Women Veterans Health Care – Strategic Goals and Priorities

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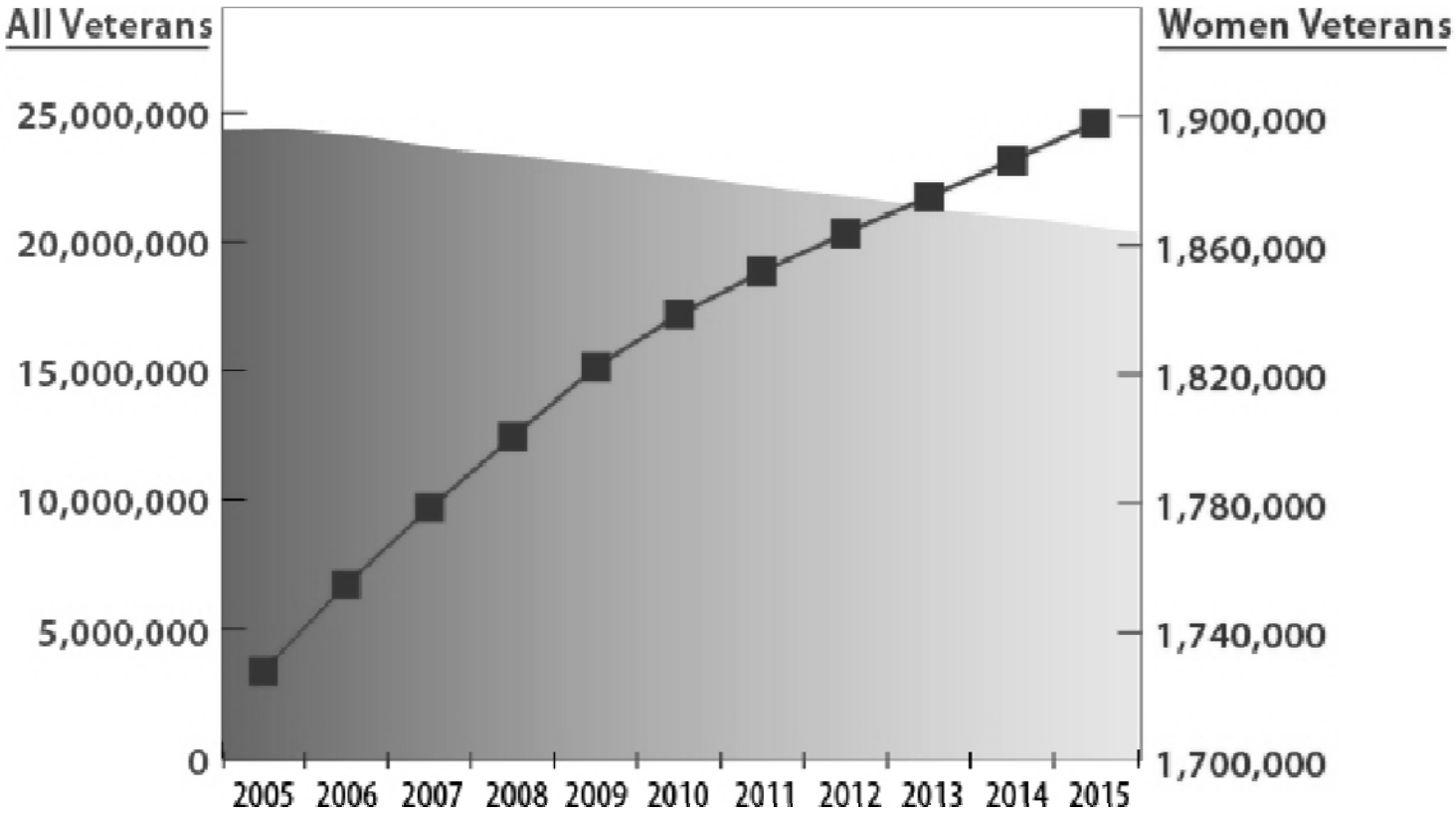
WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

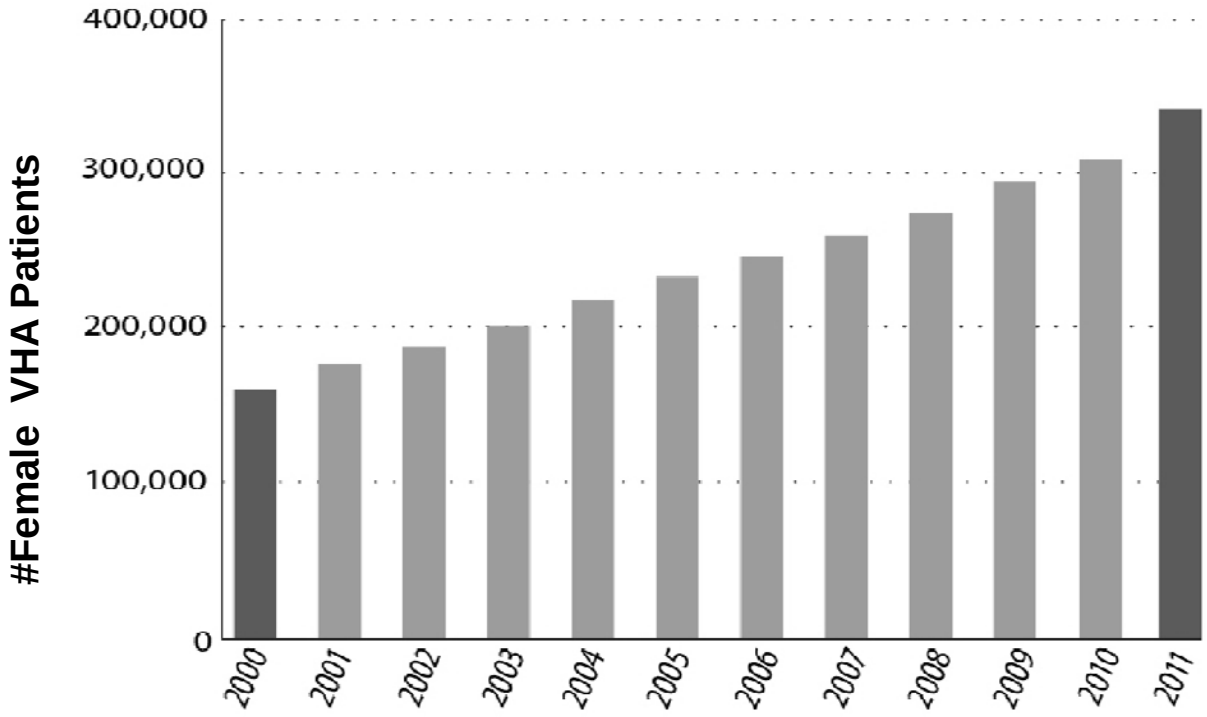
VA HEALTH CARE Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

Women Veteran Population Increasing, Total Vet Population Declining



Source: VetPOP, VA Office of Policy and Planning

Women VA Users Doubled Since 2000



Sources: 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. VHA's Office of Finance Allocation Resource Center (ARC).

Women Represent

- 14.5% of Active Duty military
- 18% of National Guard/Reserves
- 11.6% of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans
- 6% of VA health care users

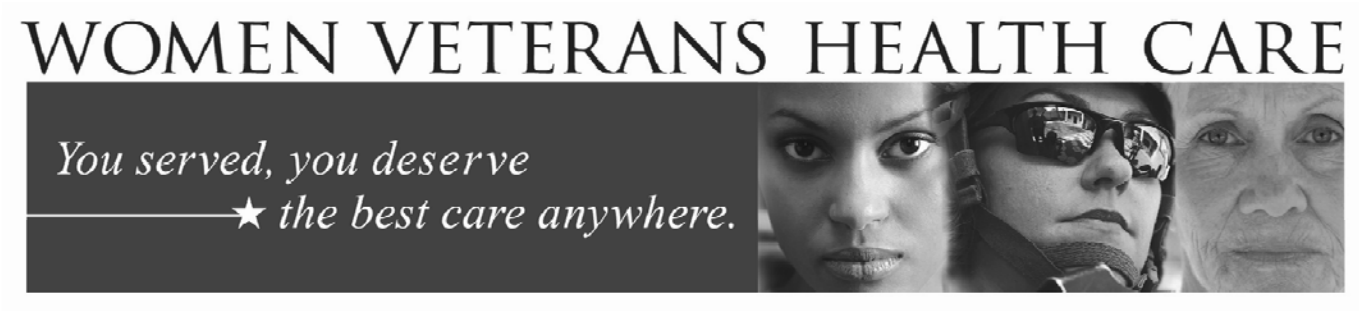
The Changing Face of VA

- Young women
- Frequent visits
- Service-connected disabilities
- Maternity care
- Working women
- Mental health needs

The Changing Face of VA

- Older women
- Largest sub-population
- Menopausal needs
- Geriatric care
- Inpatient/extended stays
- Pain management

Mission



- Ensure all women Veterans receive **equitable, high-quality**, and **comprehensive** health care in a sensitive and safe environment at all VA facilities
- Be a national leader in the provision of health care for women Veterans, thereby raising the standard of care for all women

Strategic Goals

- Transform health care delivery for women Veterans
- Develop, implement and influence VA health policy as it relates to women Veterans
- Develop, implement and influence VA education initiatives
- Drive the focus and set the agenda to increase understanding of the effects of military service on women Veterans' lives
- **End Goal: Needs of women Veterans always considered across program offices and in policy and key decisions**

GOAL 1: Transform health care delivery for women Veterans

Implementing Comprehensive Care

Complete primary care from one designated Women's Health Primary Care Provider at one site (including CBOCs)

- Care for acute and chronic illness
- Gender-specific primary care
- Preventive services
- Mental Health services
- Coordination of care
- Model for Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)
- Measured with women's health primary care evaluation tools (WATCH Tool)

Clinical Research needs

- Highest morbidity :
  - Cardiac disease, HTN, Diabetes, Obesity

    Lung Cancer, smoking behaviors and smoking cessation
  - Colon cancer and patterns of test compliance
- Veteran experience and
  - Cervical and breast cancer rates in Veterans
  - Pregnancy
    - Unplanned, preconception behaviors
    - Pregnancy outcomes
- All related to Mental Health, Combat Exposure, etc

Installing Full-time Women Veterans Program Managers (WVPMs) System-Wide

- Serves as advocate for women Veterans
- Leads facility women's health program
- Coordinates care across PACTs
- Implements improved services
- Increases outreach
- Helps develop best practices
- Serves as a linchpin for improved women's health services

Can be involved in Research activities

Women's Health Transformation Initiative

Sub-initiative of New Models of Care

- **Homelessness**
  - Vulnerability Screening Tool
  - Planned completion: 9/2012
- **Women Veterans Call Center**
  - Launched: 6/2011
- **Privacy and Environment of Care**
  - Correction of bathroom and privacy deficiencies
  - Target for FY12: Correct 90% of bathroom and 65% of privacy deficiencies identified in the Privacy/EOC

Women's Health Transformation Initiative

Sub-initiative of New Models of Care

Improved Care Coordination

- **Emergency Room Care**
  - Assessment Tool development
  - Ongoing provider/staff education
  - Planned completion: 9/2013
- **Breast Cancer**
  - Tracking of abnormal test results
  - Breast Cancer Clinical Case Registry
  - Planned Completion: 9/2013
- **Teratogenic Identification of Drugs***
  - Planned completion: 9/2013

**Subject to funding*

Culture Change

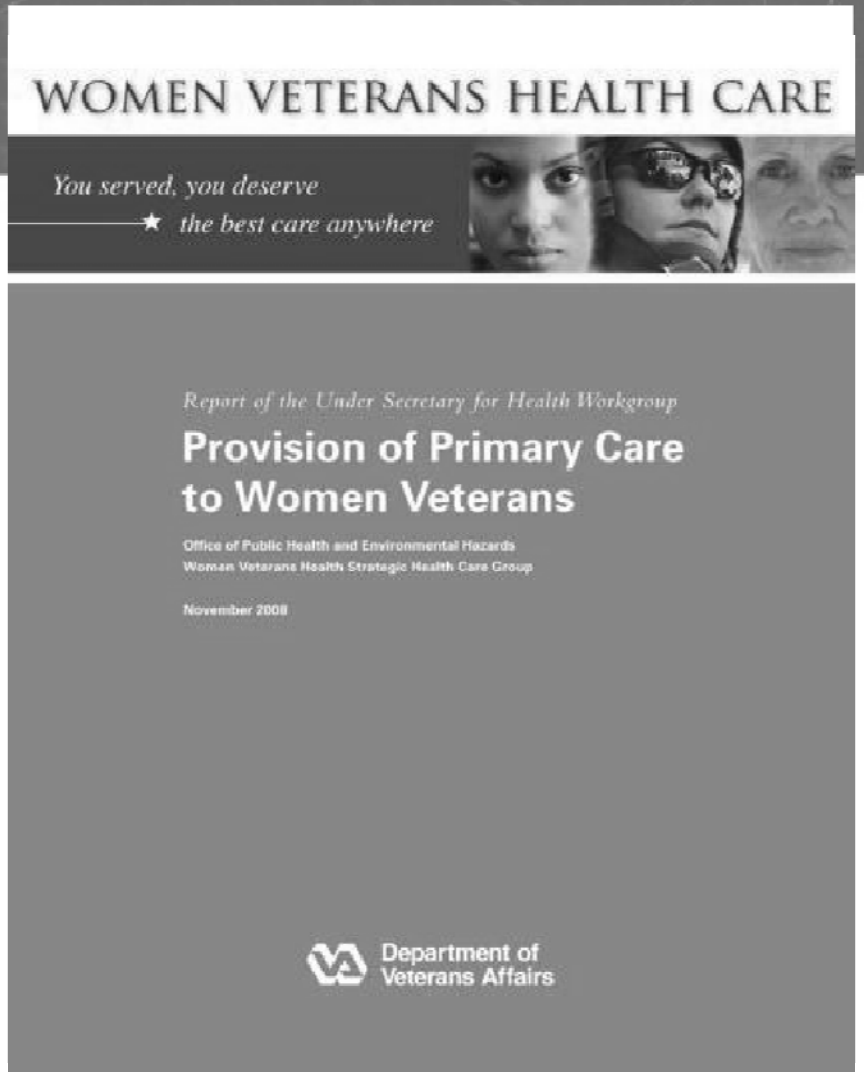
- Women Veterans Health Care is leading development of a VA-wide communication plan to **enhance the language, practice and culture** of VA to be **more inclusive of women Veterans**
- National Women Veterans Communications Workgroup:
  - Broad representation across VA
  - Tasked with developing strategies to reach **women Veterans** and **VA employees**

Culture Change Through Communications

GOAL 2: Develop, implement and influence VA health policy as it relates to women Veterans

2008 USH Report

- Defined **comprehensive primary care** for women
- Made recommendations on how facilities can improve care delivery
- Handbook 1330.01: **Recommendations became policy**


WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

You served, you deserve the best care anywhere

Report of the Under Secretary for Health Workgroup

Provision of Primary Care to Women Veterans

Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards
Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group

November 2008

Department of Veterans Affairs

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
  - General Primary Care Clinics, Separate but Shared Space, Women's Health Center
- Details safety and security requirements
- Establishes systematic data collection process

Improving Reproductive Health Services

- New and upcoming policies
  - Maternity Care Coordination
  - Infertility Policy
  - Emergency Contraception Rights of Conscience (ROC)
- Maternity care
  - 2010 Caregiver Law
  - Newborn care
  - Childcare pilots

GOAL 3: Develop, implement and influence VA education initiatives

Women's Health Education

- Recruiting and retraining providers **interested** and **proficient** in women's health
- National Women's Health Mini-Residency Program (live and online)
  - More than 1,200 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
- Monthly provider audio-conferences
- Co-sponsored 2nd VA Women's Health Research Conference

Women's Health Education FY12

- Nursing Education
  - Mini-Residencies
  - Audio Conferences
- Women's Health Training for Emergency Medicine Providers
- Grants for innovative education projects, Telehealth pilots

GOAL 4: Drive the focus and set the agenda to increase understanding of the effects of military service on women Veterans' lives

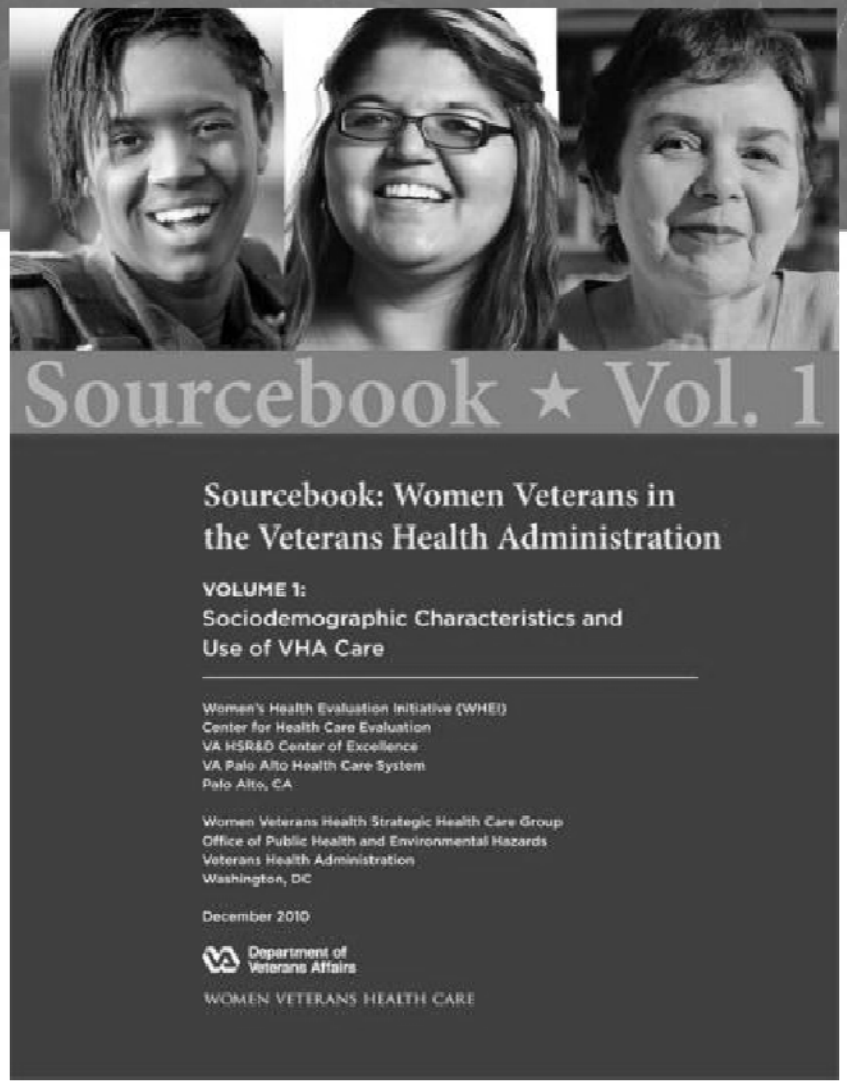
Major Goal: Understand the effects of military service on women's lives

- Women's Health Evaluation Initiative
- Practice Based Research Networks (PBRNs)
- Studies about post-deployment health, combat and trauma exposure, gender-specific, reproductive and mental health conditions
- More VA research on women Veterans published over 5-year period (2004-2008) than the preceding 25 years

Systematic review of VA Women's Health Research:
http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/research/abstracts.cfm?Project_ID=2141701051
Literature Search:
http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/womens_health/search.cfm

Sourcebook

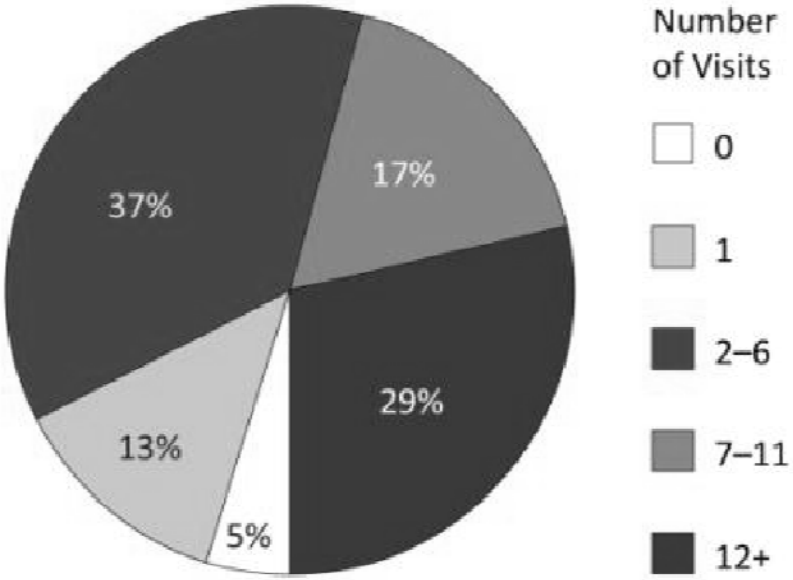
- Volume 1: Sociodemographics and Use of VHA Care
- Future volumes focus on:
  - Analysis of fee basis data
  - Diagnoses
  - Race and Ethnicity
- **Challenges:** data quality issues re: employee vs. Veteran data, changes over time



Sourcebook Volume 1:
http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/publications.asp#research

High Usage

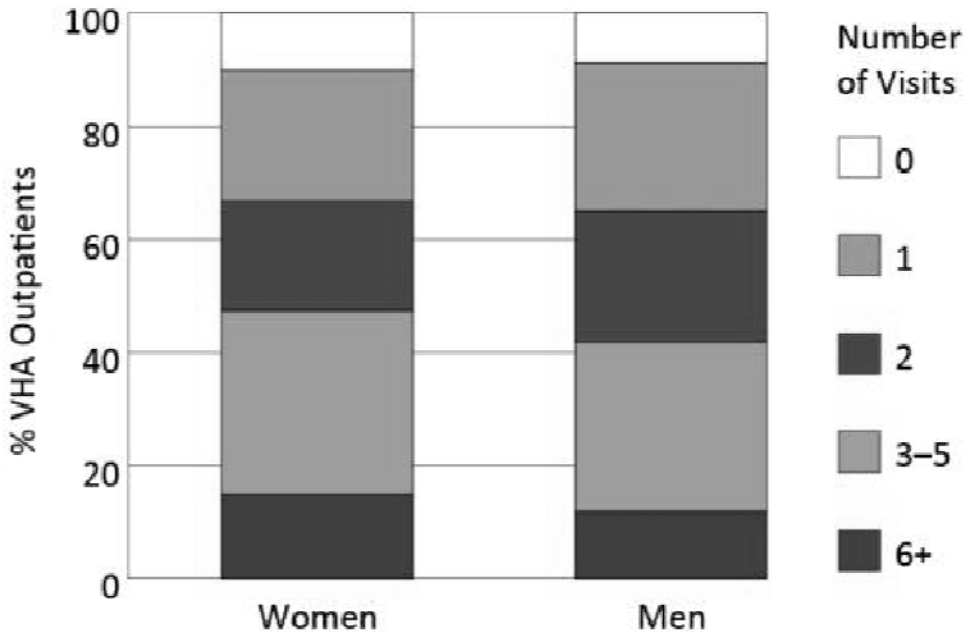
Proportion of women Veteran VHA patients by frequency of face-to-face outpatient visits, FY09



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.

Women Use PC more than Men

Proportion of women and men Veteran VHA outpatients by frequency of total primary care visits, FY09



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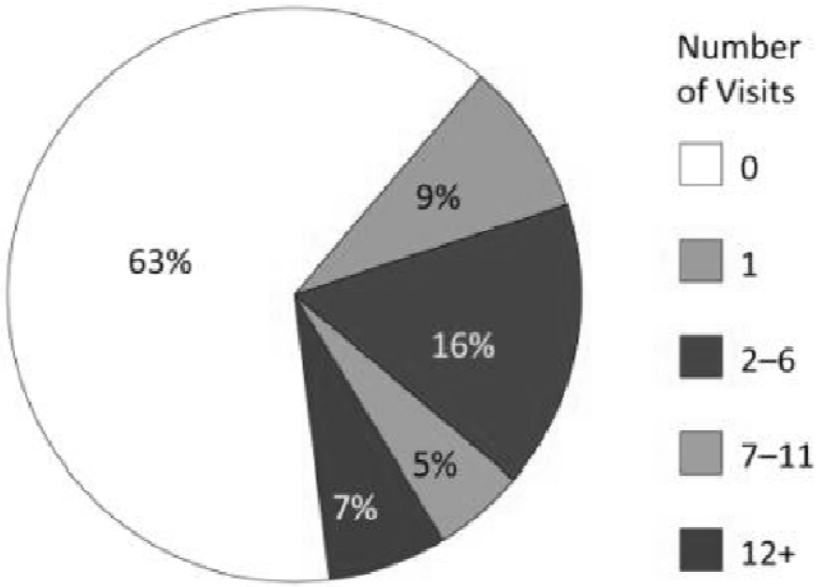
Mental Health Use

Proportion of women Veteran VHA outpatients by frequency of mental health visits, FY09



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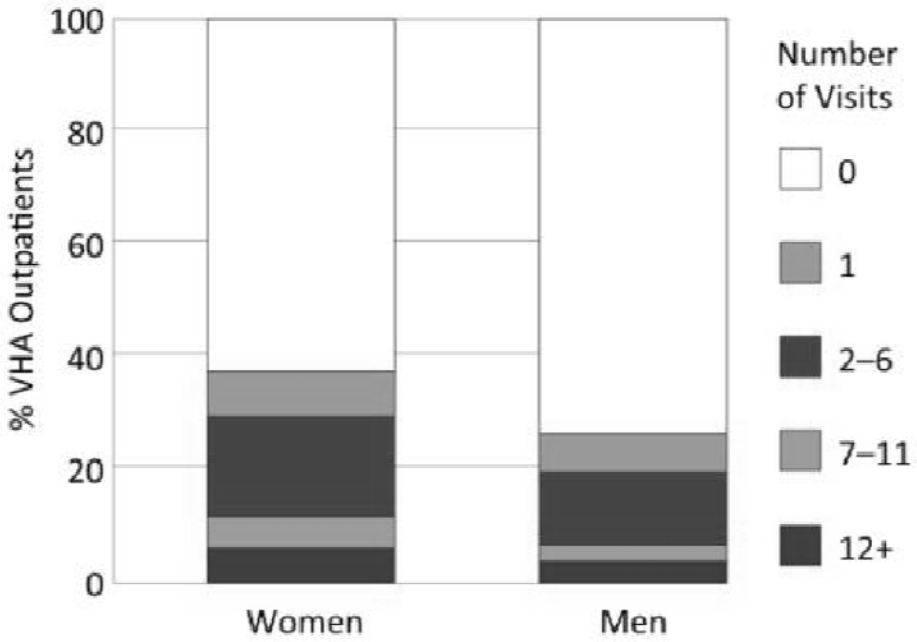
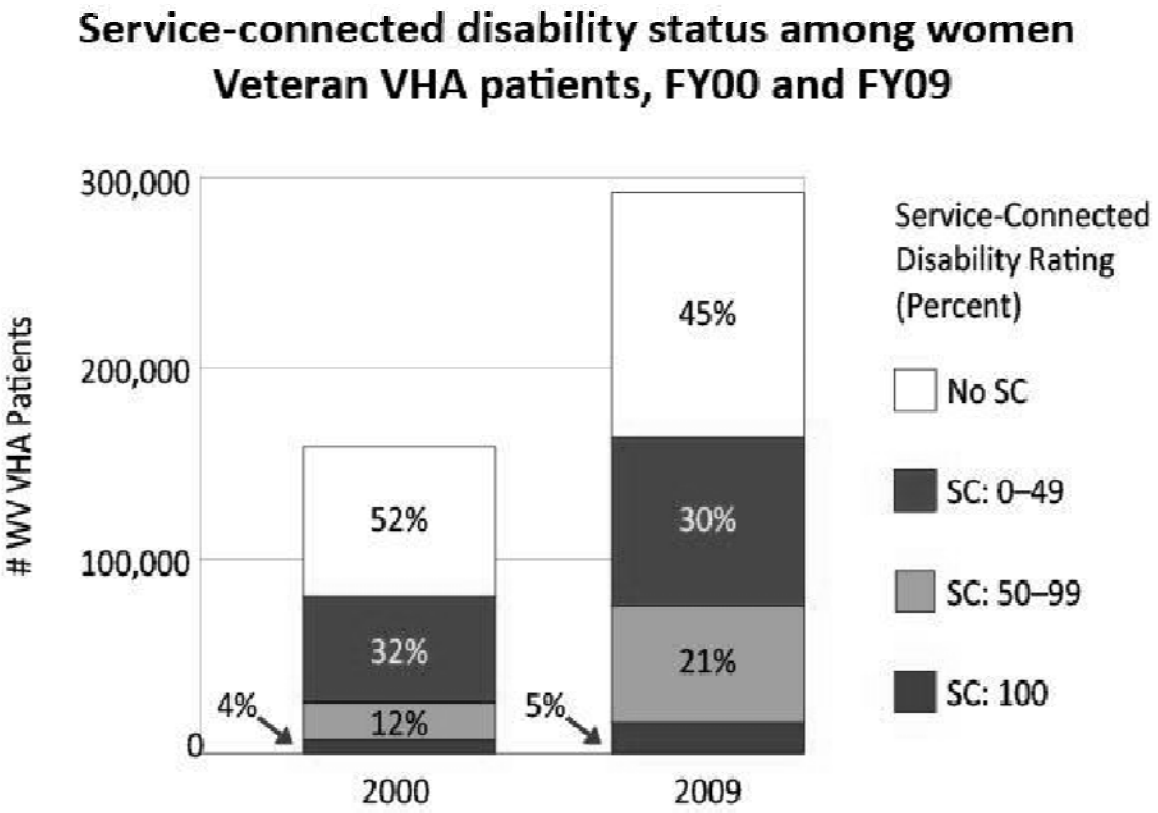
Women Use MH more than Men

Proportion of women and men Veteran VHA outpatients by frequency of mental health visits, 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.

Increase in Women with Service-Connected Disabilities



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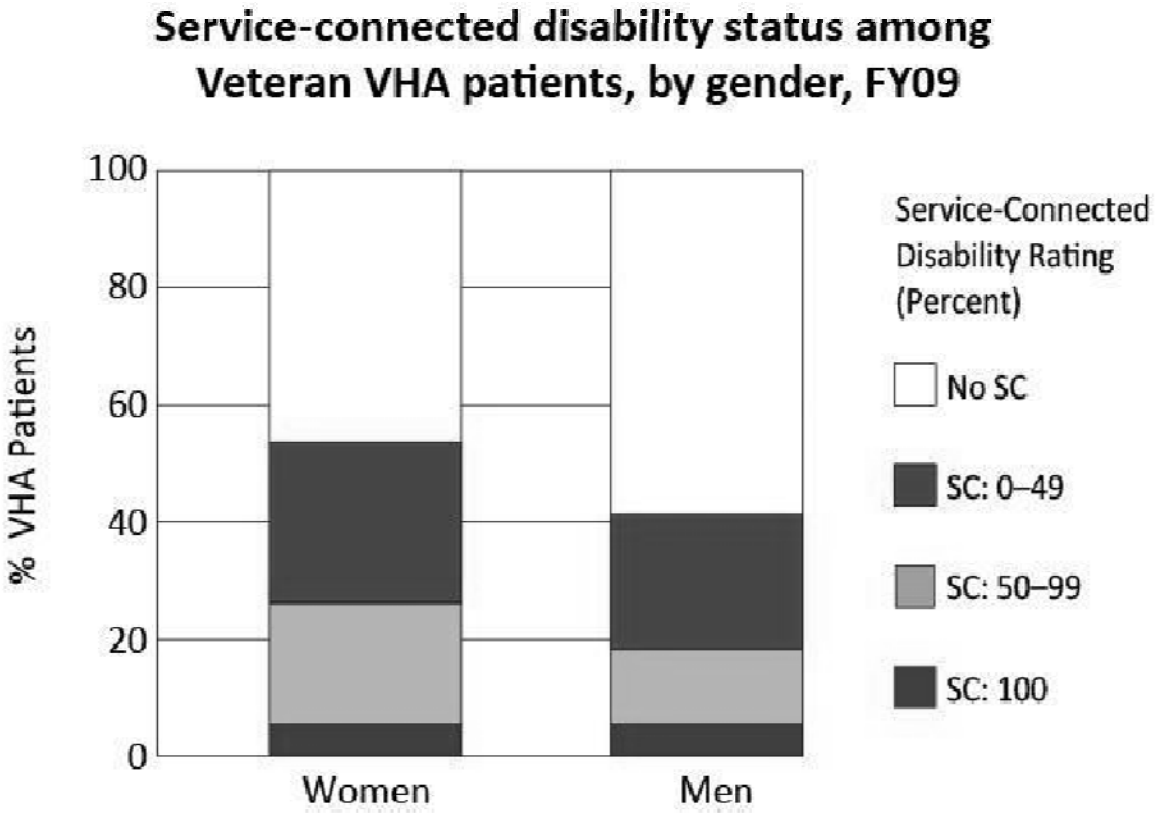
More Service Connected Status among Women than Men



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Understanding Women Veterans

- National Survey of Women Veterans 2010
  - 3,500+ participants through telephone interviews
  - Findings: access, quality perception, barriers
  - Next scientific survey of women Veterans: 2012
- More to come
  - Women Vietnam Veterans Study
  - Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Cohort Study

Key Research Questions

- Outcomes
- Implementation
- What do we need more research on?

Implications

- Develop, evaluate, and disseminate interventions to address:
  - Women Veterans' access
  - Comprehensive care needs
  - Care delivery preferences
  - Health care quality
  - Awareness of VA care and services for women

Questions?

www.womenshealth.va.gov