



## Performance Overview

### Purpose of This Report

VA's FY 2008 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) describes VA's accomplishments and progress during FY 2008 toward fulfilling its mission. The report is designed to enable Department management, our stakeholders, and our employees to assess VA's program and financial performance as compared to its goals and to use this information to make necessary assessments and improvements.

### How We Measure Performance

VA employs a **five-tiered performance management framework** to measure performance.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	The Department's long-term outcomes as detailed in its Strategic Plan and articulated through four strategic goals and one enabling goal.
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	Broad operational focus areas designed to achieve strategic goals. The Department has 21 strategic objectives.
<i>Performance Measures</i>	Specific measurable indicators used to measure progress towards achievement of strategic objectives. The Department uses different types of measures (i.e., outcome, output, and efficiency) to evaluate its performance and progress.
<i>Performance Targets</i>	Associated with specific performance measures, these are quantifiable expressions of desired performance/success levels to be achieved during a given fiscal year.
<i>Strategic Targets</i>	Also associated with specific performance measures, these are quantifiable expressions of optimum success levels to be achieved; they are " <i>stretch goals</i> " that VA strives for in the long-term.

VA's 21 strategic objectives are supported by 138 performance measures, 25 of which were identified by VA's senior leadership as **mission critical**. The Department's performance measures are a mix of program outcomes that measure the impact that VA programs have on the lives of veterans and their families, program outputs that measure activities undertaken to manage and administer these programs, and program efficiency that measures the cost of delivering an output or desired outcome.



## Improvements to the FY 2008 Report

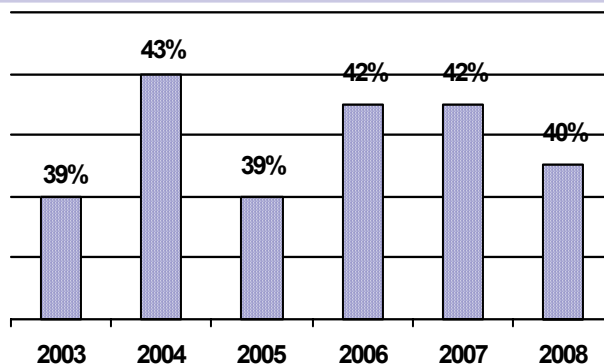
This year's PAR includes several new improvements designed to give our stakeholders more complete information on VA's performance and activities.

<i>Improvement</i>	<i>Benefit to VA's Stakeholders</i>
<i>Cost Per Measure Data</i>	Consistent with the President's Management Agenda, the Department is furthering its integration of performance and budget information. As part of this effort, this year's PAR includes information on the cost of achieving performance targets for <i>seven</i> measures. We provide this in addition to cost estimates provided by strategic goal and objective, respectively.
<i>Major Management Challenges</i>	This year's report improves how major management challenges are presented. For each challenge, in an easy-to-read tabular format, there is an estimated resolution date, a responsible official, a summary of actions taken, milestones planned for FY 2009, and anticipated impacts of actions taken. Together these elements provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing the Department and what VA is doing to address them.
<i>Web Links</i>	Beginning with a table on page 5 that lists key VA Web links, this year's PAR includes numerous links to a variety of Web sites available to the reader who wishes to have more information about a given topic pertinent to VA.
<i>Data Quality Information</i>	This year's report contains more robust and detailed information on how VA verifies the quality of its performance results data. The report's Key Measures Data Table and the Assessment of Data Quality sections have been restructured to provide more comprehensive data quality information.
<i>Dashboard Style Tables</i>	Selected tables now include more dashboard-like features that convey performance results to the reader more quickly and clearly.
<i>VA Snapshots</i>	Snapshots are short vignettes that give the reader an easy way to understand VA through human interest stories.
<i>Strategic Objective Measures Recap</i>	Our strategic objective chapters in Part II now include a recap of all measures and associated results for a given objective including a statistical recap.

## 2008 Performance -- A Department-Level Summary

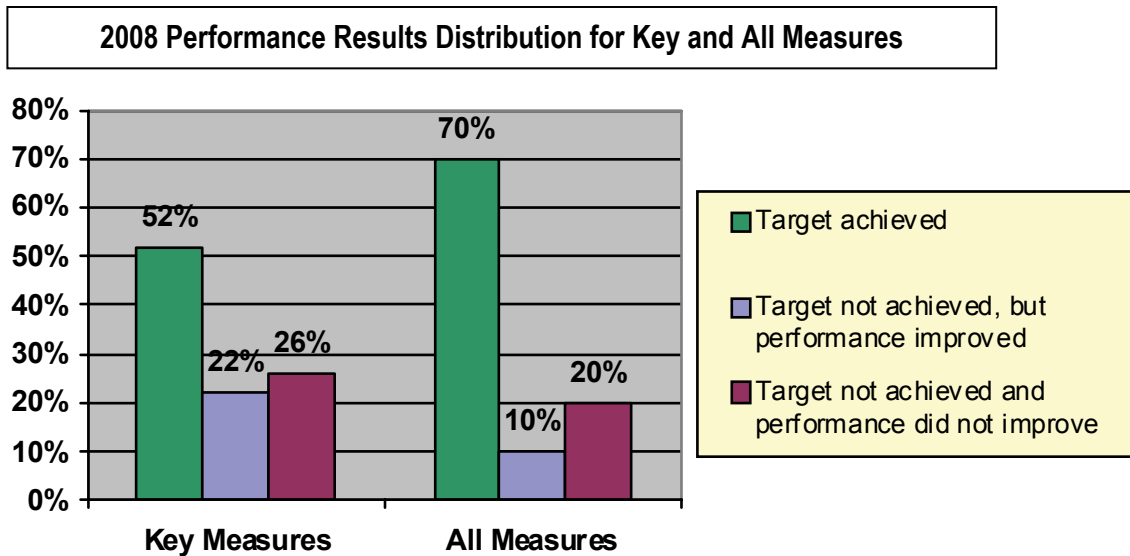
**Key Measures -- Continuity and Type:** Key measures are those that measure mission-critical activities. As of FY 2008, 22 of VA's 25 key measures have been in place for at least 4 years. This provides the Department's leadership with the ability to track significant performance trends over time and to make strategic adjustments when necessary. As shown in the chart below, over the past several years, outcome and efficiency measures account for around 40 percent of VA's key measures.

Percent of VA's Key Measures that are Outcome or Efficiency Oriented

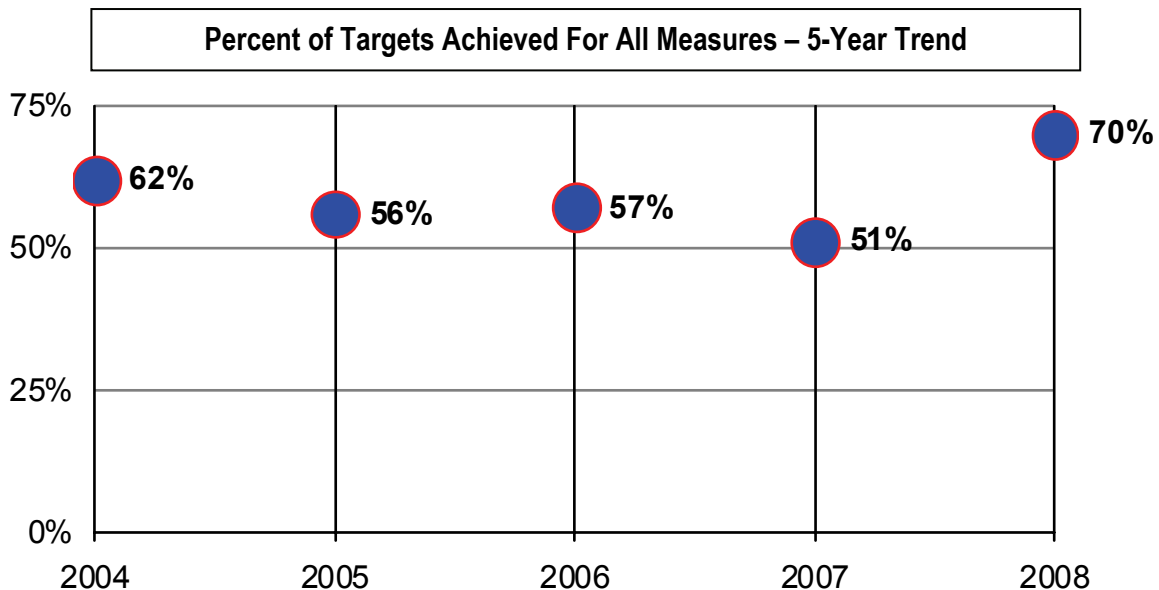




**Performance Results: Key vs. All Measures:** The chart below shows how well VA performed in meeting its performance targets. As shown, VA achieved the target for 52 percent of its key measures and 70 percent of all measures. In addition, for key measures, 22 percent of the targets were not achieved, but performance improved from 2007. Further details on performance by goal and objective are provided on the following pages.



**Performance Trends: All Measures:** The chart below shows how well VA performed in meeting its performance targets for all of its measures since 2004. Trend analysis should be considered in light of yearly changes to performance targets and, to a lesser extent, changes to the numbers and types of measures.





**Cost to Achieve Performance Goals – For 7 Selected Measures**

As in past reports, VA is providing an estimate of costs devoted to achieve *strategic goals* and *objectives*. However, as a continuing part of the Department’s overall effort to better identify resources required to achieve a certain level of performance, this year we show estimated costs to achieve a level of performance (i.e., a result) for *seven measures*.

Measure	Fiscal Year 2008		
	Performance		Estimated Cost (Obligations) (\$ in Millions)
	Target	Result	
<b>Annual percent increase of non-institutional, long-term care average daily census</b>	7.7%	31.7%	\$680.6 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Impact of Result on the Veteran</b>	Increasing the number of veterans receiving Home and Community-Based Care (HCBC) services provides veterans with an opportunity to improve the quality of their lives. HCBC promotes independent physical, mental, and social functioning of veterans in the least restrictive settings.		
<b>How VA Uses Performance Data</b>	VA uses the data to project the need for services, evaluate existing services, and promote access to required services. In addition, the data are used to establish VISN targets and evaluate VISN performance in meeting assigned workload levels in the HCBC area.		
<b>FY 2008 Program and Cost Efficiencies Implemented</b>	Fiscal year 2008 saw the largest ever expansion in access to non-institutional long-term care services, a 31.7% increase over the previous year. Non-institutional long-term care programs were delivered to more veterans than ever before, resulting in increased services as well as increased numbers served. In addition, delivery of several services received targeted attention due to identified special needs for Care Coordination/Home Telehealth, homemaker/home health aide, and home hospice services.		
<b>Progress towards development of one new treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder</b>	80%	80%	\$2.7
<b>Impact of Result on the Veteran</b>	PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after a person has been exposed to a terrifying event or ordeal in which physical harm occurred or was threatened. PTSD related to military service or combat exposure is a major concern in the health of the veteran population. In cases where veterans do not respond to initial treatment, symptoms (including nightmares, disturbing memories during the day, sleep problems, and aggressive behavior) may persist for years. Therefore, effective relief of symptoms is needed. The milestones involve four clinical trials, three of which have been completed. The fourth trial is still ongoing.		
<b>How VA Uses Performance Data</b>	Results of PTSD studies are rapidly translated into clinical practice. Findings have been published in the <u>Journal of the American Medical Association</u> and <u>Biological Psychiatry</u> . Research has been discussed at conferences with VA, DoD, and university attendees.		
<b>FY 2008 Program and Cost Efficiencies Implemented</b>	Three of the four studies comprising this performance measure have been completed. One study evaluated the efficacy of exposure therapy for treating PTSD in female veterans and active-duty military personnel. The investigators concluded that it is an effective treatment that is feasible to implement across a range of clinical settings. Researchers leading a study with the drug prazosin found that it is an effective and well-tolerated treatment for trauma nightmares, sleep disturbance, and for veterans with chronic PTSD.		

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary estimate; actuals are anticipated in December.



Measure	Fiscal Year 2008		
	Performance		Estimated Cost (Obligations) (\$ in Millions)
	Target	Result	
a) Percent of headstones and/or markers in national cemeteries that are at the proper height and alignment	72%	65%	\$32.7
b) Percent of headstones, markers, and niche covers that are clean and free of debris or objectionable accumulations	80%	84%	
c) Percent of gravesites that have grades that are level and blend with adjacent grade levels	88%	86%	
<b>Impact of Result on the Veteran</b>	National cemeteries carry expectations of appearance that set them apart from private cemeteries. Our Nation's veterans have earned the appreciation and respect not only of their friends and families, but also of the entire country and our allies. VA's cemeteries reflect this appreciation and respect.		
<b>How VA Uses Performance Data</b>	VA uses these data to identify areas where improvements in appearance are needed. Data are broken out by individual cemetery. Best practices are shared with cemeteries that are having difficulty.		
<b>FY 2008 Program and Cost Efficiencies Implemented</b>	VA implemented an analytical method to more accurately link the impact of resources to performance results attained for this measure. This new method enables NCA to more accurately project the funding needed to achieve targets pertaining to the maintenance of headstones and markers at the proper height and alignment as well as being free of debris, and level with adjacent grade levels.		
Percent of veterans served by a burial option within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence	83.7%	84.2%	\$188.4
<b>Impact of Result on the Veteran</b>	By the end of 2008, more than 19 million veterans and their families had reasonable access to a burial option.  One of VA's primary objectives is to ensure that the burial needs of veterans and eligible family members are met. Having reasonable access is integral to realizing this objective.		
<b>How VA Uses Performance Data</b>	VA analyzes census data to determine areas of the country that have the greatest number of veterans not currently served by a burial option. This information is used in planning for new national cemeteries and for gravesite expansion projects to extend the service lives of existing national cemeteries, as well as in prioritizing funding requests for state veterans cemetery grants.		
<b>FY 2008 Program and Cost Efficiencies Implemented</b>	VA locates new national cemeteries in areas of the country with the largest concentration of unserved veterans. Grants for new state veterans cemeteries are prioritized by the number of currently unserved veterans who will be served by the new cemetery. This enables VA to maximize the provision of burial benefits at new national and state cemeteries.		



Measure	Fiscal Year 2008		
	Performance		Estimated Cost (Obligations) (\$ in Millions)
	Target	Result	
Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Rehabilitation Rate	75%	76%	\$106.9
Impact of Result on the Veteran	A “rehabilitated” veteran is one who successfully completes the rehabilitation program plan. Rehabilitated veterans are capable and equipped with the required skills and tools needed to hold suitable employment or have improved ability to live independently.		
How VA Uses Performance Data	The rehabilitation rate is a key indicator of the effectiveness of the VR&E program. The measure is used to assess the performance of vocational rehabilitation counselors, counseling psychologists, VR&E officers, and regional office directors as well as the effectiveness of the program and services provided.		
FY 2008 Program and Cost Efficiencies Implemented	The rehabilitation rate improved because of increased focus placed on making sure that veterans become employable by completing the program. Additional employment coordinators were hired, which allowed VR&E to refine the employment coordinator role and provide more direct job placement services. Further, the training of counselors, managers, and employment coordinators has enabled VA to provide higher quality service to veterans.		

## Performance Summaries by Strategic Goal

### STRATEGIC GOAL 1

#### *Restoration and Improved Quality of Life for Disabled Veterans*

Restore the capability of veterans with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, and improve the quality of their lives and that of their families.

#### Public Benefit

Providing for the **specialized health care** needs of veterans is an integral component of America’s commitment to its veterans. Due to the prevalence of certain chronic and disabling conditions among veterans, VA has developed strong expertise in certain specialized services that are not uniformly available in the private sector.

For example, VA has developed a **polytrauma system of care (PSC)** that provides coordinated inpatient, transitional, and outpatient rehabilitation services to active duty servicemembers and veterans who have experienced severe injuries resulting in multiple

traumas including spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, visual impairment, burns, amputations, combat stress, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The PSC provides intensive clinical and social work case management services essential to coordinating the complex components of care for polytrauma patients and their families.

VA’s expertise in these specialized services has been shared with health care systems across the **country** and throughout the **world**.

In addition to VA’s comprehensive system of health care, VA provides **compensation, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance,**