



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Dec. 8, 2016

## Medical School Association Praises VA's New National Veteran Health Equity Report

*Association of American Medical Colleges recognizes VA's leadership in health equity studies.*

WASHINGTON— The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), representing medical schools nationwide, is recognizing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) initiatives to advance equity in health care through VA's new National Veteran Health Equity Report. The National Veteran Health Equity Report advances understanding of the many factors to be considered when treating Veterans. The report can be used as a tool to set treatment goals for vulnerable Veterans in order to reduce health care disparities they experience. Clinicians in VA and in the private sector are already using the report to understand and better address health issues among diverse patient populations.

"The Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) National Veteran Health Equity Report e-book includes extensive data clinicians can utilize to tailor care to individual Veterans' experiences and health care goals," said Under Secretary for Health, David Shulkin, M.D. "This extraordinary resource exemplifies Secretary Robert McDonald's vision of MyVA and is another example of how VA puts the best interests of Veterans at the center of all we do."

Data for the [National Veteran Health Equity Report](#) are from centralized, national VA administrative databases of enrollment; outpatient, inpatient, and Non-VA (Fee) medical care, but do not include long-term care services or care received privately by health care patients. All of the report chapters are written by VA subject matter experts.

Social and economic characteristics directly impact health and are important considerations in developing a personal care plan. During this time, women represented about seven percent of VA patients. Approximately, 23.5 percent of the Veteran population were racial/ethnic minority group members, 72.9 percent were non-Hispanic White, and 3.7 percent were of unknown race/ethnicity. And, 46.3 percent of Veterans were age 65 or older and nearly five percent were diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

The Report describes sociodemographic characteristics, health care utilization patterns, and medical conditions based upon race/ethnicity, gender, age, geography, and mental health status for fiscal year (FY) 2013. The Office of Health Equity plans to review data beyond fiscal year 2013 in future reports and include 2014 – the year when the significant surge in Veteran enrollment occurred.

The Report also includes data related to the special needs of rural Veterans who, according to the VA Office of Rural Health made up about 32 percent of the 9.1 million Veterans enrolled for VA care in 2016, and approximately 15 percent of all Americans.

Darrell G. Kirch, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of AAMC, called the report a "first-of-its-kind" tool, which "contributes to the scholarship on social inequity and disease and raises awareness of health care disparities among Veterans."

The insight provided by this report will ensure VA care is culturally and gender sensitive and reflects the needs and preferences of diverse Veteran populations. For more information about VA health, visit [www.va/health.gov](http://www.va/health.gov).

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