Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Webinar

VAMC Data Sharing and Integration into Coordinated Entry Systems

August 16, 2016
Webinar Format

• Webinar will last approximately 90 minutes
• Participants’ phone connections are “muted” due to the high number of callers
  – *Questions can be submitted during the webinar using the Q&A function*
• Questions can also be submitted anytime to SSVF@va.gov
Questions

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel.
• **Welcome & Introductions**
  - Tamara Wright, MPA, SSVF Regional Coordinator
  - Reminder: This webinar is a peer-to-peer educational webinar and a demonstration of promising practices.

• **VAMC Data Sharing and Integration into Coordinated Entry Systems**
  - Gary Grier, Project Coordinator, Houston Coalition for the Homeless
  - Toni Harvell, LCSW, Health Care for Homeless Veterans (VA)
  - Niki Paul, Director of Operation, Ending Community Homelessness in Austin, TX
  - Katy Mangenella, HMIS Program Director, Ending Community Homelessness in Austin, TX
  - Joanna Bomba, Veterans Services Coordinator, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
VA Information Sharing

• The VHA Privacy Office, in collaboration with the VHA Homeless Program Office, after discussions with the VA Office of General Counsel, issued guidance regarding VHA’s legal authority to disclose Veteran information and demographics, which is considered protected health information (PHI), to community partners who assist in serving Veterans who are currently homeless or those with a prior episode of homelessness. There is a memo attached to this presentation for your review.

• The memo should be reviewed in conjunction with VA staff and the VA Privacy Officer to initiate the process of data sharing.
The By Name List

- In addition to using VHA’s legal authorities to disclose information necessary for the coordination of housing and homeless services, these authorities may also be used to develop and manage “By Name Lists” (BNL). VA and Non-VA community partners collaborate to develop BNLs, which are master lists of homeless Veterans in the community.

- These lists are populated through information obtained from outreach, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS; community data collection system), shelters, Homeless Operations Management & Evaluation System (HOMES; VA data collection system), and any other providers in the community who may work with veterans experiencing homelessness.

- VA and community partners work collaboratively to establish and maintain the BNL, which includes sharing information on Veterans already on the BNL, on Veterans needing to be placed on the BNL and Veterans needing to be removed from the BNL.
Getting started

• Community providers, such as SSVF and Continuum of Care staff, and VHA homeless staff should discuss how the community can benefit from full VA integration into the coordinated entry system.
• VHA facility Privacy Officers should work with local VHA Homeless Program Staff to ensure they understand the legal guidance and that there is a process for maintaining an accounting of disclosures.
• Communities have already started this process and can share forms and policies and procedures to help expedite BNL data sharing between VA and community partners.
The Way Home

Using SSVF and Data Sharing to End Veteran’s Homeless in Houston

Gary M Grier
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

Toni Harvell, LCSW
Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center
The right people in the room

Different environment

Important & Urgent

Set a Goal
**VA programs**

- HUD-VASH mass briefings: (Housing Events)
  - Pulling together all service providers in one single location.
  - SSVF
  - Coordinated Access
  - Employment
  - Fair Market property owners
  - Housing Authorities
  - VA

**Coordinated Access System**

- At Stand Down
- At Point in Time Count
- System Out reach and 11 HUBS
- At Drop In Center
  - Assessment and match for best resource
  - HUD-VASH, SSVF, GPD, CoC Funded Housing

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The Way Home
Housing Houston’s Heroes

– Crosswalk and Standardized Documents
– SSVF grantees integrated into local coordinated access system
  • Ability to deliver appropriate interventions for homeless veterans
– SSVF presence at VA Drop-In Center
  • Able to assess homeless veterans on-site
– Utilizing HMIS as an alert and connection tool
– Housing Houston’s Heroes Rapid Rehousing subcommittee
VA Process to Participate in HMIS and Coordinated Access

• Contact medical center’s Information Security Officer (ISO)

• Facilitate communication between ISO and community HMIS coordinators

• Establish user agreement terms between VA and community

• HMIS training for read only and entry

• Designate CA/HMIS entry staff
End Veteran Homelessness by 2015

- Identify Homeless Veterans and Use Coordinated Access System to:
- Connect Chronically Homeless Veterans to Existing Veteran Administration Supportive Housing (VASH)
- Rapidly Return Homeless Veteran Households to Affordable Housing

The Way Home
The Way Home is the collaborative model to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County.

**Goals:**
- End Chronic Homelessness by 2015
- End Veteran Homelessness by 2015
- End Family Homelessness by 2020
- End Youth Homelessness by 2020
- Set a Path to End All Homelessness

**Homeless Veteran Progress:**
As of August 2015

- Total homeless: 4,609
- Unsheltered: 1,950
- Sheltered: 2,659

Since 2011 we have seen:
- a 46% decrease in overall homelessness
- a 56% drop in unsheltered homelessness
- a 58% reduction in chronic homelessness

**Chronically Homeless Progress:**
As of August 2015

- Housing Placements
- Target
- Point-In-Time Count, Chronically Homeless

- 168 individuals were assessed for housing.
- 126 of those assessed for housing were chronically homeless.
- 19 of those assessed for housing were veterans.
What’s Next?

REFINING PROCESSES
- Reviewing Data
- Resources
- Community involvement
- House all of non-VA eligible veterans

IMPROVING RETENTION

MAINTAINING STEADY STATE
- Best process – only essential elements
- Veteran Homelessness Remains Important & Urgent

The Way Home
Effective End of Veteran Homelessness

**Steady State** describes a system that maintains equilibrium, even through changes

Number of veterans who will face homelessness each year = Number of available housing units based on historical turnover of HUD-VASH, SSVF, and CoC

Our community has a housing option for any veteran who becomes homeless.
Acknowledgement for contributions to the SSVF Workgroup, Gerald Eckert of TSA and Heather Muller of CSH
The Way Home is the collaborative model to prevent and end homelessness in Houston, Harris County, and Fort Bend County.

For more information visit: www.thewayhomehouston.org

Or email:
Gary Grier
Ggrier@homelesshouston.org
info@thewayhomehouston.org
Working Together: Onboarding the VA as an HMIS user in Austin, TX

Presented by Niki Paul, Director of Operations and Katy Manganella, HMIS Program Director
Ending Community Homelessness Coalition
Community Context

- Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System main offices located 70 miles outside of Austin, TX
- ECHO is the Coordinated Entry and HMIS Lead for the Austin/Travis County Community
- Austin Homeless Veterans Initiative-Meets weekly as serves as the community-wide initiative to end homelessness among Veterans
- Approximately 600 HUD-VASH Vouchers and 32 GPD beds in community
Key Players We Engaged

- VA-HUD-VASH, HCHV and GPD Program Managers
- CoC Lead (ECHO)
- HMIS Lead (ECHO)
- VA Staff that will be directly using HMIS (HUD-VASH SW’s, VA Outreach Staff, etc)
- Regional and Local VA Leadership
Timeline of Effort to Onboard the VA into HMIS

• Research and Education-How did other communities accomplished this? Thank you Houston, TX!
• Release of Information and SOP approval
• HMIS MOU Execution
• HMIS Training Completion
• HMIS PKI Installation on VA Laptop
Research and Education

- **Research & Education**

  - **12/1/2014** – Director of Strategic Initiatives at ECHO worked with VA Homeless Coordinator and HCHV Coordinator to develop the ROI and SOP for the VA Privacy Officer review. Discussion on how to integrate HMIS use with VA staff or alternate options.


  - **12/29/2014** – Call with HMIS and VAMC Houston
**ROI / SOP Approval**

- **1/2/2015** – HCHV submitted the ROI and SOP to the VA Privacy Officer for approval.
- **1/5/2015** – Veteran’s Initiative Meeting to review progress updates. HCHV informed everyone that they submitted materials on 1/2/15.
- **1/26/2015** – Vet’s Initiative Meeting - No update from the VA on approval of ROI or SOP, still waiting.
- **2/9/2015** – Vet’s Meeting – No updates from VA.
- **3/9/2015** – Vet’s Meeting – No updates from VA.
- **3/16/2015** – Vet’s Meeting – HCHV reports reviewing ROI and SOP with VA Privacy Officer, no formal feedback on ROI or SOP.
- **4/13/2015** – Vet’s Meeting – Update from HUD-VASH lead, VA has approved using HMIS. Have reviewed and approved the ROI and SOP for moving forward.
- **Late April through Early Summer** – ECHO had staff transition and had limited capacity to drive this forward.
- **8/31/2015** – VA releases guidance on HMIS “Read only” and “Direct Entry Access” Policy that basically gave the green light. Ann re-energized the effort to get VA HMIS access. Followed up with Andrew and Paula via email and brought in recently hired HMIS Director to drive this forward.
HMIS MOU Execution

- **Approval of HMIS MOU**

- **9/2/2015** – CoC leadership sent email to HUD-VASH and HCHV program leadership. VA staff requested a meeting to review the guidance from the VA together and to plan onboarding in HMIS and CA.

- **9/9/2015** – HCHV Program Manager requests direct entry access for HCHV SW based on guidance from VA. Chief of SW Service approved at his level and elevated it to the next for approval.

- **9/10/2016** – HMIS Director went to Temple to meet with HCHV PM and VA Privacy Director to review MOU. Questions came up about who would need to sign it at the VA, which prompted the question of what other VAMCs had done.

- **Mid September** – HMIS Director networked with other CoCs that had been success on this to find out exactly how they did it and what steps they took.

- **9/30/16** – HMIS Director contacted HCHV lead with a list of other VA’s using HMIS. **10/14/2015** – HMIS Director sent HMIS MOU to Program Support Assistant at VA to be signed.

- **10/19/2015** – HMIS Director followed up on MOU. No updates yet. MOU was sent to Director’s office for signature.

- **10/26/2015** – VA signed the MOU!
• HMIS Training
  • 11/23/2015 – 4 VA Staff attended HMIS New User Training
HMIS PKI Install on VA Computers

• **December – Feb 2016** – HMIS lead worked to get approval to download the PKI certificate onto VA computers

• **3/4/2016** – 4 VA SW officially logged into HMIS for the first time!!!
Benefits

- Coordinated updates on unsheltered Veterans improved outreach and connection to housing
- Real-time Veteran By-Name List updates
- Data Quality: Cross reference VA data with CoC data
- Improved timeliness with critical service coordination for Veterans
Challenges

- CoC did waive the HMIS License Fees for the VA to avoid financial hurdle
- Staff Capacity to Follow Through with Effort
Contact Us

Niki Paul, Director of Operations, ECHO
Email: nikipaul@austinecho.org

Katy Manganella, HMIS Program Director, ECHO
Email: katymanganella@austinecho.org
Ending Veteran Homelessness in Los Angeles County

Master List and Data Sharing

Joanna Bomba
Veteran Services Coordinator
Jbomba@lahsa.org
Why We Need To Share Data in LA
Why We Need To Share Data in LA
Why We Need to Share Data in LA

Los Angeles County Veteran Homelessness Dashboard

Housing Trends

Veterans Permanent Housing Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Veterans Permanently Housed</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>New Veterans connected to services this month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>2,124</td>
<td>Veterans on track to obtaining permanent housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>Veterans with vouchers, looking for housing</td>
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<td>Veterans housed since January 2014</td>
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Where We Began

ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS
Criteria and Benchmarks

CRITERIA

1. THE COMMUNITY HAS IDENTIFIED ALL VETERANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
The community has used coordinated outreach, multiple data sources, and other methods, to identify, enumerate, and engage all Veterans experiencing homelessness, including Veterans who are unsheltered, as well as Veterans in shelters, Grant and Per Diem programs and other VA residential programs, other transitional housing programs, etc. This identification of Veterans includes both Veterans that meet the definition of chronic homelessness and Veterans that are experiencing homelessness but do not meet the definition of chronic homelessness. The definition of Veteran used includes all persons who served in the armed forces, regardless of how long they served or the type of discharge they received.
Where We Began

• Shared ROI to cover organizations in CES using HMIS

• Incorporated required HOMES data points in CES Survey Questions

• GLA VA agreement for Read Only Access to HMIS
Where We Began

- 8 Service Planning Areas encompassing all of LA County’s 4,000 sq. miles
- 8 lead agencies *willing* to administer a By Name Veteran List
- No reliable way to compare who is on each of those lists
Where We Were

Los Angeles County Veteran Homelessness Dashboard

Housing Trends

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Veterans Permanent Housing Need

- 136: New Veterans connected to services this month
- 2,124: Veterans on track to obtaining permanent housing
- 825: Veterans with vouchers, looking for housing
- 8,793: Veterans housed since January 2014
Where We Were

LAHSA Secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP)

- Included HMIS and Community Data (inclusive of SSVF and some GPD)
- Did not include Data from VA

**Monthly Process**

LAHSA Staff
Analyze
Aggregate Data

8 Communities
Send Data to
LAHSA through
FTP

LAHSA Sends
Data back to
Community
through FTP
A Pivotal Moment

VACO Privacy Guidance: Authority to Make Disclosures to Community Partners
A Pivotal Moment

VA Privacy Guidance

Summary of Authorities - Homeless Veterans

• If a Veteran is homeless, 24VA10P2 Routine Use #40 and HIPAA 45 CFR 164.512(j) would provide legal authority to disclose pertinent information on the Veteran related to obtaining housing and related services, such as the Veteran’s homeless status, without a signed authorization in cases where a Veteran is in imminent risk.

• General Counsel ruled that homelessness, in and of itself is considered imminent risk.
Looking Forward

- VA and LAHSA agreed on what data points were needed for
  - Los Angeles County Veteran Homeless Dashboard
  - Updating data for identified clients on By Name List
  - De-duplication

- LAHSA agreed to do data analysis

- First chance at fully identifying all veterans in Los Angeles County
Looking Forward

LAHSA Secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP)
- Includes HMIS and Community Data (inclusive of SSVF and some GPD)
- Includes client level from VA to de-duplicate

New Monthly Process

VA Sends Data to LAHSA through FTP

LAHSA Staff
Analyze HMIS and VA Data

LAHSA Manages Secure By Name List for SPAs
Current Limitations

• Only updating data for clients already in HMIS and covered in data sharing

• Rolling out end of August; slowed down in mean time

• Heavy lift for staff at VA and LAHSA
Panelists:

- Gary Grier, Project Coordinator, Houston Coalition for the Homeless
  - ggrier@homelesshouston.org
- Toni Harvell, LCSW, Health Care for Homeless Veterans (VA)
  - Toni.Harvell@va.gov
- Niki Paul, Director of Operations, ECHO Austin
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- Katy Manganella, HMIS Program Director, ECHO Austin
  - katymanganella@austinecho.org
- Joanna Bomba, Veterans Services Coordinator, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
  - jbomba@lahsa.org
Additional Questions

SSVF Program Office
Email: ssvf@va.gov

Website:
www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf.asp

A recording of this presentation will be provided to webinar registrants and posted at SSVF University.