

VD HCBS Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has had the opportunity to implement and expand the Veteran-Directed Home and Community Based Services Program (VD HCBS) since Battle Creek VA began enrolling Veterans in February 2009. The VD HCBS program is a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Administration on Community Living (ACL). The program is a purchased service in which local Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs) enter into provider arrangements with Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and/or State Agencies on Aging (SAA). Veterans at risk for nursing home placement may be enrolled in the program in which they manage their own capped monthly budget to hire and direct workers and purchase goods and services that will best meet their personal care needs to remain in their homes. There are currently 42 operational VD HCBS programs with 6-10 sites expected to be operational in the next six months.

The VD HCBS Program Coordinator completed an analysis of the VA Boston VD HCBS program to determine cost efficiency and customer satisfaction as compared with the VA Boston Contracted Nursing Home (CNH) program. This analysis reviewed all Veterans who are currently enrolled as well as those discharged from the VD HCBS program (n=28) and a random sample of Veterans admitted to a CNH facility (n=27). The national premise of VD HCBS includes cost shifting from institutional long-term care to home and community based services.

The state of Massachusetts ADRC was recently awarded a five year grant from the ACL, VHA, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to significantly strengthen and expand their person-centered access programs and to help people learn about and access the long term services and supports (LTSS) that best meet their needs. This funding also provides access to a special opportunity being made available by the VHA to assist Veteran's with disabilities and their family caregivers to access VD HCBS services. This grant will provide additional funding to the VA Boston VD HCBS for acceptance of new Veterans.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

This report supports previous findings that VD HCBS programs appear to be less expensive than CNH care however, overall cost benefits will be seen on a case by case basis (A Comparison of Veteran Directed Health Care Programs vs. Community Nursing Home Placement, 2013) (Kayala & Mahoney, 2012). Nursing homes are necessary for individuals, requiring twenty-four nursing care due to the nature of their medical needs, safety concerns or risk for harm of self or others, but the VD HCBS program is a viable alternative to Veterans who may otherwise be admitted to a nursing facility, offering an option to remain in their homes and receive a more substantial level of care compared to other in-home support programs offered by the VA. The VD HCBS program also offers younger Veterans an opportunity to remain at home with more

supports compared to being admitted to a facility where populations are typically elderly individuals.

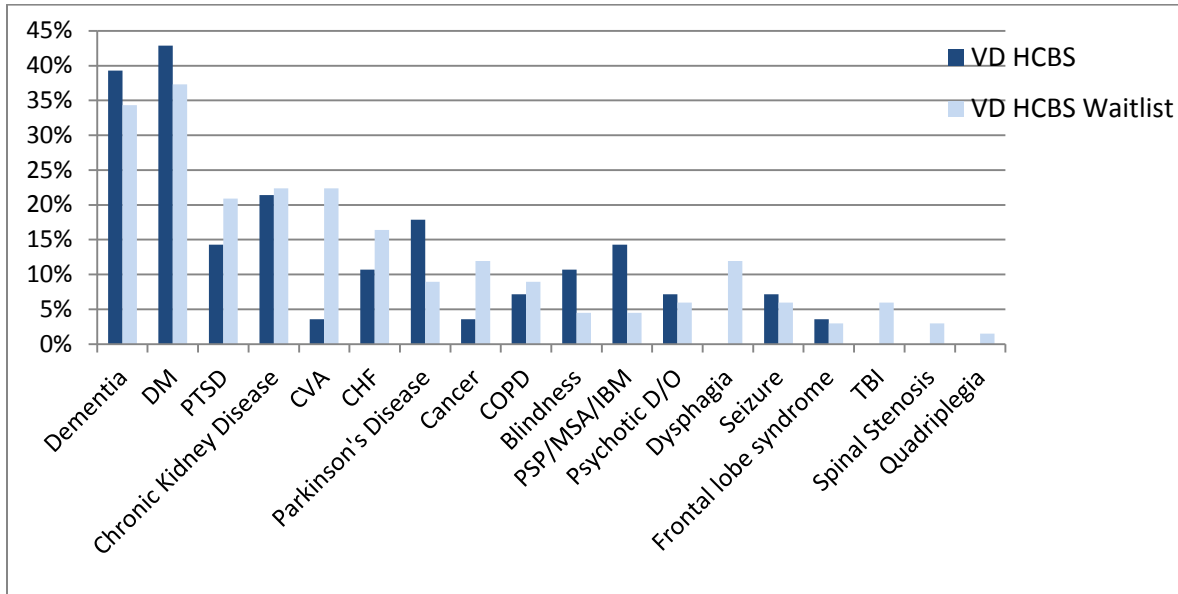
1. The monthly cost for VD HCBS Veterans is determined utilizing the Minnesota Case Mix ADLs Only personal care assessment. The monthly allotments are as follows:

Table 1: Monthly Cost List in Minnesota Case Mix

Urban Area	Case Mix "L"	Case Mix "A"	Case Mix "B"	Case Mix "C"	Case Mix "D"	Case Mix "E"	Case Mix "F"	Case Mix "G"	Case Mix "H"	Case Mix "I"	Case Mix "J"	Case Mix "K"
National Rate	\$1,293	\$1,678	\$1,909	\$2,240	\$2,315	\$2,552	\$2,630	\$2,714	\$3,062	\$3,143	\$3,350	\$3,904
Boston-Quincy, MA	\$1,588	\$2,061	\$2,345	\$2,751	\$2,844	\$3,135	\$3,230	\$3,334	\$3,761	\$3,861	\$4,115	\$4,795

2. The care providers are typically family members, friends, and neighbors, although Veteran’s may hire private professionals. Homecare agencies are forbidden to be hired as part of the Veteran’s spending plan. Care providers provide personal care and complete household chores. Within their monthly spending plans, Veterans may also include the purchase of medically necessary goods and services. All spending plans must be submitted to the VA Medical Center program coordinator for approval.
3. The customer satisfaction survey revealed that individuals receiving VD HCBS services compared to CNH reported higher quality responses (excellent and very good) to the handling of their personal wants and needs (87% v. 67%) and personal care needs (74% v 47%)
4. The survey also noted that respondents enrolled in VD HCBS services reported a higher level of overall quality of care and services received in the program (96%) compared to those received at contracted nursing facilities (73%)
5. The findings show significantly less monthly costs for Veterans receiving VD HCBS services (\$2398) compared to CNH services (\$7599). The CNH data is based on the average basic daily rate for the VA Boston Healthcare System (\$250.74). The VD HCBS average monthly cost is the average of all 28 Veterans who have been enrolled in the VD HCBS program during the previous two years.
6. Veterans with a broad range of physical, mental health and psychosocial needs have been served or have been referred for VD HCBS services:

Figure 1: Percentage of Veterans Served and on Waitlist



7. The VD HCBS program has served 28 Veterans since the inception of the program in August 2011. The average length of time of the program is currently 374 days, with a range of 32 to 618 days. Of the ten Veterans who have been discharged, five were related to death, four were admitted to long-term care and one went to a rehabilitation facility following an acute medical condition.
8. As of April 30, 2013 there are 68 Veterans on the waiting list to receive services. This list works on a strictly first come first served basis. The next Veteran on the list to receive services was referred on April 12, 2012, making for a wait of 384 days. There have been 16 Veterans removed from the waitlist, 13 due to death and 3 were admitted to long-term care.

Recommendations:

1. Should VA Boston VD HCBS continue to accept referrals for all Veterans or should eligibility be restricted to Millennium Bill eligibility Veterans? 43% of Veterans served by VD HCBS and 40% on the waitlist are Mill Bill eligible
 - Due to budgetary issues and extensive waitlist at this time. The recommendation is to only accept future referrals for Veterans who are Millennium Bill eligible.
2. Should all Veterans enrolled in VD HCBS within the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) coverage area, be required to receive HBPC services? 36% of the Veterans who have received VD HCBS services were VERA 8 or above, while 26% on the waitlist are VERA 8 or above.
 - Due to level of care needs, to provide Veterans and their families with additional support and oversight, the recommendation is to require all Veterans within the HBPC geographic area (15 miles from Jamaica Plain campus and 30 miles from Brockton campus) who are enrolled in VD HCBS to receive HBPC services.

3. What will the VA Boston VD HCBS budget cap be for FY 14?

- The recommendation at this time is to maintain budget at current level of \$569,949. The program will be receiving additional funds through the five year ADRC pilot project in addition to the Boston medical center VD HCBS budget. As data continues to show exemplary customer satisfaction along with increasing cost benefit to the medical center, the program would benefit from an annual increase in funds as part of a long-term care cost shifting in accordance with the Affordable Care Act.