



Presentation to the House Select Committee on Mental Health: Veteran Services

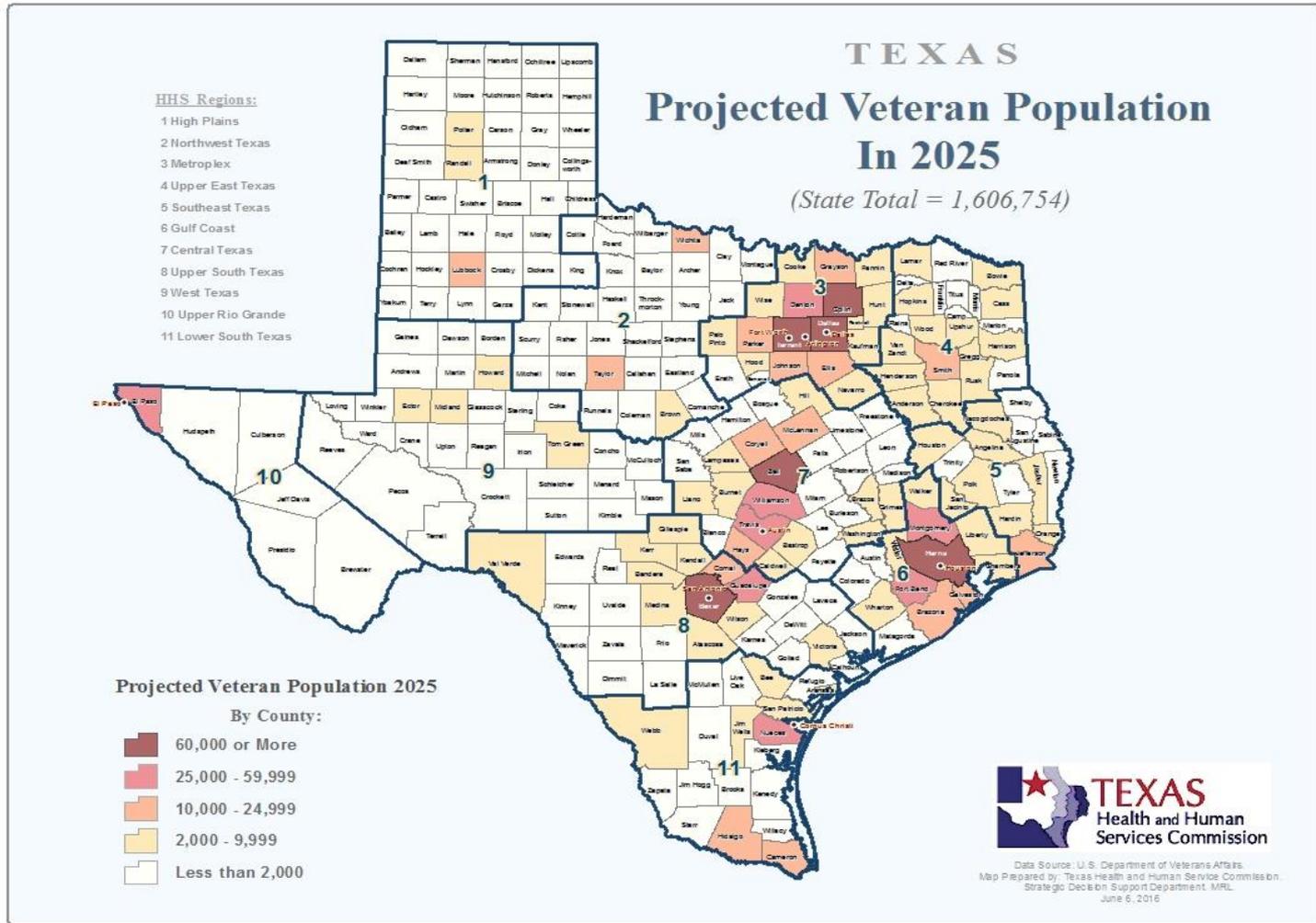
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Texas Veteran Population

- Texas is home to approximately 1.6 million veterans, which ranks Texas second among the 50 states behind only California.
 - An estimated 1,430,000 (89%) are male and 172,000 (11%) are female.
 - An estimated 4% are under the age of 25; 57% are age 26 through 64; and 38% are age 65 or older.
- The Texas veteran population includes individuals who:
 - entered service in Texas or in another state;
 - were stationed at one of the Texas military installations and remained in the state following discharge; or
 - moved to Texas from another location following discharge.

Texas Veteran Population



Homelessness Among Texas Veterans

- According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, approximately 2,400 Texas veterans of all ages were considered homeless in 2015.
- Principal Causes:
 - Mental health issues, including Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression and feelings of hopelessness, substance abuse, and brain injury.
 - Difficulty re-integrating into home and community life.
 - Difficulty finding and maintaining stable employment.
- Needs:
 - Thirty-eight percent of the approximately 2,400 homeless Texas veterans received no shelter assistance.
 - Access to basic resources such as food, health care, counseling, job training, family services and veteran benefits and services.

Homelessness Among Texas Veterans

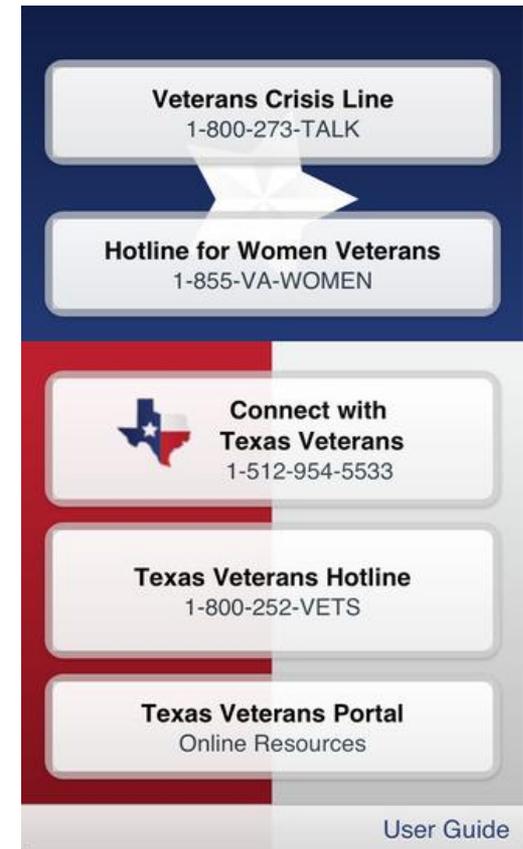
- Efforts and Solutions:
 - Texas Mayors' Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.
 - Public-private partnerships.
- Best Practices:
 - Outreach and inter-agency collaboration and coordination of veteran services.
 - Identification and connection of existing homeless veteran programs.
 - Public-private partnerships to provide veteran homeless shelters, resource centers, peer networks, and information and referrals related to training and employment opportunities.

Suicide Among Texas Veterans

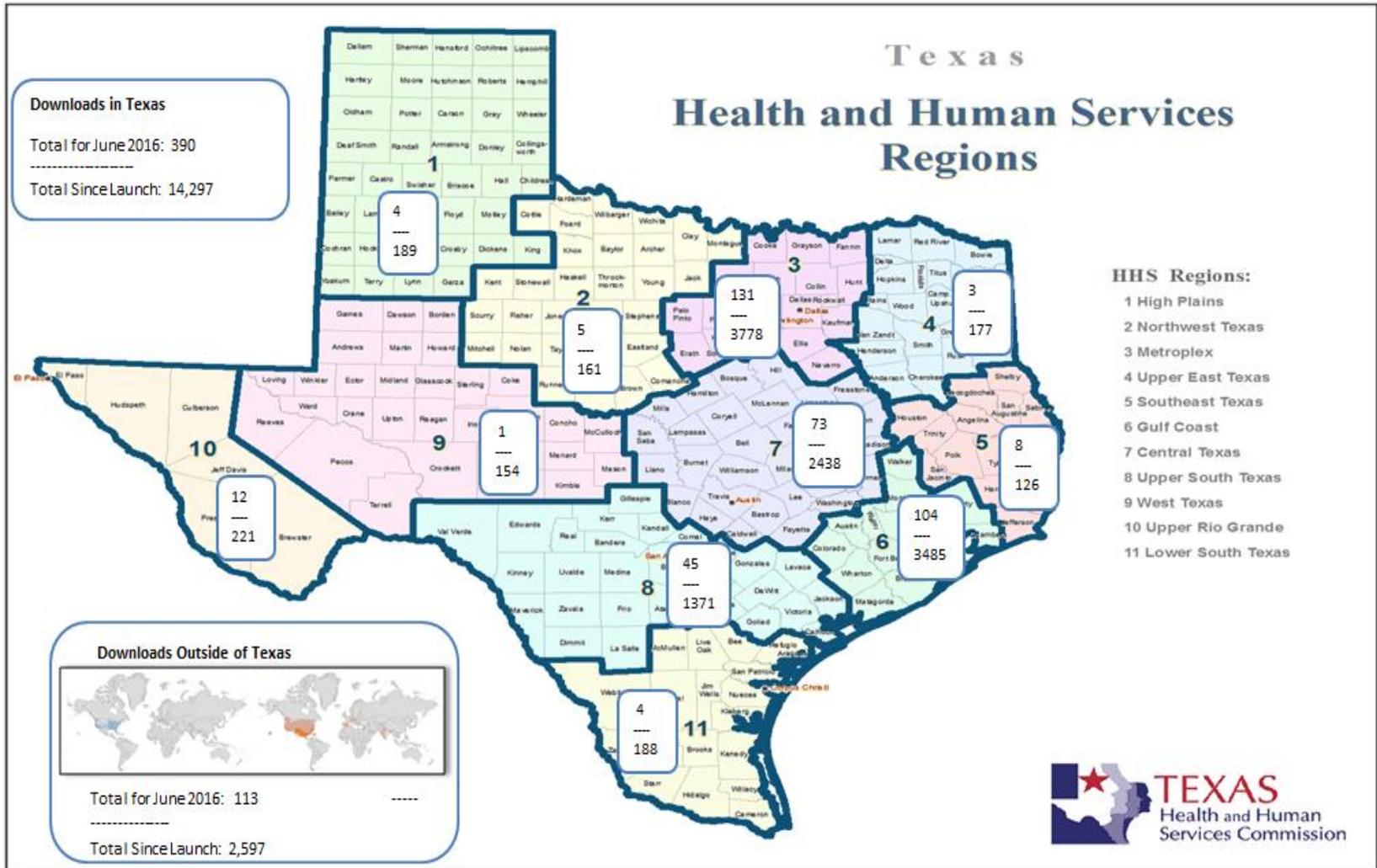
- During calendar years 2010 to 2013, a total of 11,413 suicides were reported in Texas among persons 17 and older.
- Texas veterans represented about 10% of the Texas population ages 17 and older during that period, but represented approximately 18% (2,056) of all Texas suicides.
- The incidence of suicide among veterans is more pronounced among the young.
- Among veterans of all ages, suicides are responsible for 1.4% of all deaths. Among younger veterans (under age 30), suicides are responsible for 32% of all deaths.

Connecting Veterans to Resources

- **Texas Veterans Phone App:**
 - HHSC developed a free mobile application for Texas veterans, active duty personnel, military families, and service providers.
 - The App allows for quick, easy, and portable access to crisis lines, online resources, personal connections with local veterans and assistance with accessing services.
 - Since its launch in March 2014, the Texas Veterans App has had 15,044 downloads, as of July 31, 2016.



Veteran App Downloads as of June 30, 2016



Texas Veteran's Portal (TVP)

- The Texas Veterans Portal, managed by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVD), is a collaborative effort of several state agencies and commissions to provide assistance, services, and benefits for Texas veterans, their families, and service providers.
- HHSC is also working with county governments to include the portal on their websites and to further promote at the local level by extending TVP to city government and private industry.
- HHSC is currently collaborating with other veteran agencies to update the Portal.

National Leadership Policy Initiative

- In 2013, Texas joined 45 other states as a member of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration’s Service Members, Veterans and their Families Interagency Leadership Initiative. HHSC Veteran Services serves as team lead.
 - Contribute to the national initiative regarding suicide prevention, substance abuse, posttraumatic stress, rural issues and others that affect the military and veteran population across the U.S.
- The Texas interagency team represents all HHSC agencies, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Military Forces and the Texas Councils of Government.
 - Since 2013, the Texas team has worked to solve issues such as mental and behavioral health, homelessness, suicide prevention, criminal justice in the veteran population, family support, education and employment.
- On September 16, 2016, the SMVF staff will present the Governor’s Leadership Briefing hosted by HHSC to inform state agency and military leadership of Team Texas accomplishments and to introduce them to Phase III of the initiative.

SB 55: Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program

- Senate Bill 55 (83R) requires HHSC to establish a grant program to support community mental health programs providing services and treatment to veterans and their families.
- Grant Funds Totaling \$21 million:
 - \$1 Million Pilot Program: HHSC identified \$1 million to support a pilot program which will be matched by another \$1 million from the pilot program administrator.
 - \$20 Million Full Program: Rider 68 appropriated \$10 million each fiscal year of the 2016-17 biennium with the full grant program administrator securing or obtaining matching private and local matching funds up to \$20 million.
- Expected Outcomes:
 - Local communities will increase access to mental health care that is safe, appropriate and timely, of high quality, and respectful of military culture for Texas veterans and their families.
 - Barriers to accessing care, including community stigma, will be reduced.
 - Community partnerships will be supported as they develop projects and integrate services to strengthen their collaborative planning capacity.
- HHSC contracted with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to serve as the program administrator for the pilot and full program.

SB 55: Implementation Plan

- Phase One (Pilot):
 - Pilot grantees were announced May 2016 and will serve nearly 1,000 veterans and their family members.
 - University of Texas at Dallas – Center for BrainHealth serving Dallas-Forth Worth area,
 - Emergence Health Network serving El Paso County and Fort Bliss,
 - Texas Panhandle Centers serving 30 counties in the Texas Panhandle region, and
 - United Way of Denton County serving Denton County.
 - The first quarter reports from the pilot grantees due September 30, 2016.
 - Contracts run through August 31, 2017.
- Phase Two (Full Program) – funds awarded in two stages:
 - Phase II-A Request for Applications (RFA) released June 27, 2016, and awards expected to be announced at the end of September 2016.
 - Phase II-B RFA expected to be released in early October 2016 with a targeted announcement date of March 2017.