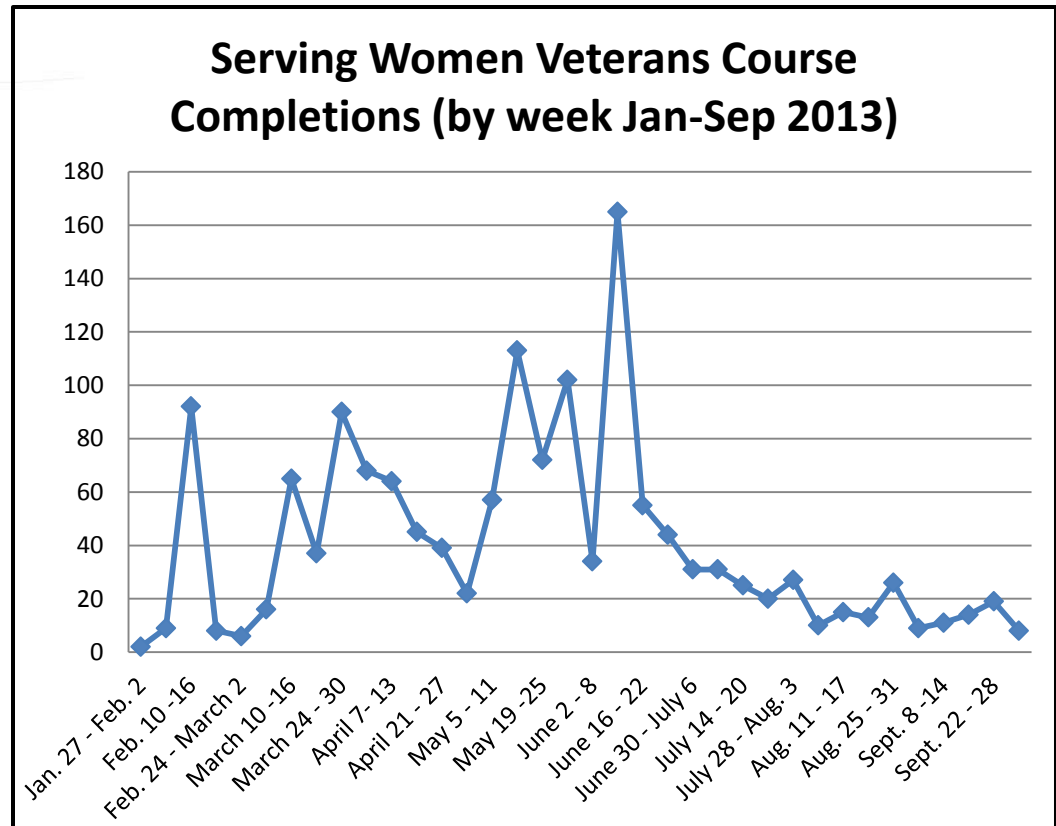


# Partnered with VALU to create the Training Module “Serving Women Veterans” for VA staff



## 1,467 VA Staff completed Serving Women Veterans Course

- Veterans Advocacy and Awareness eLearning Suite:
  1. Military Cultural Awareness Outreach
  2. Connecting with Veterans
  3. Serving Women Veterans





## Final Thoughts





# What Women Veterans Tell Us They Need and Want

- Recognition and respect
- Employment
- Suitable housing
- Access to and receipt of high quality health care
- Childcare options
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Want to make a difference



# How to Contact the Center

## Staff Members:

- Elisa Basnight, JD, MPA
- Betty Moseley Brown, EdD
- Desiree Long
- Shannon Middleton
- Michelle Terry

## Address:

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Fax: 202-273-7092

Website: [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)

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