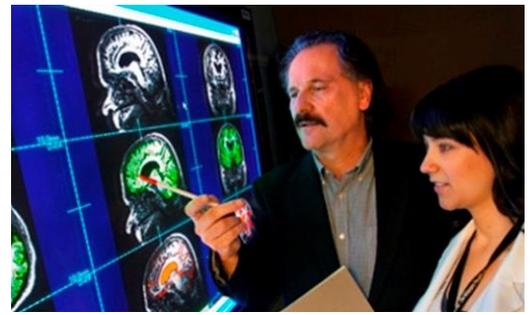


Office of Health Equity

Veterans Health Administration

Department of Veterans Affairs



TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FACT SHEET

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INTRODUCTION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) serves a Veteran population that is increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. Equitable access to high-quality care for all Veterans is a major tenet of the VA healthcare mission. The Office of Health Equity (OHE) champions the elimination of health disparities and achieving health equity for all Veterans.

The VA Health Economics Resource Center (HERC) aims to increase the quality of VA health economics research and cost-effectiveness studies so that the nation and the nation's Veterans may get the best possible health care value from available resources.

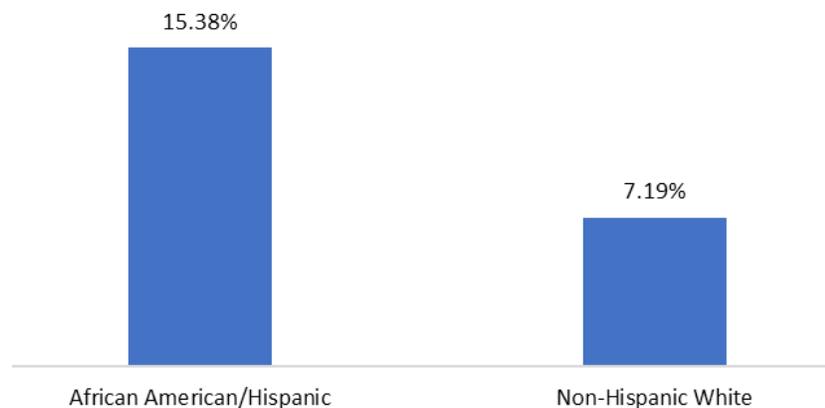
HEALTH DISPARITIES

Traumatic Brain injury (TBI) is considered the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, until recently there was very little information about Veterans who acquire a TBI outside of military service and the care they receive through the Veterans Health Administration.

African American and Hispanic Veterans are more likely to acquire a TBI from an assault or gunshot than non-Hispanic White Veterans. However, non-Hispanic Whites tend to experience more severe

trauma and are more likely to die from an assault or gunshot than African Americans and Hispanics in a civilian Level 1 Trauma Center. Additionally, the VHA costs of caring for non-Hispanic White Veterans who acquire TBI from an assault or gunshot are higher -- \$19,435 more per year than VHA care for African American and Hispanic Veterans with the same types of injuries.

Rate of Civilian-Acquired TBI from Gunshot/Assault by Race/Ethnicity, 1999-2003



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REDUCING DISPARITIES

Using Technology to Reduce Disparities

The Office of Health Equity supports VA researchers and clinicians who work to reduce health disparities by targeting interventions aimed at Veteran groups at higher risk for poor health outcomes. Health outcomes are closely connected to a Veteran's health status, social environment, and socioeconomic status.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Program of the Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service is based at Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA. It is responsible for evaluation, development and implementation of appropriate assistive technology services, strategies, devices and/or practices to improve the functional challenges faced by service members and Veterans in their daily life roles. Their work is especially important to Veterans with TBI including those

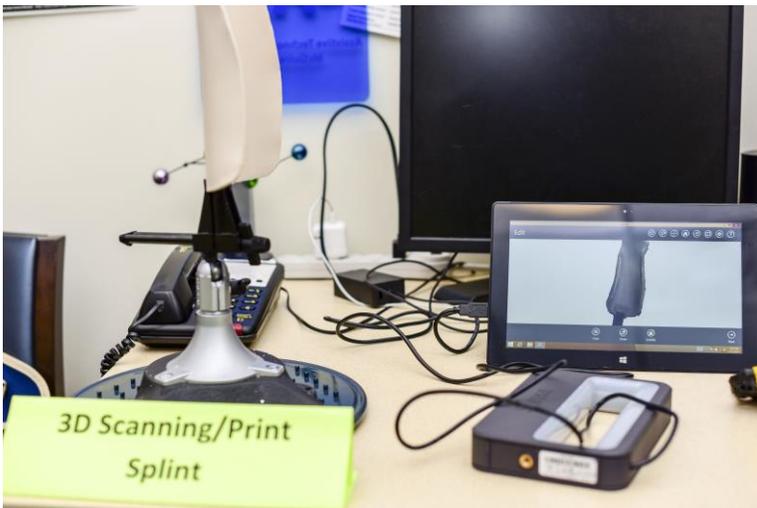
with Polytrauma needs. In addition, the AT Program provides services in areas of spinal cord injury & disease, mental health, acute care VA community living centers and home based primary care.

The team in Richmond works closely with each Veteran referred to their service to provide them with a customized program of devices to best meet their individual needs. They will outfit Veterans with home devices like the Amazon Echo and Google Home that can help Veterans be more independent. The AT team will also work with Veterans and their families to create custom devices utilizing 3D printing and other tools.

In addition to the program in Richmond, there are also other AT Centers across the country and are located at the following VA Medical Centers:

- Minneapolis VA Health Care System
- Palo Alto VA Health Care System
- South Texas VA Health Care System (San Antonio)
- James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (Tampa)

AT Centers provide Veterans with TBI opportunities to maximize their functional status through the use of technology thereby helping to reduce disparities related to their diagnosis.



For more information about the Office of Health Equity visit: <https://www.va.gov/healthequity/>

Reference

Dismuke-Greer CE, et al. "Racial and Service Connected Disability Disparities in Civilian Assault and Firearm TBI Injury and Costs Among U.S. Military Veterans: Evidence From A Level One Trauma Center" presented at Annual TBI Research Forum March 1, 2019, Palo Alto, CA.