

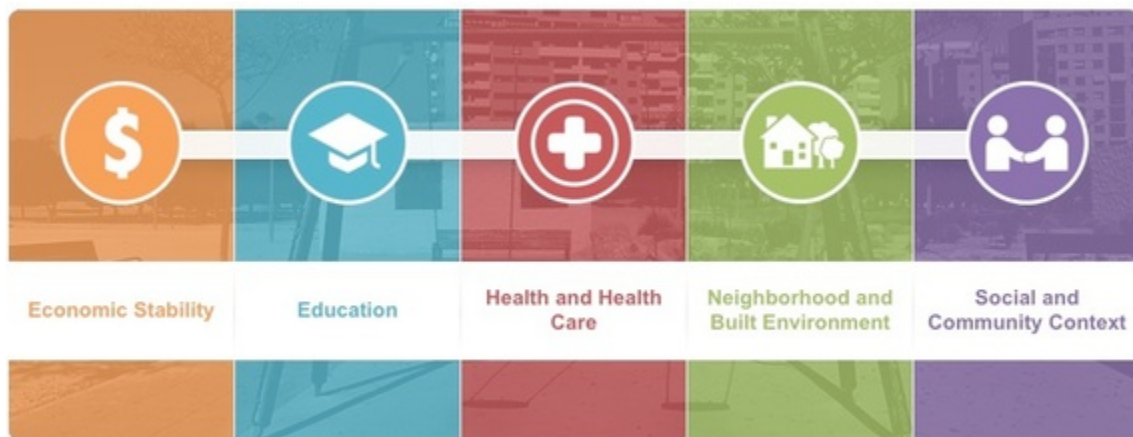


Veterans Health Administration  
Office of Health Equity

# Announcements

March 16, 2017

## March Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar – Incorporating Social Determinants of Health into VHA Patient Care and Electronic Medical Records



Please join the Office of Health Equity for the March 2017 Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar titled, "[Incorporating Social Determinants of Health into VHA Patient Care and Electronic Medical Records](#)." Event description and registration information is below.

**Incorporating Social Determinants of Health into VHA Patient Care and Electronic Medical Records**  
**March 30, 2017**

**3:00 – 4:00 pm**

**Registration Link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2964856574755258370>

#### Event Description

Social determinants of health is a useful concept for describing the availability and distribution of economic, social, and physical conditions that impact patient's health and the health care system. The current Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar session will 1) describe social determinants of health and how these determinants influence VHA patient care; 2) present an example from the Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team program and their use of social determinants of health to improve patient care for homeless Veterans and their families; and 3) discuss VA data sources and industry best practices to understand and incorporate social determinants of health into the electronic medical record and research activities.

#### Confirmed Speakers

- Tom Garin, DPA  
VA Office of Enterprise Integration, Washington, DC
- Thomas P. O'Toole, MD  
National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans, Providence VA Medical Center
- Uchenna S. Uchendu, MD  
Office of Health Equity, Washington, DC

#### Background Resources

- O'Toole TP, Johnson EE, Aiello R, Kane V, Pape L. Tailoring Care to Vulnerable Populations by Incorporating Social Determinants of Health: the Veterans Health Administration's "Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team" Program. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2016;13:150567. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd13.150567>.
- United States Department of Labor. Consumer Expenditure Survey. <https://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>.

Registration Link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2964856574755258370>

Visit the Office of Health Equity website at <http://www.va.gov/healthequity/> for more details about Veteran health equity issues, VA's strategic plan to achieve health equity for Veterans (Health Equity Action Plan), and to learn more about the [Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar series](#).

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## **New Report on Racial/Ethnic Minority Veterans' Military Service History and Use of VA Benefits Recently Released and Topic for April's Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar**

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently released [Minority Veterans Report: Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization Statistics](#). The new report, according to the authors, is the first comprehensive VA report to chronicle the history of racial and ethnic minorities in the military and as Veterans. The report highlights social and demographic characteristics of minority Veterans in 2014 and illustrates how these American heroes have used major benefits and services offered by the VA.

The new report will be featured for April's [Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar series](#) just in time for National Minority Health Month. A description and registration link for April's session is below.

### **Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization for Minority Veterans**

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

**3:00 – 4:00 pm EST**

**Registration Link: <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/5353823763119229187>**

#### Session Description

VHA Office of Health Equity is pleased to partner with the VA Center for Minority Veterans for April's session in observation of National Minority Health Month. April's [Focus on Health Equity and Action Cyberseminar](#) session spotlights the recently released Minority Veterans Report: Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization Statistics report from the VA Data Governance and Analytics office. This new report increases our understanding of racial and

ethnic minority Veterans, their use of VA benefits and services, as well as the impact of military service on their lives post-military. April's session will 1) discuss the new report and the role of social and economic determinants of health; 2) highlight VA actions to advance health equity for minority Veterans; and 3) explore additional ways to best to serve these American Heroes.

#### Confirmed Speakers

- Tom Garin, DPA  
Director, Statistics and Analytics Service, VA Office of Enterprise Integration,  
Washington, DC
- Barbara Ward  
Director, VA Center for Minority Veterans, Washington, DC
- Uchenna S. Uchendu, MD  
Chief Officer, Office of Health Equity, Washington, DC

#### Background Resources

Department of Veterans Affairs. (2017). Minority Veterans Report: Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization Statistics. Data Governance and Analytics, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC. Available online at [https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Minority\\_Veterans\\_Report.pdf](https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Minority_Veterans_Report.pdf).

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## **VE-HEROeS Study on Health of Vietnam Era Veterans is Seeking Participants**



Veterans serving in different periods of service or military eras may experience unique health concerns. The [Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study \(VE-HEROeS\)](#) is a large-scale survey study on the health and well-being of Vietnam-era Veterans. It is the first study to comprehensively evaluate the physical health and well-being of Vietnam Veterans

since the Centers for Disease Control completed a series of studies on the physical and reproductive health of Army Vietnam Veterans in the late 1980s.

Approximately 54,000 scientifically selected individuals, including Vietnam-era Veterans and a comparison group of similarly aged Americans without military experience, have been invited to participate. VA sent out initial invitations for this study in November 2016, and reminder invitations in early February to individuals who had not yet completed their survey.

The [Office of Health Equity](#) is encouraging all Vietnam-era Veterans who received an invitation to participate in this very important study. If you are among those invited, or know of a Vietnam Veteran or other invited participant who received an invitation, please encourage them to participate in this survey.

More participation means more data for researchers to learn about the current health of Vietnam-era Veterans, and more knowledge to help VA care for these Veterans. Because each individual invited to this study represents other people with similar characteristics, researchers are not able to accept volunteers for this study.

Visit <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/epidemiology/studies/heroes/index.asp> to learn more about this study. Also, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the time frames for each period of service/military era by visiting <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHY/Tools.asp#pos>.

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## New Research on Veteran Health Equity

### [The Obesity Epidemic in the Veterans Health Administration: Prevalence Among Key Populations of Women and Men Veterans](#)

**Authors:** Jessica Y. Breland, Ciaran S. Phibbs, Katherine J. Hoggatt, Donna L. Washington, Jimmy Lee, Sally Haskell, Uchenna S. Uchendu, Fay S. Saechao, Laurie C. Zephyrin, Susan M. Frayne

**BACKGROUND:** Most US adults are overweight or obese. Understanding differences in obesity prevalence across subpopulations could facilitate the development and dissemination of weight management services.

**OBJECTIVES:** To inform Veterans Health Administration (VHA) weight management initiatives, we describe obesity prevalence among subpopulations of VHA patients.

**DESIGN:** Cross-sectional descriptive analyses of fiscal year 2014 (FY2014) national VHA administrative and clinical data, stratified by gender. Differences  $\geq 5\%$  higher than the population mean were considered clinically significant.



**PARTICIPANTS:** Veteran VHA primary care patients with a valid weight within  $\pm 365$  days of their first FY2014 primary care visit, and a valid height (98% of primary care patients).

**MAIN MEASURES:** We used VHA vital signs data to ascertain height and weight and calculate body mass index, and VHA outpatient, inpatient, and fee basis data to identify sociodemographic- and comorbidity-based subpopulations.

**KEY RESULTS:** Among nearly five million primary care patients (347,112 women, 4,567,096 men), obesity prevalence was 41% (women 44%, men 41%), and overweight prevalence was 37% (women 31%, men 38%). Across the VHA's 140 facilities, obesity prevalence ranged from 28% to 49%. Among gender-stratified subpopulations, obesity prevalence was high among veterans under age 65 (age 18-44: women 40%, men 46%; age 45-64: women 49%, men 48%). Obesity prevalence varied across racial/ethnic and comorbidity subpopulations, with high obesity prevalence among black women (51%), women with schizophrenia (56%), and women and men with diabetes (68%, 56%).

**CONCLUSIONS:** Overweight and obesity are common among veterans served by the VHA. VHA's weight management initiatives have the potential to avert long-term morbidity arising from obesity-related conditions. High risk groups—such as black women veterans, women veterans with schizophrenia, younger veterans, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native veterans—may require particular attention to ensure that systems improvement efforts at the population level do not inadvertently increase health disparities.

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