The mental health needs of Veterans in Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a behavioral health needs assessment of Veterans in Minnesota including interviews with 45 behavioral health practitioners and surveys with 918 Veterans.

Survey participants were more likely than Minnesota Veterans, overall to be female (15% compared to 7%), a person of color (12% compared to 9%), and live in the Twin Cities Metro area (56% compared to 46%).

The Minnesota Veteran survey identified several groups of Veterans at an increased risk for behavioral health issues:

- Women Veterans
- Veterans who have experienced sexual assault
- Veterans of color
- Veterans with a disability or chronic medical condition including traumatic brain injury
- Younger Veterans

Half of all of the survey respondents (50%) selected at least one barrier that prevented them from accessing services:

- 28%: I was worried about how I would be seen
- 24%: I was worried about the effect on my current or future employment
- 19%: I don’t think the services will help
- 19%: I could not pay for the services
- 16%: I cannot financially afford to take time off for treatment

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For more information contact Kristin Dillon at Wilder Research, 651-280-2666 or see the full report online at www.wilderresearch.org
Behavioral health services are not equally distributed across the state

Key informants in greater Minnesota were significantly more likely than those in the Twin Cities metro area to report there are no services in their area

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<tr>
<th>Greater MN</th>
<th>Twin Cities Metro</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>66%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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Greater Minnesota key informants were also significantly more likely to say there are no good services in their area for Veteran-specific issues

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<thead>
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<th>Greater MN</th>
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<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Survey respondents in greater Minnesota were more likely to select that services weren’t available in their area as a barrier than respondents in the Twin Cities metro area

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<td>15%</td>
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Wilder Research identified the following recommendations based on the primary data collected as well as secondary data. Please see the full report for all supporting evidence.

- Collaborate with efforts to address statewide provider shortages.
- Increase mental health and chemical health services for Veterans in rural areas.
- Train community specific service providers on issues related to serving Veterans.
- Increase awareness of available services and eligibility requirements.
- Reduce stigma surrounding behavioral health services.
- Enhance support services to accommodate dual-diagnosis.

- Increase access to Veteran social supports.
  - Increase and improve efforts to prepare families and friends to support Veterans.
  - Increase opportunities for Veterans to obtain informal, individual support from peers.
- Provide population-specific behavioral health services for Veterans.
- Provide services related to sexual assault for both men and women.

Note. Neither mental health nor chemical health diagnosis: 54%.