



# Department of Veterans Affairs

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## The Veterans Justice Outreach Program

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# The VA – Who are we?

## **The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):**

### **Veterans Health Administration (VHA)**

- Administered by VHA – All Health care services
- VA Medical Centers, Ambulatory Care & Community Based Outpatient Clinics

### **Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA)**

- Administered by VA Regional Offices - All VA Benefits
- Compensation & Pension, Education, GI Bill, Home Loan Guaranty, etc.

### **National Cemetery Administration (NCA)**

- National and State Veterans Cemeteries
- Headstones, Markers & Presidential Memorial Certificates



# VA Eligibility

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- Eligibility is based on each individual's service and is determined by the VA eligibility/enrollment office.
- Usually determined by length of service and character of service.
  - What is a DD214?
- VET Center – served in Combat Era
  - honorable, general and other than honorable



# How will YOU know if someone is a Veteran?

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- Ask: *Have you ever served in the United States Armed Forces or Military?*
    - Do not ask: *Are you a Veteran?* Many Veterans mistakenly think this applies only to Veterans who served in combat or retired from the military.
  - Refer to local VA facility
  - We encourage all Veterans to apply for VA services.



# Veterans Justice Programs

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- VA is making a system-wide effort to ensure access to services for the justice-involved veteran population at risk for homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, and physical health problems
  - Healthcare for Reentry Veterans Program (HCRV)
  - Veterans Justice Outreach Program (VJO)



# Goal of VJO

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The goal of the VJO program is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VA mental health and substance abuse services when clinically indicated as well as other VA services and benefits.



# Limits on VA Authorization

- Can provide:
  - Outreach, assessment, referral and linkage to services
  - Treatment for justice-involved Veterans who are not incarcerated
- Title 38 CFR 17.38 does not allow VHA to provide:
  - Hospital and outpatient care for a Veteran who is
    - Either a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency
    - If that agency has a duty to give that care or services



# DUSHOM Memo to VISN Directors (May 2009)

- Designation of a Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist at every VAMC to:
  - Provide outreach to justice-involved Veterans in the communities they serve
  - To take initiative in building working relationships and reach out to potential Justice System Partners to see that eligible justice-involved Veterans get needed care
  - Partner with Law Enforcement Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) to train law enforcement personnel on Veteran specific issues.





# Justice Outreach Program

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- While incarcerated, Veterans can:
  - Request his/her DD214
  - Enroll at their local VA Medical Center
  - Apply for the VA transitional and/or supportive housing programs
  - Learn about VA and non-VA community resources for post-release needs



# Law Enforcement

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- The Veterans Justice Outreach Program, OEF/OIF Team, VA Police and Veterans Panel have teamed together to facilitate Veteran specific trainings for law enforcement.
  - Trainings have been facilitated for Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), Crisis Negotiation Teams
  - Police Departments and Sheriff Departments
  - County and State Probation Officers



# Program Collaboration

- VJO Specialists collaborate with a variety of programs both within and outside the VA Healthcare System.
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Assistance Program
  - Strength At Home Program
    - 12-Week evidenced based program to help Veterans understand abuse, anger and trauma, gain anger management skills and improve communication.
    - Program is supported by our Veterans Court Teams
    - VJO Specialists are trained and actively facilitating groups
      - Role of VJO versus Role of Facilitator



**Questions?**