Women Veterans Health Care

Patricia Hayes, PhD
Chief Consultant
Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group
Department of Veterans Affairs
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Women Users Doubled Since 2000

Number of women Veteran VHA patients in each year, FY00-FY10

Source: Women’s Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.
New Women VA Users by VISN 2009

Figure 1: Proportion of Women Veteran VHA patients who were new to VHA in Fiscal year 2009, by VA Integrated Service Network (VISN).

A woman is considered to be a "new" VHA patient in Fiscal Year 2009 if she had no VHA outpatient use in the three years prior to her first outpatient visit in Fiscal Year 2009.

Women VA Patients: Three Peaks

**Age distribution among women Veteran VHA patients (#), FY00 and FY09**

Source: Women’s Health Evaluation Initiative (WHEI) and the Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group; Sourcebook: Women Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration V1: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Use of VHA Care, 2011.
# Greater Market Penetration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL VISNs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All living male Veterans</td>
<td>20,817,765</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique male users</td>
<td>5,037,366</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market penetration (male)</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All living female Veterans</td>
<td>1,840,380</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique female users</td>
<td>316,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market penetration (female)</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
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Source: [VETPOP 2007](#), ADUSH for Policy and Planning, and VSSC Data Portal
Roles

✓ Manage facility women’s health program
✓ Advocate for women Veterans
✓ Coordinate care across Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACTs)
✓ Increase outreach
✓ Help develop best practices
✓ Ombudsman for women Veterans’ issues
Implementing Comprehensive Care

- Complete primary care from one designated Women’s Health Primary Care Provider at one site, including Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)
  - Care for acute and chronic illness
  - Gender-specific primary care
  - Preventive services
  - Mental health services
  - Coordination of care
  - Model for PACT
  - Measured with women’s health primary care evaluation tools (WATCH Tool)
Revised VHA Handbook 1330.01: “VHA Services for Women Veterans”

- Outlines specific services at facilities and CBOCs
- Defines “Comprehensive Primary Care for Women Veterans”
- Requires women be seen by Women’s Health Primary Care Providers
- Offers three clinic models
- Details safety and security requirements
- Establishes systematic data collection process
Women’s Health Transformation Initiative

- Implementing comprehensive primary care is one piece of Women’s Health Transformation Initiative
- Other initiatives over 3+ years:
  - Women Veterans Call Center
  - Privacy and Environment of Care
  - Homelessness
  - Improved care coordination
Privacy, Safety, and Security

- Top VA priority
- VA policy requires women Veterans have a female chaperone for all gender-specific exams or procedures
- Environment of Care rounds ensure privacy, safety, and security requirements are met
- In FY11
  - $29M to field for clinical program improvements
  - $21M to field for facility privacy corrections
- Correction of remaining deficiencies under way
Homelessness

- Vulnerability screening tool
  - Identifies a woman Veteran’s risk for homelessness
  - Tool piloted, validated within Women’s Health
  - Coordinated with homeless program to expedite services
  - Planned completion: 9/2011

- Parallel efforts
  - Compensated work therapy programs specific to women
  - VBA, DOL, state partnerships to improve employment options
Women’s Health Transformation Initiative

- Improved Care Coordination
- Emergency room care
  - Assessment tool development
  - Ongoing provider/staff education
- Breast cancer
  - Tracking of abnormal test results
  - Breast Cancer Clinical Case Registry
- Teratogenic identification of drugs
  (birth defect risk)
Women’s Health Education

- Recruiting and retraining providers interested and proficient in women’s health

- National Women’s Health Mini-Residency Program
  - 1,000+ primary care providers educated in basic and advanced women’s health care
  - Flagship education model for VA
  - SimLEARN partnership: Large mini-residency, ED-WH curriculum, task trainer dissemination

- Advanced fellowships in women Veterans’ health
- VA HSR&D Cyber Seminar Spotlight on Women’s Health Series
Reproductive Health

- Upcoming policies
  - Maternity Care Coordination Handbook
  - Infertility Handbook
  - Emergency Contraception Rights of Conscience (ROC)

- Maternity care
  - 2010 Caregiver Law
  - Newborn care
  - Childcare pilots
Benchmarking
Women’s Health Evaluation Initiative

- Acquiring data on women Veterans
- Producing key demographic and VHA health care usage data
- Goal: To understand the effects of military service on women’s lives
Volume 1: Sociodemographics and Use of VHA Care

Future volumes focus on:
- Analysis of data on non-VA purchased care
- Diagnoses in women
- Race and ethnicity
Opportunities Ahead

- Women’s Health leverages partnerships and collaborates across offices
  - Primary care, PACT
  - Mental health
  - Prevention
  - Specialty medicine (e.g., cardiology, pain management)
- End goal: Needs of women Veterans are always considered across program offices, in policy and key decisions
National Survey of Women Veterans 2008

- National stratified random sample
- 3,500+ participants thru telephone interviews
- Findings
  - Access: Fragmentation of care
  - Quality perception: VA nonusers had poorer assessments of VA quality than VA users
  - Barriers to using VA Care*
    - 31% did not think they were eligible
    - 21% did not know how to apply for benefits
    - 20% noted closest VA is too far from their home

*Among women Veterans who considered but did not use VA. Factors are not mutually exclusive.
Next Survey of Women Veterans

- Required by PL 111-163
- Expands on National Survey of Women Veterans (NSWV)
- Larger sampling
- Telephone interviews
- Stratified by race/ethnicity
- Independent contractor
- Start date: 2012
Question and Answer