

CONNECTICUT VETERANS JAIL DIVERSION PROGRAM

Studies have shown that large numbers of military personnel returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have struggled with psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. Far too often, veterans experiencing trauma-related symptoms exhibit behaviors that may lead to arrest. We now know that the road home following service in a war zone has predictable emotional and behavioral challenges that every returning service member, to varying degrees, must face. Among Connecticut's response is a first-of-its-kind effort – the *Connecticut Veterans Jail Diversion Program*.

In 2008 DMHAS was one of six states awarded a \$2 million, 5-year grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish a statewide jail diversion program for veterans struggling with trauma-related symptoms. In addition to piloting services in one region of the state, DMHAS was required to accomplish a comprehensive planning process during the first year with program start-up dependent upon SAMHSA review and approval. Connecticut's Strategic Plan was approved by SAMHSA in August 2009 and services began the following month.

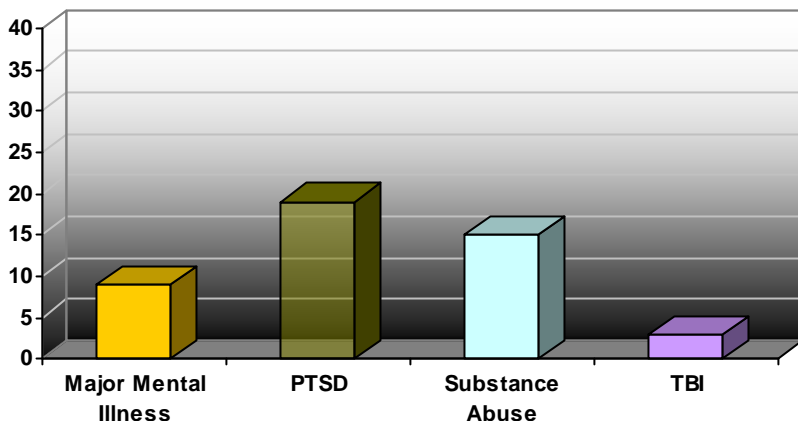


The level of inter-system collaboration and services coordination in support of Veterans at risk of incarceration is unprecedented in the nation.

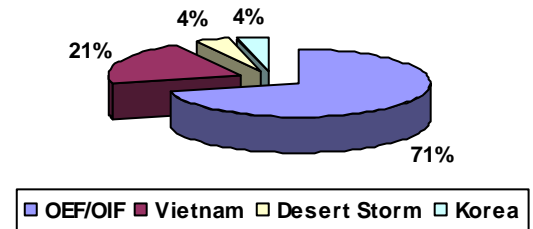
Connecticut's Veterans Diversion Program brings together multiple stakeholders from several distinct systems. Representatives from the judicial system, law enforcement, the VA Healthcare and Benefits Administrations, the Vet Center system, Department of Defense, as well as several state agencies including the Connecticut Military Department, participated in the planning process. Twenty-nine (29) agencies signed the project's Memorandum of Agreement!

Connecticut's newest generation of returning veterans will be diverted from incarceration at the earliest opportunity along the criminal justice continuum into a seamless system of treatment and recovery support services. State and federal systems and others have committed to work together to provide a new service delivery model that combines the strengths of each participating federal, state and community stakeholder, thereby offering diverted veterans an array of treatment and recovery support options as they develop their Individual Service Plans for Court review. Although just begun, Connecticut has already served 40 veterans in courts throughout the state.

Diagnoses (n=40 Self-Report)



Veterans by Conflict (n=40)



Working with law enforcement to divert veterans to appropriate support services before problems develop.