Veterans Treatment Courts

Hon. Ronald Crowder

District Court Judge

4th Judicial District of Colorado

Lucien G Crowder

PVT MD World War I

Post-9/11 Veterans: Who are they?

- Over 2 million deployed to the Global War on Terror (GWOT)
- 810,000 have deployed more than once to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)
- Over 1 million currently separated from active duty AND eligible for VA services

Reserve and National Guard

- 254,000 Reservists and 332,000 National Guard members have deployed to OEF/OIF
- National Guard OEF/OIF Veterans tend to be older, with an average age of 37
- 30% of Reserve and National Guard members identify themselves as a member of a racial or ethnic minority
- Increased stress on families, employment, and housing

Women Veterans

- 15% of today's military
- Over 235,000 served in OEF/OIF
- 12%-16% are single parents
- Approximately 10% of homeless Veterans < 45
- Twice as likely to become homeless than non-Veteran women

Homelessness

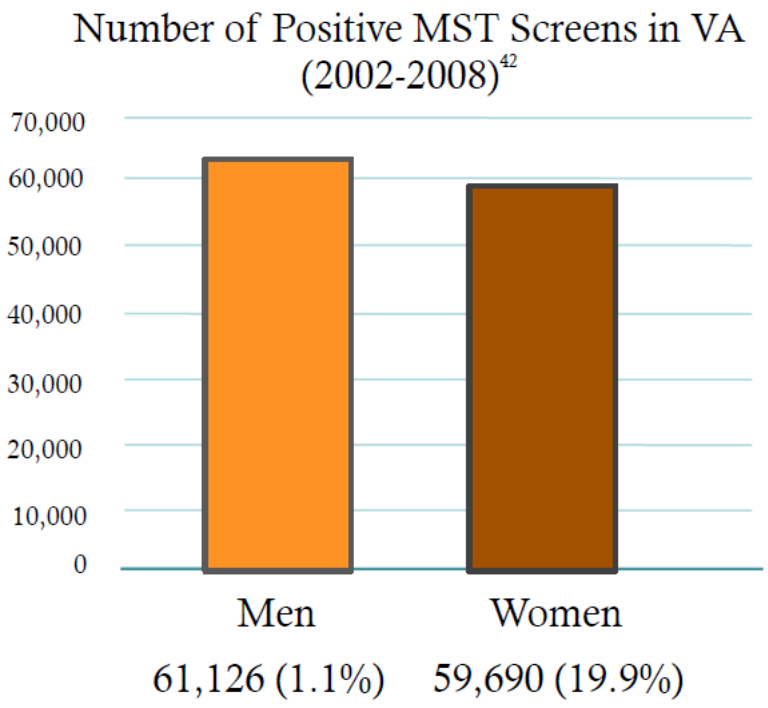
- 75,000 Homeless Veterans
- Veterans twice as likely to become homeless as non-Veterans
- Homeless veterans tend to be older and more educated than homeless non-veterans
- Criminal involvement is single best predicator of future homelessness
- About 45% suffer from mental illness and slightly over 70% suffer from substance abuse problems

Unemployment

- In 2008, 18% of recently separated Veterans were unemployed
- In 2009, Male Veterans, aged 18-24, unemployment rate was 21.6%

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- Both sexual harassment and sexual assault that occurs in military settings.
- 60% of women with Military Sexual Trauma also suffered from PTSD.



Suicide

- Suicide Hotline received roughly 10,000 phone calls a month (2010)
- Women Veterans are 2 to 3 times more likely to commit suicide than non-Veteran women
- Incarcerated Veterans have the highest risk of suicide

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE™
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder & Traumatic Brain Injury

- 1 in 5 Veterans report symptoms of a mental disorder
- In 2010, an estimated 300,000 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans were suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or major depression
- Repeated deployments increase the likelihood of PTSD
- Estimated 320,000 GWOT Veterans may have experienced a TBI ranging from mild to severe
- **Slightly less than 50% of service members with TBI also have PTSD**

Substance Abuse

- 1 in 4 Veterans ages 18-25 met criteria for substance abuse disorder in 2006
- 1.8 million vets met the criteria for having a substance abuse disorder in 2006
- A 2000 Bureau of Justice Statistics study found
  - 81% of all justice involved veterans had a substance abuse problem prior to incarceration.
  - 35% were identified as suffering from alcohol dependency
  - 23% were homeless at some point in the prior year
  - 25% were identified as mentally ill.

Justice-involved Veterans

- Less likely to be arrested or incarcerated
- Average 9-10% of criminal justice population
- Approx 80% with Honorable/General discharge

- 57% violent offenders compared to 47% of non-Veterans
- Reported longer sentences for all crime types
- Expected increase from Iraq and Afghanistan

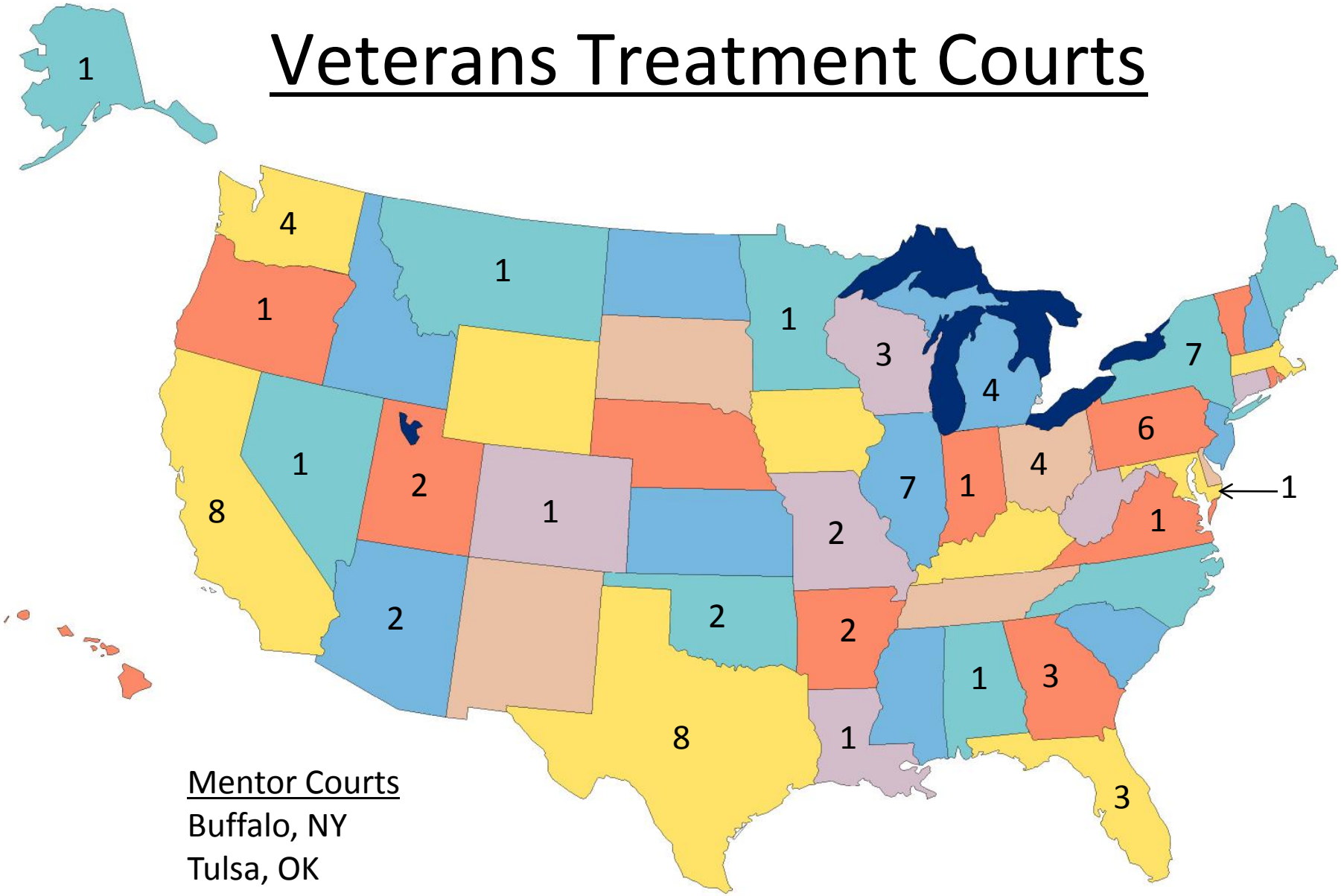
Bureau of Justice Statistics - 2004

Justice-involved Vets Cont.

Veterans in the Criminal Justice System - 2007
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

- Probation - 399,300
- Parole-Supervised Release - 75,000
- Local Jail - 72,600
- State Prison - 136,800
- Federal Prison - 19,300
- Total Correctional - 703,000
- Adults Arrested - 1,159,500

Veterans Treatment Courts



Mentor Courts
Buffalo, NY
Tulsa, OK
Orange Co., CA
Santa Clara Co., CA

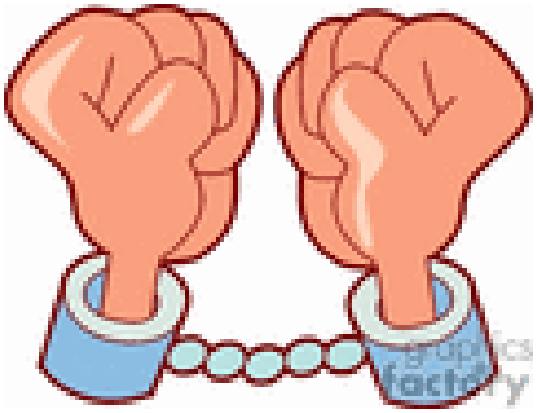
Produced by the Cartographic Research Lab
University of Alabama

COLORADO SPRINGS VETERANS TRAUMA COURT

- MODEL: DRUG/ALCOHOL/MENTAL HEALTH COURTS
  - Frequent appearance reviews before judge
- IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OR REWARDS
- STAFFINGS (immediately prior to calling docket),
  - Judge, District Attorney, Public Defender
  - Veterans Justice Outreach
  - DHS Representatives and DHS VTC Program Coordinator
  - Mental Health Evaluator
  - Probation Officers
- PEER SPECIALISTS/MENTORS

Reduces Crime

- 75% of Drug Court clients remain arrest-free compared to 30% of those released from prison.
- Reductions in crime last at least 3 years and can endure for over 14 years.
- Drug Courts reduce crime as much as 45% more than other sentencing options.



Saves Money

- $2.21 in criminal justice costs for every $1.00 invested.
- $27 for every $1 invested when including other cost offsets such as reduced victimization and healthcare service utilization.
- Annual cost per prisoner = $22,650

  Annual cost per Drug Court participant = $6,985

Ensures Compliance

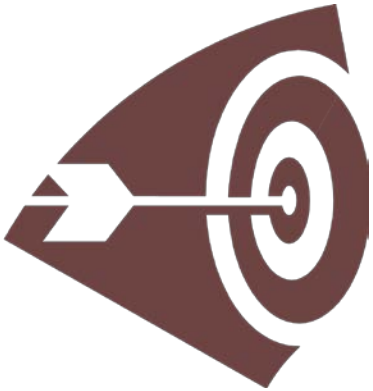
- Unless substance abusing/addicted offenders are regularly supervised by a judge and held accountable, 70% drop out of treatment prematurely.

- Provide more comprehensive and closer supervision than other community-based supervision programs.

- 6 times more likely to keep offenders in treatment long enough for them to get better.

Target Population/Eligibility

- Combat vs. Non-combat
- Violent Offenders
- Active Duty, Reservists, National Guard
- High Risk, High Need
- Military Discharge Status
- VA Eligibility



VTC Mentor/Peer Programs

- Volunteers with prior or current military service
- Help Veterans navigate the Court, VA, and treatment systems
- Assess "other needs" to help them adjust to civilian life
- Do Not serve as Counselors

Justice For Vets: The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts

NADCP

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JUSTICE FOR VETS: THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

JUSTICE FOR VETS

A Project of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals

Welcome to Justice for Vets: The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts. This is the most comprehensive site on the Web for Veterans Treatment Court news and resources.

www.JusticeForVets.org

Justice For Vets "SITREP"

Justice For Vets: The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts

SITREP 005-10

A special note from General (Ret.) Barry McCaffrey:

On this Veterans Day as we pause to honor the men and women who have served in the United States military, I would like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding service of our nation's first 45 Veterans Treatment Courts.

The United States military instills a sense of discipline, duty and respect that is evident in millions of veterans who return home strengthened by their experience. But we must not forget that some veterans struggle upon their return. For those whose struggles lead them to the criminal justice system, Veterans Treatment Courts are ensuring that we leave no veteran behind.

Our criminal justice system has been transformed over the last two decades by dedicated Drug Court professionals who believe that a blend of accountability and compassion can, and should, be the foundation for which we handle our addicted offender population. Now these same professionals are forever changing the way this nation treats veterans when their invisible wounds of war lead them astray. From El Paso, Texas to Anchorage, Alaska; Orange County, California to Buffalo,

Hon. Ronald Crowder

District Judge

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