

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

This section of the report presents detailed information on the Department's program performance during 2002. The discussion is structured around our strategic goals, as published in VA's strategic plan in September 2000 and the revised objectives recently approved by the Secretary. The Department has adopted these goals and objectives for strategic planning, performance planning, and performance reporting purposes. While most of the objectives are quite similar to those previously used, some have been modified to better reflect the priorities established by the Secretary. The current set of key performance measures will be re-evaluated and some modifications will likely be made to ensure they fully address these revised objectives. In the

interim, there are a few objectives for which there are no key performance measures.

The strategic goals reflect the combined effort of all organizational elements to deliver benefits and services to disabled veterans, veterans in transition from the military, the overall veteran population and their families, and the Nation at large. In addition to our strategic goals, we have an enabling goal that focuses on management issues and fosters a climate of world-class service and benefits delivery. The following table identifies estimates of the total resources the Department devoted to the achievement of these goals, by program. The costs below are approximated because we do not yet have the sophisticated financial tools necessary to precisely report the cost of each goal.

Strategic Goal Resources by Responsible Program

Responsible Program and Goal	Total Obligations (\$ in millions)	Restore Disabled Veterans	Ensure a Smooth Transition	Honor and Serve Veterans	Support National Goals	Enabling Goal
Medical Care	\$23,446	\$12,299	\$80	\$11,066		
Medical Research	\$964	\$520			\$443	
Medical Education	\$923	\$498			\$425	
Compensation	\$23,023	\$23,023				
Pension	\$3,400			\$3,400		
Education	\$1,766	\$177	\$1,590			
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$606	\$606				
Housing	\$1,042		\$1,042			
Insurance	\$2,749	\$93	\$650	\$2,006		
Burial	\$374			\$299	\$75	
Departmental Management	\$607	\$42		\$5	<\$1M	\$560
Total (\$ in millions)	\$58,899	\$37,259	\$3,361	\$16,776	\$943	\$560

VA's Key Performance Goals and Measures

VA's senior leadership identified 23 key performance goals as critical to the success of the Department. Some of these deal with program outcomes; others pertain to the manner in which we administer our programs.

The Department is committed to continuously improving the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and their families. Whether the focus is on enhancing the quality of health care, expanding access to care, reducing the time it takes to complete claims for benefits, improving the accuracy of claims processing, or providing more veterans with a burial option, our aim is to improve our performance each year.

At the end of each fiscal year, we evaluate performance for the previous year and set new performance targets that demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement. In many instances, the performance improvements we project from one year to the next, as well as the performance advancements we actually achieve, are dramatic. In other cases, the improvement is more limited. Nevertheless, we continuously strive to improve our performance in all programs.

While the vast majority of our performance measures remain the same from one year to the next, our list of measures does change in response to changing circumstances. For example, we are constantly striving for better ways to measure

performance. This is an ongoing process — with the introduction of new measures each year that reflect a more sophisticated and mature performance measurement system. There are also instances in which our actual performance has met or exceeded our original goals, and further performance improvements are unlikely or unreasonable. In these cases, we either drop the performance measure or replace it.

While some of VA's key performance measures support achievement of more than one strategic goal, we have aligned them with the strategic goal and objective that they most closely support. For each of the objectives, we present:

- the performance measure or measures used to gauge progress toward achieving the goal;
- historical data;
- means and strategies used to achieve the actual level of performance;
- crosscutting activities with other federal and private organizations;
- descriptions of any relevant management challenges affecting goal achievement;
- the source of the performance information and how it was validated.

Other goals and measures deemed important by the program offices continue to be monitored and are presented in the data tables beginning on page 121.

Note that in this report, years are fiscal years unless stated otherwise.