

## Strategic Goal Two

*Smooth Transition to Civilian Life*

### Strategic Objective 2.1

*Reentry into Civilian Life*

Ease the reentry of new veterans into civilian life by increasing awareness of, access to, and use of VA health care, benefits, and services.

#### Making a Difference for the Veteran

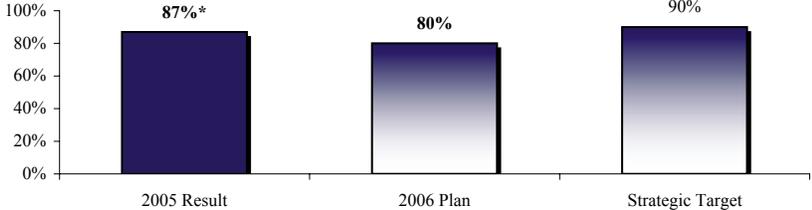
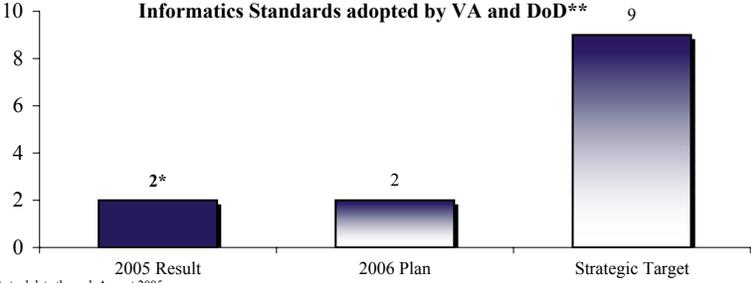


*Walter Reed Army Medical Center  
outreach*

#### Seamless Transition Program

VA's Seamless Transition program sent social workers and benefits counselors to military hospitals across the Nation. Their job was to meet with recovering servicemembers, introduce them to VA benefits, help them file claims, and facilitate their transfer to VA medical facilities where they could be closer to their families. The program has made a huge difference, according to Brian Austin, assistant national service director with the Disabled American Veterans in Washington, DC, who works with wounded soldiers. He said the troops "are ecstatic and overwhelmed that someone is there to take care of them and help them submit their benefits packets."

## Performance Trends and Impact of FY 2005 Results

Performance Trend	FY 2005 Impact								
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Measure</b> <b>Percentage of VAMCs contracted to serve as TRICARE network providers**</b></p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <caption>Percentage of VAMCs contracted to serve as TRICARE network providers**</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Target</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>87%*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Estimated result. Final data are not yet available. **FY 2005 was the baseline year; thus no target had been identified.</p>	Year/Target	Percentage	2005 Result	87%*	2006 Plan	80%	Strategic Target	90%	<p>The 87 percent result for 2005 means that more active duty patients are being transferred to VA prior to discharge. This not only facilitates servicemembers' transition to veteran status but also provides continuity of medical care during the discharge process.</p>
Year/Target	Percentage								
2005 Result	87%*								
2006 Plan	80%								
Strategic Target	90%								
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Measure</b> <b>Implementation guides developed for those Consolidated Health Informatics Standards adopted by VA and DoD**</b></p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <caption>Implementation guides developed for those Consolidated Health Informatics Standards adopted by VA and DoD**</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Target</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>2*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Actual data through August 2005. **FY 2005 was the baseline year; thus no target had been identified.</p>	Year/Target	Count	2005 Result	2*	2006 Plan	2	Strategic Target	9	<p>The development of two implementation guides benefits the transition of veterans to civilian life by implementing a uniform medical record for both DoD and VA, thus facilitating transfer of medical records between the two agencies.</p>
Year/Target	Count								
2005 Result	2*								
2006 Plan	2								
Strategic Target	9								

## Related Information

### Major Management Challenges

The following major management challenges have been identified for this strategic objective:

GAO

- VA/DoD Efficiencies (see page 222 for more details)
- VA/DoD Information Sharing (see page 226 for more details)

### Program Evaluations

No independent program evaluations have been conducted that specifically address this objective.

### Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Evaluation

No PART evaluations have been completed that specifically address this objective.

### New Policies and Procedures

VA expanded the scope of care at the four regional Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Lead Rehabilitation Centers (located in Minneapolis, Palo Alto, Richmond, and Tampa) to create Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRCs). The PRCs are designed to treat catastrophically injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Patients treated at these facilities may have serious TBI alone or in combination with amputation, blindness, or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries, auditory and vestibular disorders, and mental health concerns. The PRCs will specialize in coordinating the multifaceted treatment of these complex-injury patients.

In January 2005 VA established a permanent Office of Seamless Transition (OST). The OST reports to the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health and is composed of representatives from VBA and VHA as well as two active duty Marine Corps officers. The OST coordinates all VA activities related to the provision of benefits and health care for seriously injured Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) servicemembers transitioning directly from the military to VA facilities.

The OST works closely with DoD to ensure that these servicemembers are transitioned from the military to VA smoothly and efficiently. Uniformed Army officers are stationed at each of the four Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers to serve as liaisons for active duty servicemembers receiving treatment at these sites. The OST is working with the military organizations providing support to injured servicemembers and their families such as Marine for Life, the Disabled Soldier Support System, and the Military Severely Injured Support Center.

### Other Important Results

The Department's Vet Centers hired and trained a cadre of up to 50 new outreach workers from among the ranks of recently separated Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) veterans at targeted Vet Centers. Augmented Vet Center outreach is primarily for the purpose of providing information that facilitates the early provision of VA services to new returning veterans and their family members immediately upon their separation from the military. Due to the success of the initial GWOT veteran outreach program, the Under Secretary for Health authorized the hiring of additional OEF/OIF veteran outreach workers. The Vet Centers are now engaged in hiring 50 more GWOT veteran outreach workers to welcome home and inform their colleagues returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

## Strategic Objective 2.2

### *Decisions on Education Claims*

Provide timely and accurate decisions on education claims and continue payments at appropriate levels to enhance veterans' and servicemembers' ability to achieve educational and career goals.

### Making a Difference for the Veteran



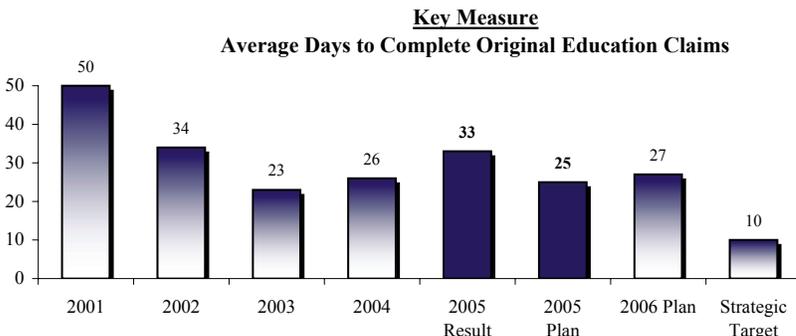
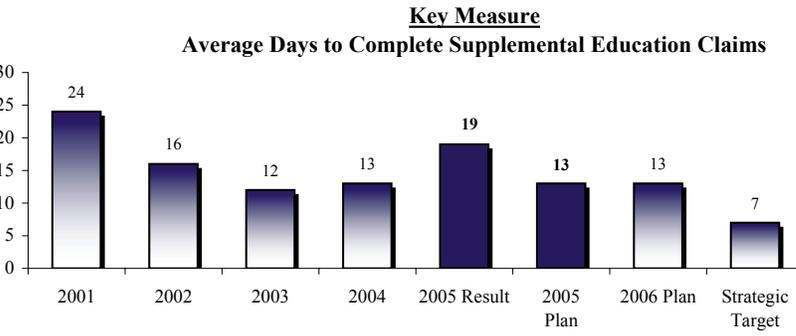
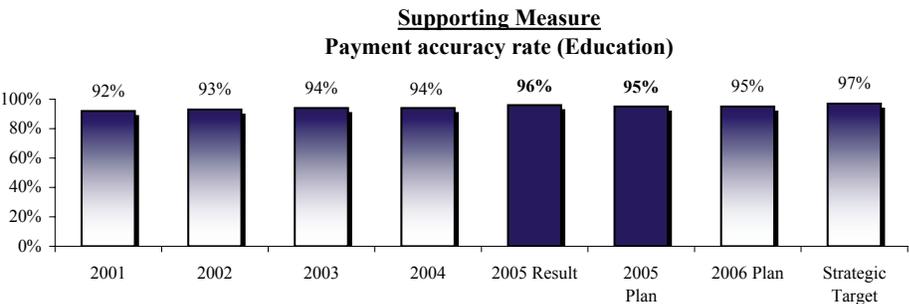
*Graduation day*

#### Helping in a Time of Need

Caring and timely help of VA staff at the Detroit VA Regional Office eased the ordeal of a veteran and her husband who had just lost their son in Iraq. The couple had just moved from Colorado to Detroit, and the veteran, accompanied by her husband, came to the regional office to discuss her VA benefits. The counselor discovered they were distraught after learning that their son had been killed in an accident while on active duty in Iraq. Asked why she had come to the meeting under such circumstances, the woman said she wanted to make sure she would not lose her education benefits in her move to Michigan.

Although the woman's records had not yet been transferred to Detroit, the VA counselor worked with a local VA outpatient clinic manager and the eligibility clerk and arranged counseling and support for the veteran and her husband. Her educational benefits were secured for the following semester, VA's actions eased the burden on the veteran and her husband.

## Performance Trends and Impact of FY 2005 Results

Performance Trend	FY 2005 Impact																		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Measure</b> <b>Average Days to Complete Original Education Claims</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="251 430 1047 766"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Target</th> <th>Average Days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2001</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Plan</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year/Target	Average Days	2001	50	2002	34	2003	23	2004	26	2005 Result	33	2005 Plan	25	2006 Plan	27	Strategic Target	10	<p>The average number of days to process original claims increased 7 days during 2005. On average, beneficiaries waited these additional days to receive their initial award notification and payment. The importance of making timely payments to veterans for educational claims is critical to helping them meet their educational goals.</p>
Year/Target	Average Days																		
2001	50																		
2002	34																		
2003	23																		
2004	26																		
2005 Result	33																		
2005 Plan	25																		
2006 Plan	27																		
Strategic Target	10																		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Measure</b> <b>Average Days to Complete Supplemental Education Claims</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="251 1008 1047 1344"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Target</th> <th>Average Days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2001</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Plan</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year/Target	Average Days	2001	24	2002	16	2003	12	2004	13	2005 Result	19	2005 Plan	13	2006 Plan	13	Strategic Target	7	<p>The average number of days to process supplemental claims increased 6 days during 2005. On average, beneficiaries waited these additional days to receive their award notification and payment. The importance of making timely payments to veterans for educational claims is critical to helping them meet their educational goals.</p>
Year/Target	Average Days																		
2001	24																		
2002	16																		
2003	12																		
2004	13																		
2005 Result	19																		
2005 Plan	13																		
2006 Plan	13																		
Strategic Target	7																		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Measure</b> <b>Payment accuracy rate (Education)</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="203 1533 1112 1837"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Target</th> <th>Payment Accuracy Rate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2001</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>93%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>96%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Plan</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>97%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year/Target	Payment Accuracy Rate	2001	92%	2002	93%	2003	94%	2004	94%	2005 Result	96%	2005 Plan	95%	2006 Plan	95%	Strategic Target	97%	<p>The payment accuracy rate for claims processing improved by more than 2 percentage points in 2005. This means more beneficiaries are receiving the correct payment for their educational assistance benefit award.</p>
Year/Target	Payment Accuracy Rate																		
2001	92%																		
2002	93%																		
2003	94%																		
2004	94%																		
2005 Result	96%																		
2005 Plan	95%																		
2006 Plan	95%																		
Strategic Target	97%																		

## Related Information

### Major Management Challenges

Neither VA's Office of the Inspector General nor the Government Accountability Office identified any major management challenges related to this objective.

### Program Evaluations

No independent program evaluations have been conducted recently that specifically address this objective.

### Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Evaluation

In relation to this strategic objective, the Administration conducted a PART evaluation of VA's Education program during 2003, which resulted in a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." Please see Summary Table 3 on page 57 for more information.

### New Policies and Procedures

During the next year, VA will work to develop a method to measure the percentage of Montgomery GI Bill participants who successfully completed an education or training program. In addition, the Education Service has been working with the National Association of State Approving Agencies to develop an outcome measure for the VA education assistance programs. VA will continue to develop the methodology to collect required data and determine targets.

Following the development of strong outcome measures, the necessary information will be available to develop and recommend changes to the educational assistance programs and thereby improve education benefits for veterans, reservists, servicemembers, and dependents.

# Strategic Objective 2.3

## Home Purchase and Retention

Improve the ability of veterans to purchase and retain a home by meeting or exceeding lending industry standards for quality, timeliness, and foreclosure avoidance.

### Making a Difference for the Veteran



VA helps veterans to buy and retain a home

### Veteran Expresses Appreciation

From a veteran's letter to the Phoenix VA Regional Office: "I am writing to express my heartfelt thanks and the thanks of my entire family for your help in our time of need. In January 2001, I was diagnosed with cancer. After successful surgery to remove the cancer, I underwent intense radiation treatments; these, along with the surgery, left me unable to work. I was not released by my doctor to return to work for nearly six months. During this time, my family and I lived on my disability insurance and were unable to pay our mortgage. We would have lost our home if not for VA. I cannot adequately convey to you the feeling of relief that I received from the straightforward advice and the hopeful words that Mr. Bill Bertrand of the Phoenix Regional Office gave me during these dark times. The stress, worry, and sleepless nights were nearly unbearable before talking to Mr. Bertrand. I have no doubt that my rapid recovery is due in no small part to the stress load taken off my shoulders by VA. VA gave my loan to a different lender and put the payments that I could not make at the end of a new loan and dropped the interest a full point. It is true -- VA takes care of their veterans!"

### Performance Trend and Impact of FY 2005 Result

Performance Trend	FY 2005 Impact																		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Key Measure</b> <b>Foreclosure Avoidance Through Servicing Ratio</b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Foreclosure Avoidance Through Servicing Ratio Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year/Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2001</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Result</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005 Plan</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006 Plan</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Target</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year/Category	Percentage	2001	40%	2002	43%	2003	45%	2004	44%	2005 Result	48%	2005 Plan	47%	2006 Plan	47%	Strategic Target	47%	<p>This result, which measures the success of VA's intervention efforts to prevent foreclosure, means that veteran homeowners were in a better position to avoid foreclosures.</p>
Year/Category	Percentage																		
2001	40%																		
2002	43%																		
2003	45%																		
2004	44%																		
2005 Result	48%																		
2005 Plan	47%																		
2006 Plan	47%																		
Strategic Target	47%																		

## Related Information

### Major Management Challenges

Neither VA's Office of the Inspector General nor the Government Accountability Office identified any major management challenges related to this objective.

### Program Evaluations

No independent program evaluations have been conducted recently that specifically address this objective.

### Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Evaluation

In relation to this strategic objective, the Administration conducted a PART evaluation of VA's Loan Guaranty program during 2004, which resulted in a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." Please see Summary Table 3 on page 57 for more information.

### New Policies and Procedures

VA will be implementing significant improvements in the management of defaults with emphasis on loan holders being compensated for foreclosure avoidance through loss mitigation.