

What We Accomplished

Charts for those key performance measures that have data also include the goals for 2004 and strategic targets. The performance goals for 2004 might change depending on Congress' decisions regarding VA's appropriation for the year. Strategic targets are those long-term goals that, when achieved for a number of years, will indicate that VA has reached the optimal functioning in the area being measured. Preliminary data are identified in the charts and a notation indicates when the data will be available. We will publish final data in the 2005 Congressional budget and/or the FY 2004 Performance and Accountability Report.

The strategic goals reflect the combined efforts of all VA elements to deliver benefits and services to disabled veterans, veterans in transition

This section of the report presents detailed information on the Department's program performance during 2003. The discussion is structured around our strategic goals and objectives, as revised and approved by the Secretary and published in VA's strategic plan in July 2003. The Department has adopted these goals and objectives for strategic planning, performance planning, and performance reporting purposes. The set of key performance measures presented in this report are re-evaluated annually and modified to ensure they continue to fully address our objectives. A few objectives have no key performance measures at this time but they are under development.

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 cross-cutting 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

by program to the achievement of these goals. The resources spent to achieve each goal below are approximated because we do not yet have the sophisticated financial tools necessary to precisely report the cost of each goal. Note that numbers might not add due to rounding in this and subsequent charts.

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	\$27,670	\$14,303	\$83	\$12,648	\$454	\$177
Medical Research	\$1,005	\$543			\$463	
Compensation	\$25,466	\$25,466				
Pension	\$3,367			\$3,367		
Education	\$2,184	\$218	\$1,966			
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$665	\$665				
Housing	\$996		\$996			
Insurance	\$2,703	\$100	\$659	\$1,945		
Burial	\$336			\$256	\$80	
Departmental Management	\$721	\$42		\$5	<\$1M	\$673
Total (\$ in millions)	\$65,115	\$41,341	\$3,704	\$18,221	\$997	\$850

VA's Key Performance Goals and Measures

For 2003, VA's senior leadership identified 27 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. The majority of our performance measures remain the same from year to year, but we will modify our list in response to changing circumstances. If our actual performance has met or exceeded our original goals and further performance improvements are unlikely or unreasonable, we will either drop the performance measure or replace it.

Some of VA's key performance measures support achievement of more than one strategic goal; however, 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 assess progress toward achieving the goal;
- historical data;
- the 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 for key measures and how it was validated is presented in the Data Appendix in part IV on page 180. Other goals and measures deemed important by the program offices continue to be monitored and are presented in the data tables beginning on page 86.

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