

Number of Unique Veterans Served By VA in FY 2003
Summary Report by the Department of Veterans Affairs



Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy
Data & Analysis Service (008A3)

April 30, 2004

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BACKGROUND

VA has not historically published data on the number of unique veterans utilizing all VA benefits and services for a given period of time although this data has been previously requested. Unique veterans are defined as veterans having a unique Social Security Number (SSN). In late 2003, the Secretary's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Task Force requested such information to better understand the relationship of the population of veterans using Chapter 31 VR&E benefits and the other VA benefits and services being used by this population. Unique veteran data is available on a business line basis, but this data has not been integrated and matched to present a clear picture of the number of unique veterans who make more than one demand on a VA business line for benefits or services during a period of time.

As a result of the VR&E Task Force request, the Office of Policy initiated a pilot project to study the feasibility of determining the number of unique veterans who make demands for Health Care, Compensation & Pension, Insurance, Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Memorial Affairs, or Loan Guaranty benefits and services for FY 2003. This paper summarizes the data findings of this pilot project. A description of the methodology used in developing these estimates is attached.

Findings

- 7,936,559 unique veterans received at least one service or benefit from VA during Fiscal Year 2003 or approximately 32% of the estimated living veteran population in the United States and Puerto Rico¹.
- Of the 7,936,559 unique veterans using VA programs in FY 2003, approximately 71% (5,653,399) received service only from one program.
 - Approximately 32% of the unique veterans came to VA only for health care service. The next largest group of single-program users came to VA for Life Insurance Service (16%) followed by Compensation and Pension (12%).
 - The smallest single-program user groups are Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (less than 1%) and Memorial Service (2%).
- Of the 2,283,160 veterans who used multiple VA programs in FY 2003, more than half (51%) received compensation or pension and health care service. A table identifying the number of unique veterans receiving one or more benefits or service in FY 2003 appears on the following page. This table identifies the Top Ten categories of benefits or services where a veteran received more than one benefit or service.

¹ **Source:** Vetpop2001Adj, Office of the Actuary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

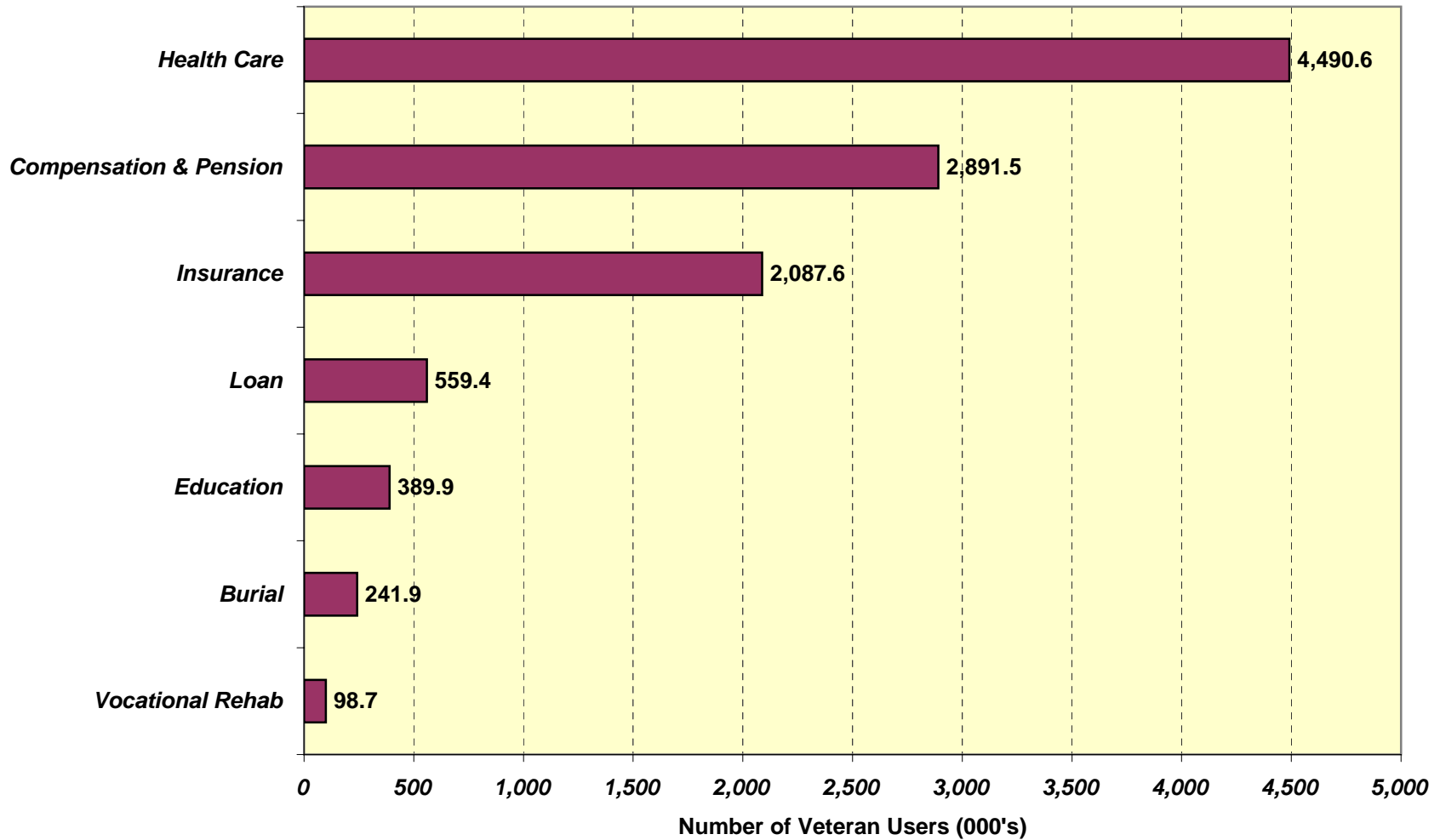
Below is a list of the top 10 multiple-service user groups:

Programs	Unique Veterans	%
Health Care + C&P	1,168,405	51.2
Health Care + Insurance	248,841	10.9
Health Care + C&P + Insurance	248,753	10.9
C&P + Insurance	194,057	8.5
Health Care + Burial	57,227	2.5
Health Care + C&P + Voc Rehab	53,077	2.3
C&P + Loan	39,253	1.7
Health Care + C&P + Loan	32,087	1.4
C&P + Education	24,168	1.1
Insurance + Burial	23,043	1.0
Other using multiple VA programs	194,249	8.5
Total	2,283,160	100.0

Future Project

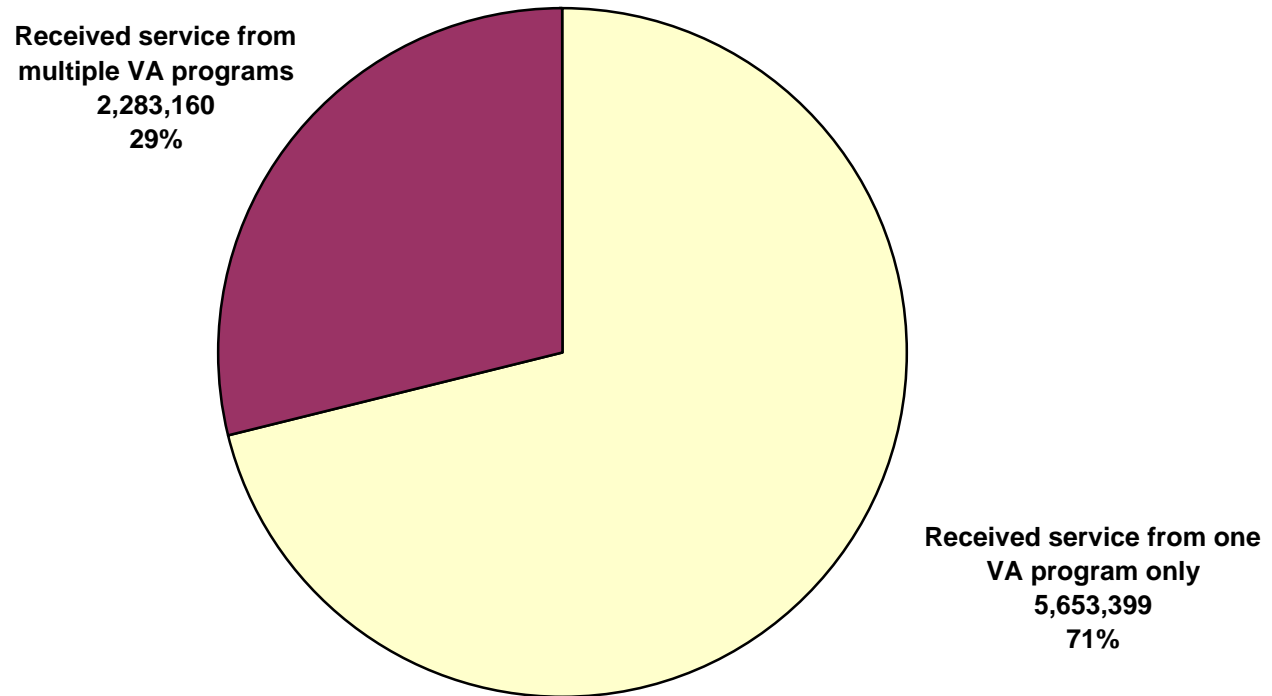
The Office of Policy is planning to use the lessons learned from the pilot study to conduct a longitudinal study that examines the patterns and frequency of use of benefits and services by unique veterans over a five year period.

Veterans Receiving VA Services by Program Type During FY 2003 *



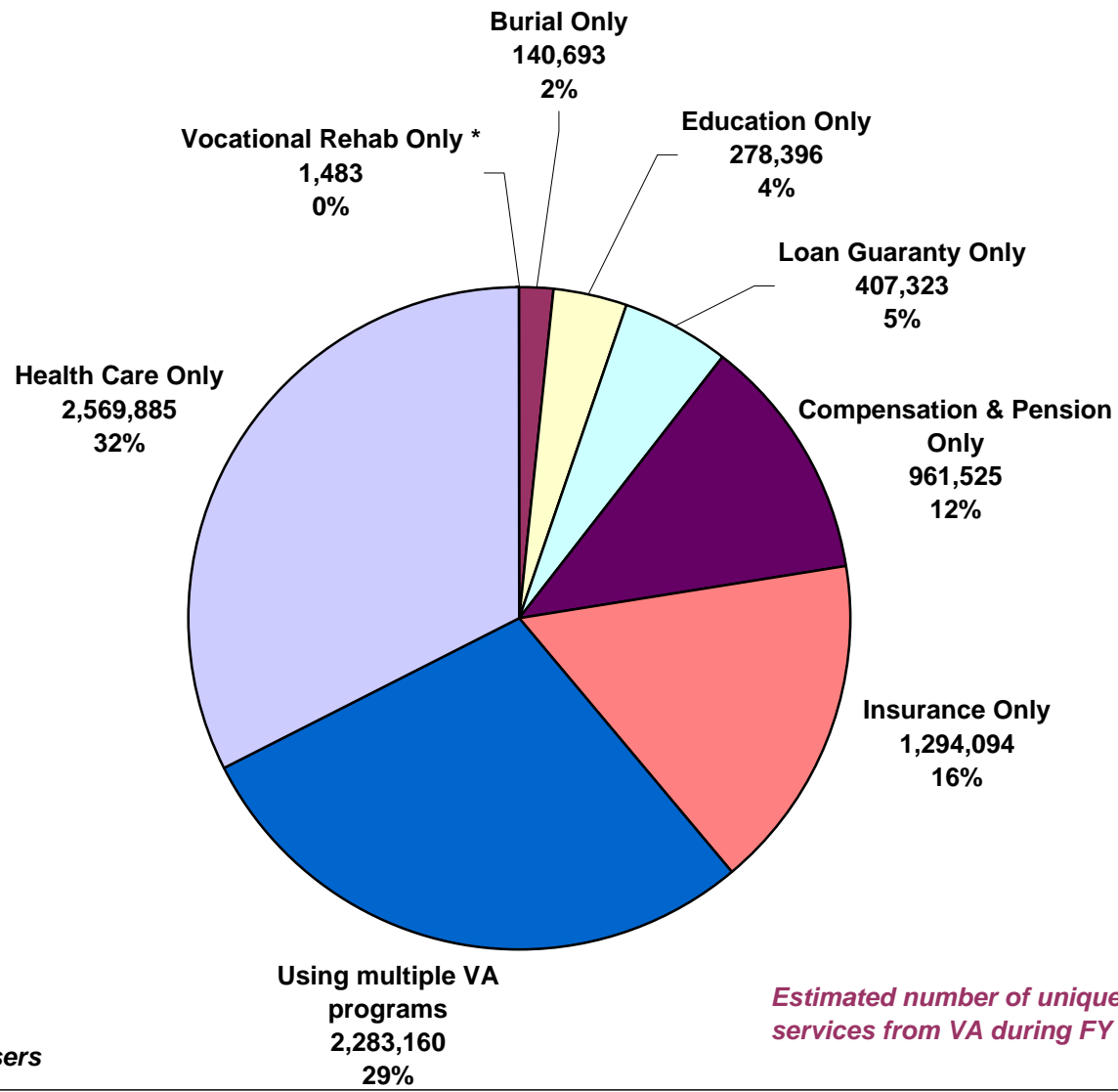
* Number of unique veterans listed for each program included veterans that have Social Security Numbers on file as well as those who don't.

Unique Veterans Receiving Services from VA During FY 2003



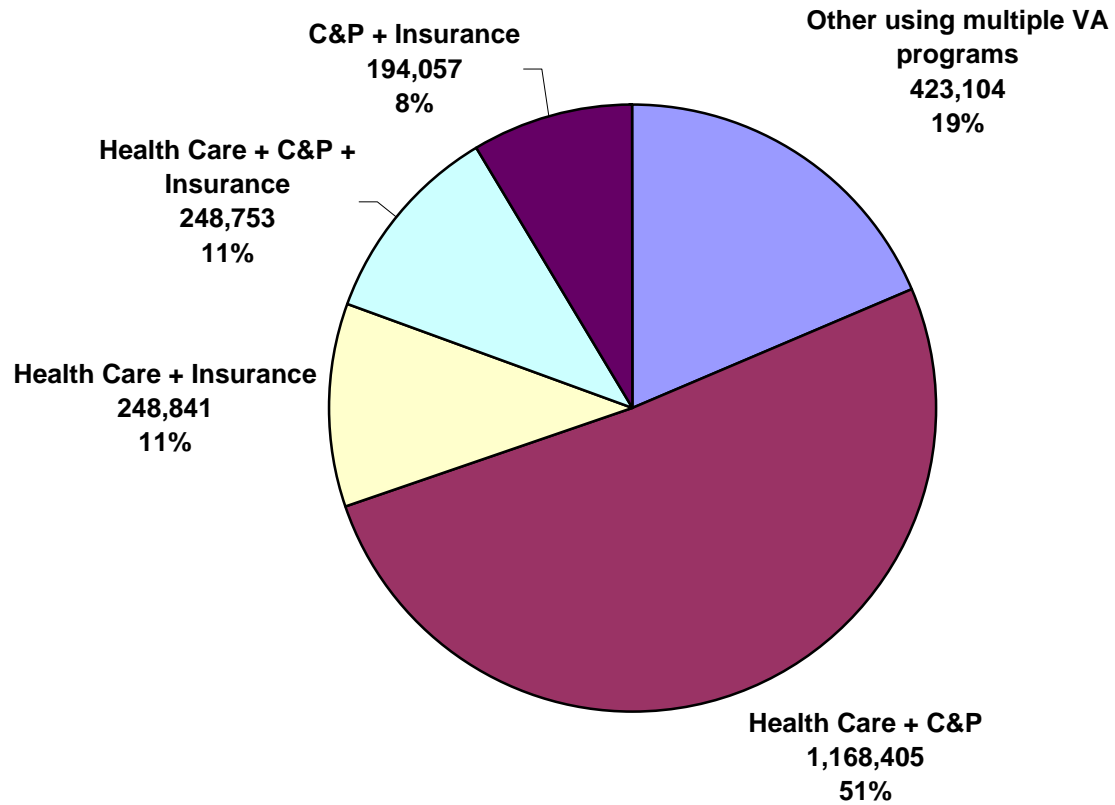
Estimated number of unique veterans receiving services from VA during FY 2003: 7,936,559

VA Program Usage by Unique Veterans During FY 2003



* Less than 1% of total users

VA Program Usage by Unique Veterans Using Multiple VA Programs During FY 2003



Estimated number of unique veterans using multiple VA programs during FY 2003: 2,283,160

Attachment

Pilot Methodology

A master user table of all veterans receiving service from VA in FY 2003 was created by the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Policy, Data Management & Analysis Service. This table was then used to identify unique veteran users. The list of unique veterans receiving service from VA was determined using the following methodology:

1. Each VA business line provided the Social Security Numbers (SSN) of users and these numbers were combined into one single data table.
2. This table was queried to count each SSN only once and put into a table called 'Master User List'. Below is a layout of the Master User List.

SSN	C&P	Education	Loan	Insurance	Voc Rehab	Burial	Health
xxx-xx-xxxx							

3. Once all the unique SSN were captured in the Master User List, the Master User List was compared to each of the program files. If the SSN in the Master User List matched to an SSN in a program file, a Y was recorded in the Master User List under that program name. For example, if SSN 123-45-6789 is matched to C&P, Health, and Insurance program files, the record will be as followed in the Master List:

SSN	C&P	Education	Loan	Insurance	Voc Rehab	Burial	Health
123-45-6789	Y			Y			Y

4. Step 3 is repeated until all program files are matched.

Data Sources: The data for this project was obtained from the following sources.

- Health Care – VISN Support Service Center (Kevin Martin)
- Compensation and Pension – C & P Mini Master Database (Calvin Beads)
- Insurance – VBA Philadelphia Insurance Center (Daryl Mecklem)
- Education – VBA Hines Data Center (Debbie Konopinski)
- Voc Rehab – VBA Vocational Rehabilitation Service (via Susan Perez)
- Loan Guaranty – VBA Loan Guaranty Service (Donald Duggan & Kathleen Mangold)
- Burial – NCA Systems Integration Service (Bill Barnes)

The table on the following page shows the number of records in the product line data bases that were used for SSN matching.

Data Match Table

VA Services or Benefits	No. of Veterans	No. of Veterans with SSN	No. of Veterans without SSN
Health Care	4,490,615	4,490,615 (100%)	0 (0%)
Compensation & Pension	2,891,482	2,885,441 (99.8%)	6,041 (0.2%)
Life Insurance & VGLI	2,087,576	2,087,576 (100%)	0 (0%)
Education (Chapter 30, 1606, and Chapter 32)	389,879	389,851 (100%)	28 (0%)
Vocational Rehabilitation	98,721	98,721 (100%)	0 (0%)
Loan Guaranty	559,382	559,380 (100%)	2 (0%)
Memorial Service	241,869	237,610 (98.2%)	4,259 (1.8%)

Data Definitions:

- **Health Care** – All veterans who received any of the following services from VA in FY 2003.
 - VAOP=Outpatient
 - VAH=Inpatient
 - VAHCEN=VA Inpatient Census
 - VAEXT=VA DOM/NHCU
 - VAEXTCEN=VA DOM/NHCU Census
 - FEE MED=FEE (Medical) Outpatient
 - FEE PHR=FEE Pharmacy
 - FEE ANCIL=FEE Ancillary (DOM/NHCU)
 - FEE HOSP=FEE Inpatient
 - FEE CNH=FEE Community Nursing Home
 - PH ONLY=Pharmacy Only
 - HOME DI=Home Dialysis
 - ODS-BED=VA Observation Bed
- **Compensation & Pension** – The number of unique veterans receiving Compensation or Pension in FY 2003 was determined as follow:
 1. All veteran records with active status (record type A) in the C&P mini-master as of 12/30/2002 (Q1), 3/30/2003 (Q2), 6/30/2003 (Q3), and 9/30/2003 (Q4) were combined into one table.
 2. A query of the table was initiated to retrieve a unique list of SSN, i.e. each SSN is counted only once.

For validation purposes, we also determined the number of unique veterans who were in the C&P database but did not have an SSN. We performed this calculation by performing a unique query of all veterans who had no SSN by their claim numbers.

- **Insurance** – All veterans with an active policy or are in receipt of a benefit of a policy (i.e. matured endowment situations).
- **Education** – All veterans who received an award between or date-last-paid from 10/01/2002 through 09/30/2003.
- **Vocational Rehab** – All veterans in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment database as of 8/30/2003 with active status.
- **Loan Guaranty** – Data includes all veterans who were issued a loan guaranty during fiscal year 2003 as well as other service/assistance. The "service/assistance" veterans received may range from a simple letter of advice to financial counseling, alternatives to foreclosure such as refunding, and foreclosure.
- **Burial** – Data extractions from VA's BOSS system identified veterans who were buried in a National, State, Interior, or in Military Cemeteries. Data was also extracted from VA's AMAS system which identifies veterans buried in a private cemetery or a non-National Cemetery. Every veteran in both files received a headstone or marker from VA. SSN's were not available for deceased veterans who only received Presidential Memorial Certificates. The NCA believes that the number of Presidential Memorial Certificates issued for deceased veterans is negligible in the total calculation.

The matching of SSN and analysis of the data was performed by Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Data Management & Analysis Service, POC: Dat Tran 202-273-6482. <mailto:dat.tran@mail.va.gov>