

Office of Health Equity Veterans Health Administration Department of Veterans Affairs



OBESITY DISPARITIES FACT SHEET

Lauren Korshak, MS, RCEP, Office of Health Equity and Jessica Y. Breland, PhD, Core Investigator/CDA Awardee at the Center for Innovation to Implementation in the VA Palo Alto Health Care System

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INTRODUCTION

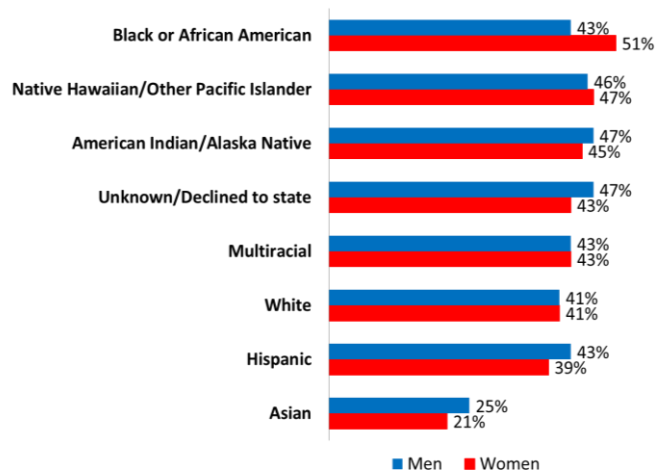
The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) serves a Veteran population that is increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. Equitable access to high-quality care for all Veterans is a major tenet of the VA healthcare mission. The Office of Health Equity (OHE) champions the elimination of health disparities and achieving health equity for all Veterans.

The Office of Health Equity-QUERI Partnered Evaluation Center examines and evaluates health outcomes and healthcare quality across the entire VA healthcare system paying special attention to whether gender, geographical location, or individuals that are members of minority population groups experience disparities in care.

HEALTH DISPARITIES

Having overweight or obesity increases the risk of developing serious health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer.

OBESITY PREVALENCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY AMONG WOMEN AND MEN VETERANS VHA PRIMARY CARE USERS IN FISCAL YEAR 2014



Overweight and obesity are common among Veterans served by VHA. VHA's weight management initiatives have the potential to avert long-term morbidity arising from obesity-related conditions. Groups with high obesity rates—such as Veterans of color and Veterans with mental health conditions—may require culturally tailored initiatives to help improve health outcomes in these Veterans.



REDUCING DISPARITIES

The Office of Health Equity has supported local VA Medical Centers who have worked to reduce health disparities by targeting interventions aimed at Veteran groups at higher risk for poor health outcomes. Health outcomes are closely connected to a Veteran's social environment and socioeconomic status.

MOVE! is VA's national weight management program developed for Veterans by the National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP). It is an evidence-based comprehensive lifestyle intervention that assists Veterans to achieve clinically significant weight loss (5% of body weight) through dietary, physical activity, and weight-related behavior changes.,. MOVE! can help Veterans achieve and maintain weight loss. Every VA Medical Center has a dedicated MOVE! Coordinator who is available to



assist Veterans interested in enrolling.

Approximately 120,000 Veterans participated in MOVE! in FY2017.

VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network (VISN 17) developed and delivered a culturally sensitive MOVE! curriculum aimed to address the specific needs of Hispanic Veterans with uncontrolled diabetes in Texas. Participants who participated in at least one MOVE! Diabetes session through this program in Texas experienced significant improvements in long term diabetes control. This effort was implemented at four VA Medical Centers, Big Spring, Amarillo, North Texas, and South Texas. MOVE! was offered as a telehealth option, in-person visits to a VA Medical Center, and at YMCA locations that had partnered with South Texas.

The VA-YMCA partnership is managed nationally by the VHA Office of Community Engagement and creates opportunities for local VA Medical Centers to establish a partnership with their local YMCA to expand access to preventive services, like MOVE! that can be tailored to the specific needs of Veterans in their communities to help improve health outcomes. For additional information about the YMCA Partnership, email CommunityEngagement@va.gov.

For more information about the Office of Health Equity visit: <https://www.va.gov/healthequity/>

References

Breland J.Y., et al. 2017 The Obesity Epidemic in the Veterans Health Administration: Prevalence Among Key Populations of Women and Men Veterans. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. Apr;32(Suppl 1):11-17.

OHE-QUERI Partnered Evaluation Center (PEC 15-239). Office of Health Equity (OHE)-Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (QUERI) Partnered Evaluation Center Report 2: Health Disparities in the Veterans Health Administration – Patient Experiences and Quality of Care. November 2017.