Meeting the Health Care Needs of America's Veterans

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Compared with other health systems, VA quality on many measures is good.

- Outpatient: 45 comparisons, VA Better: 8, VA Same: 18, VA Worse: 11
- Inpatient: 18 comparisons, VA Better: 8, VA Same: 10

RAND analysis of VA and non-VA publicly-reported data, 2015.
VA usually, but not always, provides timely care

**83% of new primary care patients** are able to get an appointment within 2 weeks.

**92% of established primary care patients** are able to get an appointment within 2 weeks.

RAND analysis of VA wait time data, 2015
Most veterans live close to a VA facility, but access depends on type of care needed

- 93% of veterans live within 40-mile driving distance of a VA facility.
- 55% are enrolled in VA health care at a VA medical center.
- 26% are enrolled in VA health care at a VA medical center with full specialty care.

RAND analysis of VA VAST and PSSG data, 2015
Can VA-purchased care in the community provide timely, accessible, high quality care?
Many studies of U.S. health care quality have found gaps

“Participants received 54.9 percent ... of recommended care.”

“The deficits we have identified in adherence to recommended processes for basic care pose serious threats to the health of the American public.”

McGlynn et al., NEJM, 2003
**Community providers may lack military cultural competence**

- E.g., survey of 522 psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors

- Regularly screened for military/veteran status: 50%
- Received training in military culture: 30%
- Very familiar with deployment-related stressors: 25%

Tanielian et al., 2014
Limited literature on timeliness in the private sector suggests wait times may be longer than VA

- Study of private sector wait times in 15 markets
  - 19.5 days (range 5-66 days) for appointment with family physician
- Study of wait times in Massachusetts
  - 39 days for family medicine appointment

(Merritt Hawkins, 2013) (Massachusetts Medical Society, 2013)
Enrollees residing far from a VA facility also live far from non-VA specialty care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Percent of VA Enrollees with Access to non-VA Care within 40 Miles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary care</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hematology-oncology</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endocrinology</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoracic surgery</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
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RAND analysis of VA VAST and PSSG data, 2015
Looking to the future, use of purchased care should be strategic

- Identify how purchased care will complement VA-provided care
- Monitor the quality and timeliness of care purchased outside VA
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RAND research on veterans issues:
http://www.rand.org/research/veterans