

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2013/14 - 2015/16





California State Capitol Building, Sacramento

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

POST OFFICE BOX 942895

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 94295-0001

Telephone: 916.653.2158



My fellow Californians:

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, California has maintained an historic commitment to caring for veterans and their families. We are proud of our service to California's veterans, and through this strategic plan, we reaffirm this commitment.

The mission of the California Department of Veterans Affairs is simple and straight forward, to serve California's veterans and their families. Our vision to guide us through that mission is to be the state's leading advocate and resource so veterans can achieve the highest quality of life.

This strategic plan is different from previous years in that we have opted for a three year plan, which will allow us to gauge our successes as we meet the strategic goals we have set for ourselves; the ultimate goal being to better serve California veterans and their families.

As part of our strategic thinking, we have implemented CalVet's vision, mission and core values into this strategic plan. We will not only work to ensure veterans and their families enjoy a high level quality life, but also benefit from a streamlined continuum of benefits and services they have earned. Our pledge is to serve veterans and their families with honesty, integrity, professionalism, commitment, stewardship, and compassion.

Via this strategic three-year plan, CalVet will increase the accessibility and utilization of benefits and services through advocacy and education; provide the highest quality of CalVet-sponsored care and services to veterans and their families; make CalVet an employer of choice by investing in the development of our employees; and provide premier long-term care with fiscal efficiencies. Although these goals may seem monumental, CalVet is poised and prepared to take any steps necessary to reach them, because at CalVet, veterans and their families are front and center.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "*As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.*" We hope that by following this strategic plan, CalVet will honor its promise to California's veterans and their families and our actions will show that we are the advocate they deserve and the resource they seek.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter J. Gravett".

PETER J. GRAVETT  
Major General (Retired)  
Secretary

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## **Executive Summary** ..... 6

CalVet’s Vision, Mission, and Enterprise Strategic Goals  
Strategic Objectives and High-Level Performance Metrics

## **Introduction** ..... 12

California’s Veterans  
Strategic Plan Development  
CalVet Partners  
Strategic Plan Process  
Quarterly Progress and Annual Report with Performance Metrics

## **Strategic Goal 1** ..... 17

INCREASE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF BENEFITS  
AND SERVICES THROUGH ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION  
Veterans Services Division  
Women Veterans Affairs Division  
Veterans Homes Division  
CalVet Home Loans Division  
Minority Veterans Affairs

## **Strategic Goal 2** ..... 37

PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF CALVET-SPONSORED CARE  
AND SERVICES TO VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES  
Veterans Homes Division  
CalVet Home Loans Division  
Information Services Division

<p><b>Strategic Goal 3</b> -----</p> <p>MAKE CALVET AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE BY INVESTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES</p> <p>Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance Unit Human Resources Division Information Services Division</p>	<p><b>47</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Goal 4</b> -----</p> <p>PROVIDE PREMIER LONG-TERM CARE WITH FISCAL EFFICIENCIES</p> <p>Veterans Homes Division</p>	<p><b>57</b></p>
<p><b>Appendices</b> -----</p> <p>APPENDIX A</p> <p>Strategic Plan Overview</p> <p>APPENDIX B</p> <p>Program Descriptions</p> <p>Veterans Services Division</p> <p>Women and Minority Veterans Affairs</p> <p>Veterans Homes Division</p> <p>CalVet Home Loan Program</p> <p>APPENDIX C</p> <p>Veteran Partners and Stakeholders</p> <p>U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA)</p> <p>California Veterans Board</p> <p>County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO)</p> <p>Veterans Services Organizations (VSO)</p> <p>California Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV)</p> <p>APPENDIX D</p> <p>Acronyms</p>	<p><b>65</b></p>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Caring for our nation's heroes in California started in 1884 when one of the nation's first long-term care homes for Civil War veterans opened and admitted residents. Since then, California has continued to welcome home those who served in the military and remains committed to its veterans and their families.

Today, California is home to 1.8 million veterans, representing eight percent of the total U.S. veteran population.<sup>1</sup> Currently the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) organizes its efforts to serve veterans into three core program areas; Veterans Homes of California (Veterans Homes), CalVet Home Loans, and Veterans Services and Outreach.

This strategic plan describes how all programmatic and support divisions within CalVet will work toward the same strategic goals to deliver services to California's veterans for the next three fiscal years. Our plan aims to provide methods for improving efficiency in delivering services to veterans while adjusting priorities and strategies periodically to respond to veteran needs and changes in funding and other factors. The focal point of the plan is our performance metrics—how our success will be measured.

1. USDVA VetPop 2011 and 2010 U.S. Census

# VISION, MISSION, AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC GOALS

## VETERANS

### VISION

CalVet will be the state's leading advocate and resource so veterans can achieve the highest quality of life.

### MISSION

Serve California's veterans and their families.

## ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Increase the accessibility and utilization of benefits and services through advocacy and education.
2. Provide the highest quality of CalVet-sponsored care and services to veterans and their families.
3. Make CalVet an employer of choice by investing in the development of our employees.
4. Provide premier long-term care with fiscal efficiencies.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

High-level performance metrics are the key indicators of success for each division. Current and target numbers will be published annually in the CalVet Annual Report. The strategic objectives are also listed by strategic goal in Appendix A.

*Note: TBD metrics will be benchmarked in 2013-14 and targets reported in the subsequent Annual Reports.*

## Veterans Outreach and Services

### OBJECTIVES

- » Expand and improve the methods for identifying and contacting veterans and their families.
- » Connect veterans with the services they need through advocacy and outreach.
- » Ensure ongoing support for our veterans and their families through continuous communication.

### HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% annual increase in claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs.
- » 5% annual increase in dollars received through claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs.
- » 5% annual increase in percent of Fully Developed Claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs.
- » 5% annual increase in total number of veterans in the CalVet database.
- » 3% annual increase in distinct services/referrals made to veterans.
- » 10% annual increase in certified DVBEs.



## Veterans Homes

### OBJECTIVES

- » Increase Veterans Homes' census to 98% of budgeted/licensed capacity excluding Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes.
- » Increase Veterans Homes' budgeted and licensed bed capacities.
- » Utilize Veterans Homes' unbudgeted space to serve more veterans through collaborative relationships with non-profits, veteran service organizations, and private entities at no additional cost to the State.
- » Provide premier long-term care and residential services in each Veterans Home.
- » Reduce the cost of care.
- » Increase revenue to offset costs to the General Fund.

### HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » An average CMS rating of 4 stars or higher.
- » Veterans Homes' census is 94% of budgeted/licensed capacity by end of 2013-14, excluding Fresno and Redding Veterans Homes.
- » Eight residents per month admitted to West Los Angeles Veterans Home to reach budgeted/licensed capacity by 2015-16.
- » Eight residents per month admitted to Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes after opening.
- » A 7% a year revenue increase in Yountville, Barstow, and Chula Vista Veterans Homes to offset costs to the General Fund by 70% by 2016-17.
- » Homes-wide implementation and staff training on the Enterprise-wide Veterans Homes Information System by 2014-15.
- » Two public-private partnerships per year at no additional cost to the General Fund by 2015-16 that increase services to veterans by utilizing unbudgeted space.
- » Two energy efficiency programs per year that decrease operational costs.

## CalVet Home Loans

### OBJECTIVES

- » Collaborate with federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations to enhance veteran housing opportunities.
- » Improve the Home Loan Program to provide industry leading services that best meet the needs of our veterans.
- » Improve the Home Loan Insurance Program to reduce program risk and maximize benefits.

### HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 100% increase in the CalVet loan volume annually through 2015-16.
- » 25% response rate for online customer satisfaction survey by 2015-16.
- » Six new housing projects by 2015-16.

## Women and Minority Veterans Outreach

### OBJECTIVES

- » Increase the points of access to information about benefits and services through community partnerships and greater social media activity.
- » Improve current services and support the development of future services for women veterans and their families.
- » Increase outreach to women veterans through recurring events and outreach materials.
- » Increase awareness of and expand outreach to minority veterans.

### HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% increase in the percentage of women who know about state/federal benefits in the biennial CalVet/CRB Women Veterans Survey.
- » 5% annual increase the number of attendees at the annual Women Veterans Leadership Conference.
- » 5% increase level of satisfaction with state/federal benefits in the biennial CalVet/CRB Women Veterans Survey.
- » Five new partnerships with minority veterans organizations annually.





## Administration

### OBJECTIVES

- » Provide the highest quality long-term care and residential services in each Veterans Home through technology.
- » Transform CalVet's computing environment by utilizing state-of-the-art technology.
- » Prepare workforce to accomplish our mission through effective planning, evaluation, and communication.
- » Improve the employee training and development program to ensure staff is prepared for our future.
- » Enhance employee recognition and incentive program.

### HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Fully develop and test a plan to achieve disaster recovery operations at a second site by April 2014.
- » 20% reduction in the number of manual workflow/approvals by December 2014.
- » 80% overall user satisfaction rating of Good or Excellent for the Help Desk ticket process by April 2015.
- » 75% overall user satisfaction rating of Good or Excellent for the IT Service Request process by April 2015.
- » 5% point annual increase in overall employee satisfaction with CalVet as an organization.
- » 95% annual completion rate of probation reports at headquarters by 2015-16.
- » 95% completion rate of Individual Development Plans at headquarters by 2015-16.
- » Increase number of employees attending training classes annually. (TBD)

# INTRODUCTION

---

## California's Veterans

The largest demand for benefits and services for veterans occurs immediately after discharge and again as the veteran population ages and requires greater access to medical facilities and long-term care services. With the substantial number of veterans under the age of 30 leaving the military after deployments to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with a considerably large population of Vietnam veterans who need greater access to medical and long-term care, California should expect and plan for a sustained spike in the demand for these earned services.

As with all levels of government, CalVet faces a challenge—finding innovative ways to extend and improve services to veterans while remaining responsible stewards of the public trust through fiscal responsibility. The fact is, we must continue to innovate and improve the services we deliver to veterans. Whether that is achieved through the quality of care in any one of the Veterans Homes or finding new ways to contact California's veteran population and connect them to the benefits and services they need, innovation will be the driver of change. Long-standing programs like the CalVet Home Loan Program will adapt to provide industry leading services that best meet the needs of our changing veteran population. Administratively, CalVet will be driven to more efficiently manage internal operations so as to focus as much of our energy and resources on delivery of services and advocacy for veterans and their families.

As an initial step in framing the strategic plan and developing key priorities, we pulled from a variety of resources, including Veteran Service Organizations, County Veteran Service Officers, community groups, non-profit organizations, and most importantly, the veterans themselves. In 2010, the Department conducted a statewide Veterans Needs Assessment Survey. The input from our partners and from veterans highlighted the issues important to veterans and suggested how we can better facilitate the delivery of benefits and services to our customers.

Veterans indicated that they are most interested in information and assistance on employment, education, healthcare, and housing, while older veterans were more likely to be interested in long-term care or assisted living. Moreover, we learned from the Veterans Needs Assessment that more than one-third of veterans surveyed did not feel they were eligible for any benefits and did not know how to file a claim or get claims assistance.

Through survey results, interaction with stakeholders through the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans, and the day-to-day operations of the department, it became clear that CalVet can't and shouldn't be totally responsible for delivering services to the nearly 2 million veterans living in California. However, CalVet should and will become the leading advocate for veterans in this state to ensure they are aware of the rights, benefits and services that they have earned through their honorable service in the military of the United States.

## Benefits and Services

When we refer to "benefits and services", we are referring to the vast number of offerings from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and the State of California to veterans and their families who have earned them. These include but are not limited to:

From the USDVA:

- » Compensation and pension payments
- » Healthcare
- » Education and training (e.g., GI Bill)
- » Survivor and burial benefits
- » VA Home Loan guarantee

From the State of California:

- » Veterans Homes
- » CalVet Home Loans
- » Dependent college tuition fee waiver
- » Property tax exemptions
- » Veteran license plates
- » Fishing and hunting license discounts, State Parks and Recreation Pass
- » Employment and Unemployment Insurance Assistance

## Strategic Plan Development

### CALVET PARTNERS

CalVet has expanded its outreach efforts through our successful partnership with the State's County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) that work within their communities with local organizations to advocate for their respective veteran populations. Together, we work to connect veterans with their benefits. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), whose advocacy, services and support are invaluable to our veteran community. For a list of additional partners that help us serve veterans, please refer to the Appendix.

### STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Each of our divisions contributed to the development of the plan, as reflected in the vision, mission, core values, goals, objectives, initiatives, and performance measures. The process emphasized alignment of CalVet's strategic plan the strategic priorities of the Governor. The review of best practices helped us establish some core principles by which the development of the strategic plan was guided:

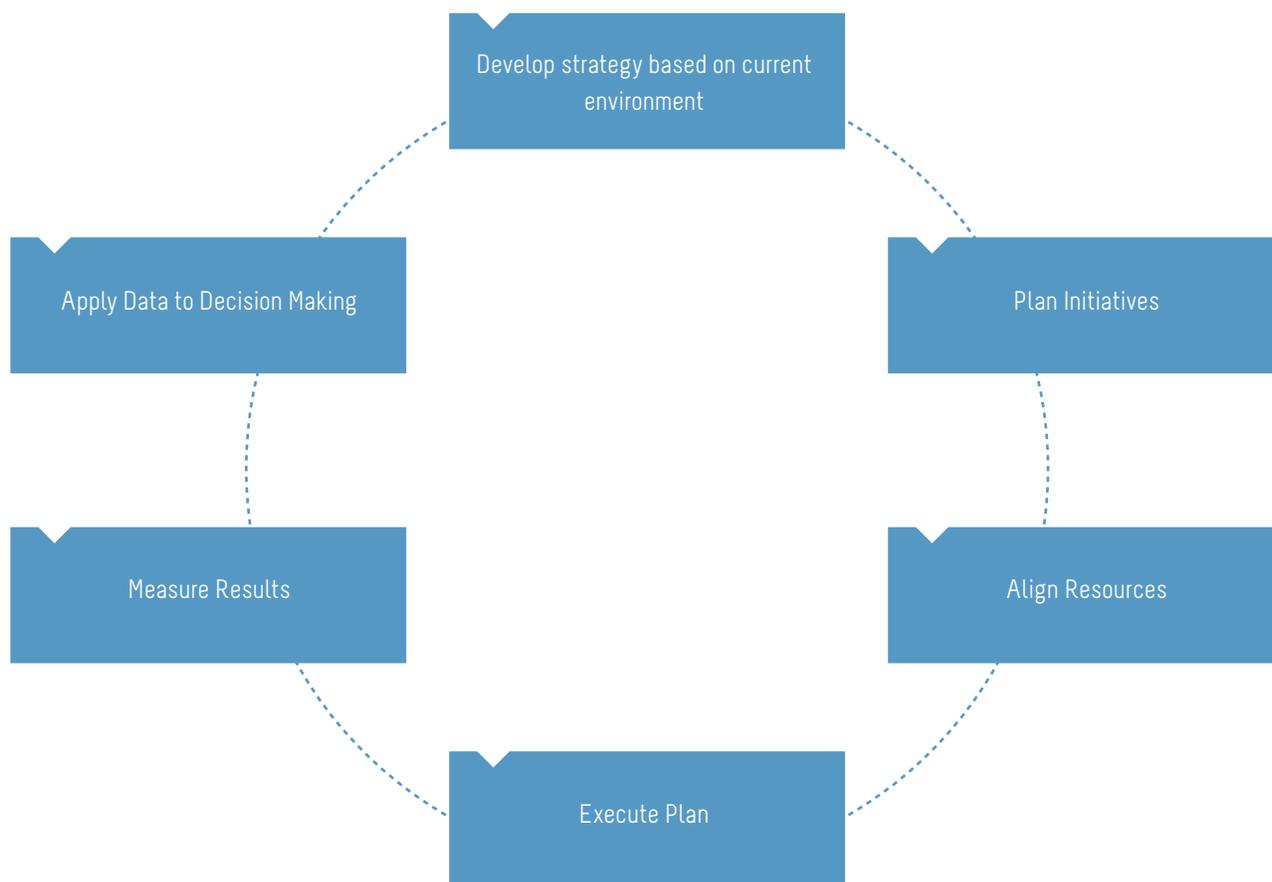
- » **Focus on the Strategic Imperatives**  
Identify and address the most pressing issues facing California's veterans.
- » **Keep an Eye on the Future-State not Current Operations**  
Focus on what you want to become, not on how you currently operate.
- » **Set Strategic Objectives that are Achievable.**  
Establish goals that can be achieved rather than rolled forward into each iteration of the strategic plan.
- » **Focus on Metrics.**  
Set strategic objectives that can be measured, easily tracked and reported in the CalVet Annual Report.



### QUARTERLY PROGRESS AND ANNUAL REPORT WITH PERFORMANCE METRICS

Each of our objectives has an action plan that explains how we will get the work done and when. These plans are living documents and updated quarterly as tasks are completed and the direction changes on initiatives. This ensures the plan remains an active element of departmental strategy and operations.

The CalVet Annual Report will report the achievements and accomplishments we have made towards our strategic plan each fiscal year. This annual publication will also include a “dashboard” of our high-level performance metrics—the key indicators of success towards the mission of each division. Our metrics will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they clearly show what we are trying to accomplish and by when. They will also be used to determine whether we are achieving our objectives or need to change course in order to achieve them. When necessary, we will update our strategy based on the performance metrics to ensure we are accomplishing our goals.





# STRATEGIC GOAL 1

INCREASE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF BENEFITS AND SERVICES THROUGH ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.

CalVet strives to be the national leader in serving veterans and their families by connecting them with the benefits and services available to them. A major challenge we face is ensuring that these benefits and services are accessible to California's veterans. We plan to accomplish this by locating and identifying California veterans, educating and connecting them to their benefits and services, improving the quality of veterans benefits claims, and leveraging partnerships and collaborations throughout the state.

## OBJECTIVE A

Expand and improve the methods for identifying and contacting veterans and their families.

## OBJECTIVE B

Connect veterans with the services they need through outreach and advocacy.

## OBJECTIVE C

Ensure ongoing support for our veterans and their families through continuous communication.

## OBJECTIVE D

Increase the points of access to information about benefits and services through community partnerships and greater social media activity.

## OBJECTIVE E

Improve current services and support the development of future services for women veterans and their families.

## OBJECTIVE F

Increase outreach to women veterans through recurring events and outreach materials.

## OBJECTIVE G

Collaborate with federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations to enhance veterans housing opportunities.

## OBJECTIVE H

Increase Veterans Homes' census to 94% of budgeted/licensed capacity excluding Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes.

## OBJECTIVE I

Increase Veterans Homes' budgeted and licensed bed capacities.

## OBJECTIVE J

Utilize Veterans Homes' unbudgeted space to serve more veterans through collaborative relationships with non-profits, veteran service organizations, and private entities at no additional cost to the State.

## OBJECTIVE K

Increase awareness of and expand outreach to minority veterans.

# A

## Expand and improve the methods for identifying and contacting veterans and their families.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Services Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Data capture and analysis (DPRIS, VetPro)
- » External Outreach Programs (LINC's, community events, PSA's)
- » Online service provider integration
- » Collaboration with state, local, and federal service providers and organizations
- » MOU's (DMV, PARIS, USDVA, other federal and state agencies)

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% annual increase in the total number of veterans in the CalVet database.
- » 3% annual increase in distinct services/referrals made to veterans.

CalVet is committed to its mission of serving California's veterans and their families. The State of California's directive for our department has always been to ensure that our veterans and their families receive the benefits that they are entitled to upon return to civilian life. Making the initial contact with veterans is an essential step to serving them and their families, and California veterans are difficult to find.

CalVet must employ a variety of tools to locate as many veterans as possible. Some veterans can be found using data gathered from Reintegration Forms and resource table visits at community events. Others can be reached through public service announcements and community events which attract veterans to points of contact who can assist them in applying for the benefits they have earned.

CalVet acts as the clearing house for data and information and as the link to the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSOs)<sup>2</sup> which are the "boots on the ground." As strategic partners, we are looking to expand relationships we have with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to include regular conversations regarding data sharing, meetings, events, and service for veterans. Data capture and analysis is critical to increasing how many veterans we touch. VetPro (our veterans benefit case management system) will enable us to develop lists of veterans within specific demographic groups. This system also allows us to track the number

2. For more information about CVSOs, please see Appendix C: Veteran Partners and Stakeholders.

of contacts we make with veterans, and we plan to implement a new process to capture those initial contacts as a performance metric.

Gaining access to other databases would increase our effectiveness in reaching veterans. Another way to improve data capture and analysis is through the Department of Defense's Defense Personnel Records Information System (DPRIS). This would give us access to veteran discharge papers and other military records that give us the information we need to increase the number of veterans we contact.

Building relationships with our community partners is also critical to our success. Our Local Interagency Network Coordinators (LINC)s work with local organizations to identify and connect with veterans. Some military members exit through California but settle in another state. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Transition Assistance Program/Transition GPS provides an opportunity for LINC)s to contact new veterans, have them complete the CalVet Reintegration Form, and share them with each state's veterans' affairs office.

CalVet also works with other local, state, and federal agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Department of Social Services, and the Department of Health Care Services, to identify veterans. These partner agencies have agreed to help CalVet search for veterans throughout the state, as some veteran residents use routine services (such as Driver's License Renewal, public assistance application, and others) throughout the year.

CalVet's initiatives for increasing the number of veterans we contact is the critical factor for ensuring veterans and their families are matched with benefits to live the highest quality of life.



# B

## Connect veterans with the services they need through outreach and advocacy.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Services Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » CVSRA
- » Data capture and analysis (VetPro and D2D)
- » Collaboration (federal and state agencies, CVSOs, VSOs, TVRs, NGOs)
- » Prop 63 (Mental Health Services Act)
- » Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) outreach/education
- » CalVet Mobile App (project partner: Information Services Division)

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% annual increase in claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs.
- » 5% annual increase in dollars received through claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs.
- » 5% annual increase in percent of claims submitted by CalVet and CVSOs that are Fully Developed Claims.
- » 10% annual increase in certified DVBEs.
- » Full implementation of VetPro and D2D.
- » Conduct one pilot program CVSRA in the first year, and two in each of the following years.

Historically, there has been a disconnect between California’s veterans and the benefits and services available to them. Returning veterans and aging veterans have many needs that are generally met by independently administered services such as healthcare, education and vocational rehabilitation, employment, care-giving, social services, housing, long-term care, and independent living assistance. CalVet’s strategic partnership with the CVSO<sup>3</sup> network strives to improve the connection veterans and their families have with the benefits and services they have earned.

The California Veterans Service Representative Academy (CVSRA) is a technical supplement to the programs, policies, and procedures set forth in Title 38 (38 USC or USCS), Art. 38 Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR), and USDVA program manuals. As part of the strategic partnership, CalVet develops the curriculum and then provides specialized training to the CVSOs and some VSOs. This course standardizes the training given to Veteran Service Representatives (VSR) and reduces the time it takes to train a new VSR to be able to work without direct supervision.

3. For more information about CVSOs, please see Appendix C: Veteran Partners and Stakeholders.

In light of the USDVA benefit claims backlog, CalVet and CVSOs are focusing on submitting Fully Developed Claims (FDC) to maximize the USDVA initiative for expeditious awards. CalVet and CVSO leadership will help to communicate the USDVA criteria for FDC to all CVSOs. In addition, the USDVA is working with CalVet and California counties to link VetPro (our veterans benefit case management system) to the USDVA claims database to create an entirely paperless claims submission process. This Digits to Digits (D2D) initiative will expedite the award process in the USDVA's Fully Developed Claims initiative, and CalVet seeks to ensure that VetPro will be an interoperable-component of that system.

CalVet and CVSOs share current benefit information, training events, and updates with veteran service organizations and other stakeholders to enhance services for veterans. Community partners play a critical role in connecting veterans, and the collaboratives formed by our LINC's and partners provide the communication and information sharing needed for success. Our award-winning mobile app also helps to maintain a presence in the community and enables veterans to find services quickly and easily.

The Mental Health Services Act, also known as Proposition 63 (Prop 63), provides funding, personnel, and other resources to support county mental health programs and monitor progress toward statewide goals for serving children, transition-age youth, adults, older adults, families, and veterans with mental health needs. We administer Prop 63 funds to six CVSOs for mental health outreach. Funding is based on their output in support of veterans, such as mental health referrals, reintegration forms collected, awareness forums, outreach events attended, and other valuable face-to-face information sharing and needs-collecting activities for veteran mental health.

CalVet's Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises Program (DVBE) Outreach Team meets regularly with the business community, the Department of General Services, and the California Public Utilities Commission. Together, we develop strategies and programs to increase DVBE participation in state contracting and procurement spending and to increase the number of certified DVBEs. CalVet also educates veteran-owned companies on how to do business with the State of California. As of March 31, 2013, the team has increased the number of certified DVBEs by 83 this year, or 66% of our goal. CalVet meets quarterly with the DVBE Advisory Council whose objective is to present DVBE Community issues to the Secretary of CalVet. The various committees of the DVBE Advisory Council maintain communication on these issues throughout the year.

Providing a mobile application will reach users who are more familiar with technology and want access to their benefits without the need for a desktop computer. CalVet's Information Services Division is working with the Veterans Services Division to prioritize the vision for enhanced functionality of the mobile app. Through implementation of this objective, CalVet will reach more veterans and will be able to connect them the service providers they need.



## Ensure ongoing support for our veterans and their families through continuous communication.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Services Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » CalVet Connect (project partner: Information Services Division)
- » Periodic benefits reviews
- » Expand the memorialization of California’s veterans and their families
- » Collaboration with state, local, federal service providers and organizations
- » External Outreach Program (LINC’s, community events, PSA’s)
- » CVSRA

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Implementation of CalVet Connect.
- » Percent increase in dollars received from reviewed and updated claims (TBD).
- » Initiation of Phase 1 construction of California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery.

Over time, veterans’ lives change and benefits and eligibility requirements change. After we initially help our veterans and their families to obtain the benefits and services they need, we cannot ignore their future needs. Through continuous communication, including benefit reviews, events, surveys, and marketing, CalVet and the CVSOs<sup>4</sup> will help ensure veterans receive the maximum amount of benefits for which they are eligible and live the highest quality of life possible.

CalVet Connect will enable us to connect veterans to the services they need by using business intelligence to tailor each visitor’s experience. This web-based portal will address the challenges of meeting veterans’ needs by providing ongoing education and information, along with timely and accurate referrals to local service providers. The portal will link to an integrated system of community services and work seamlessly with VetPro (CalVet’s veterans benefit case management system) to eliminate duplication of work between CalVet and CVSOs. When veterans request specific information through the web portal or a Reintegration Form, their contact information will be imported into VetPro so CVSOs can immediately track them and begin to tailor direct services to their needs.

4. For more information about CVSOs, please see Appendix C: Veteran Partners and Stakeholders.

CalVet's Information Services Division is a critical partner in many of our efforts to reach and assist veterans. CalVet Connect will replace CalVet's public-facing website, improve content management processes, and implement business intelligence to enhance the user experience. The service provider database will be integrated with CalVet Connect to allow timely referrals to services.

Not only do veterans' needs change as time passes, but the federal and state rules that govern benefit eligibility also change. Periodic benefits reviews are important to helping veterans maximize their benefits use. CalVet and CVSOs review changes to determine whether a veteran qualifies for additional benefits, such as the College Fee Waiver if they have added dependents. When the USDVA presumptive service connected disability list is changed, CVSOs use VetPro to investigate and update claims for those veterans who had claims based on those conditions initially denied.

Memorializing California's veterans is an benefit that we take pride in providing to veterans and their families. Through the Memorial Registry Program, the California Veterans Registry, and the state veteran cemeteries, we work to express grateful recognition of each veteran's service in the United States Armed Forces. California's heroes are also entitled to comprehensive, professional burial services at no cost to eligible veterans and a minimal fee for spouses or dependents. We run the Northern California Veterans Cemetery, which is the first state-owned and operated veteran cemetery in the Golden State, and we are in the pre-planning stage of building the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery at the former Fort Ord Army base.

To sustain the knowledge gathered through the California Veterans Service Representative Academy (CVSRA/VetRep Academy), CalVet will conduct refresher courses on changes to programs, policies, and procedures. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be given upon completion of these courses. One of the most significant components of this initiative is a well-managed database that tracks CEUs and current accreditations. This database will help us manage the recertification process and ensure that effective and standardized training is available. The CVSOs will then follow up and assist with training and updates in the local communities to veteran service organizations and other regional benefits organizations.

CalVet and CVSOs foster relationships with community partners. These ongoing relationships increase information sharing and improve communication with veterans throughout all stages of their lives.

# D Increase the points of access to information about benefits and services through community partnerships and greater social media activity.

CalVet Lead: Women Veterans Affairs Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Women Veterans Roster
- » Women Veterans Newsletter (bi-monthly)
- » CalVet Website, Facebook and other social media
- » CalVet and Military Families Collaborative Phone Calls (monthly)
- » Designated women veterans email and phone line
- » CalVet/California Research Bureau (CRB) Women Veterans Survey (biennial)
- » Coalition with the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and CRB

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 10% increase in number of entries on the Women Veterans Roster by early 2014.
- » 5% increase in number of women who know about state/federal benefits from 2013 CalVet/CRB Women Veterans Survey. (Of the approximately 900 women who responded to the 2011 Women Veterans Survey, over half did not know about their state benefits.)
- » 5% increase in unique visitors to CalVet website and followers of social media by early 2014.

Women veterans often do not self-identify as veterans for a variety of reasons. This may act as a barrier to accessing the services they need and applying for the benefits to which they are entitled. In the 2011 CalVet/California Research Bureau (CRB) Women Veterans Survey, over half of the respondents did not know about many of their state benefits and slightly less than half did not know about many of their federal benefits. If CalVet and its partners can educate women veterans about their benefits and inform them that they may qualify for needed services, perhaps fewer women veterans will be at risk for or experience homelessness, unemployment, domestic violence, and untreated health/mental health issues.

The associated initiatives for this objective are intended to provide regular access between CalVet, CalVet partners, and women veterans and increase the channels of information and the volume of information about benefits, programs and services that exist for women veterans.

# E Improve current services and support the development of future services for women veterans and their families.

CalVet Lead: Women Veterans Affairs Division

ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES	PERFORMANCE METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» CalVet and Women Veteran Program Managers Phone Calls (bi-monthly)</li> <li>» CalVet &amp; Military Families Collaborative Phone Calls (monthly)</li> <li>» CalVet/CRB Women Veterans Survey (biennial)</li> <li>» Designated women veterans email and phone line</li> <li>» Town Hall meeting and Round table Discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 5% increase in level of satisfaction with state/federal benefits by per biennial survey.</li> <li>» 5% increase in number of attendees at Town Hall meetings and roundtable discussions annually.</li> <li>» 1-2 new collaborations annually.</li> </ul>

Research shows that women veterans are more likely to suffer hardships related to military service after separation. The scope of services offered to women veterans in California needs to be improved as most services were originally developed for single male veterans. Women themselves have reported the need for gender-specific services, indicating that more needs to be developed to meet their needs.

The associated initiatives for this objective are intended to gather information about what is/is not working in the scope of services offered to women veterans and to use that information to advocate for the improvement and increase of services.

# F Increase outreach to women veterans through recurring events and outreach materials.

CalVet Lead: Women Veterans Affairs Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Women Veterans Leadership Conference (annual)
- » Women’s Military History Week Reception (annual)
- » Women Veterans Newsletter (bi-monthly)
- » CalVet Website, Facebook and social media
- » Women Veterans Outreach Toolkit
- » Outreach Events
- » Town Hall meetings and round table discussions

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% annual increase the number of attendees at the annual conference (2012 conference attendance: 230).
- » 5% annual increase the number of attendees at annual reception.
- » 90% overall satisfaction rating of annual events.

CalVet must contact veterans where they work and live to ensure they are supported. The Division for Women Veterans Affairs strives to do that as many still need or prefer in-person contact with organizations. Additionally, women veterans, like most veterans, work well within their networks of veteran friends, colleagues and family members. Women veterans also need to be represented at veterans events as they have been historically marginalized or forgotten within the overall veterans population. Therefore, the Division for Women Veterans Affairs will continue to provide the opportunity for in-person networking at outreach events that are either hosted or sponsored by the department.

The associated initiatives for this objective are intended to foster in-person contact between CalVet, CalVet partners and women veterans and to raise awareness for and in support of the sacrifice and service of women who have served in the Armed Forces.



## Collaborate with federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations to enhance veteran housing opportunities.

CalVet Lead: CalVet Home Loans Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Habitat for Heroes.
- » Explore opportunities beyond single family home ownership.
- » Develop relationships with veteran advocacy groups.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Six new housing projects by 2015-16
- » Define the types of housing needed by veterans annually.
- » Define types and amounts of supportive services needs annually.

CalVet has made great strides in providing housing for California's veterans. That population continues to grow, and the need still far outweighs the supply. To increase housing availability and leverage limited resources, CalVet collaborates with various federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Heroes. These new relationships will result in housing opportunities for veterans in areas where none previously existed. They will also help to increase capacity in existing program areas.

Due to the downturned economy, the housing needs of veterans have expanded. Not only is there a need for single family homes, but also for lower-cost solutions. CalVet's goal is to create a continuum of housing solutions including transitional, rental, and more affordable single housing options to meet the needs of every California veteran. To accomplish this, CalVet will continue to expand working relationships with governmental agencies, such as Housing and Community Development (HCD), local counties, and cities to develop multi-family housing and supportive services throughout the State.

In addition, CalVet will continue to seek out and collaborate with new veteran advocacy groups, such as the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CAVSA) and the Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV) to address housing and supportive services needs for veterans and the territories that need priority attention. Smaller groups in high density areas that are housing homeless veterans and groups developing innovative financial supportive options are also ideal partners for CalVet.

# H Increase Veterans Homes' census to 94% of budgeted/licensed capacity excluding Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Marketing and Outreach.
- » Centralize waiting lists.
- » Rapid-admissions of homeless/hardship veterans pilot program.
- » Serve veterans with immediate need at each Veterans Home by developing networks of outside referral services.

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » One marketing / outreach event per Veterans Home per month by summer of 2013.
- » Veterans Homes Division's stake in the CalVet Connect platform and improved public website content by November 2013.
- » Admission of homeless/hardship veterans to fill 84 bed domiciliary unit in WLA and available beds system-wide.
- » Outside agency referral policy and procedures developed and implemented for veterans placed on waiting lists or denied admission by May 2014.

The number of veterans 85 years of age or older is projected to increase 20% between 2010 and 2019. The Veterans Homes are increasing outreach to assist veterans who are aged, disabled, homeless or unemployable. While the Veterans Homes have a maximum physical capacity of 2,995 beds, due to statewide budget constraints, not all the beds are budgeted or licensed. CalVet is focused on reaching 94% of budgeted/licensed capacity Homes-wide (6% accounts for necessary bed-holds and level-of-care movement) with strategic marketing and outreach plans at each Veterans Home. Maintaining the highest possible resident census is essential to serving the most California veterans. To aid in this effort, CalVet centralized waiting lists and is developing referral procedures to best serve veterans regardless of which Veterans Home they apply to in the state. CalVet is also committed to providing alternative resources to those veterans who are not admitted due to capacity constraints or lack of eligibility.

71% of California's veterans are age 50 or above. An effective marketing plan will account for the "age wave" to ensure that all of California's veterans who deserve, and qualify for long-term Veterans Home care receive it. CalVet will develop a marketing and outreach plan to both bring in residents and recruit highly skilled staff. CalVet is also increasing its marketing capabilities through the upcoming CalVet Connect platform, improved web content delivery, and hiring veterans service representatives to better assist veterans with their earned benefits.

CalVet has embraced the USDVA's goal of ending veteran homelessness and will be admitting an increasingly higher percentage of homeless/hardship veterans to meet this goal. In 2013, 30% of residents admitted to the Veterans Homes were homeless before admission. CalVet will continue to increase outreach and develop programs to address the unique needs of the homeless veterans population.

Veterans Home of California - Fresno



## Increase Veterans Homes' budgeted and licensed bed capacities.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Ramp-up West Los Angeles Veterans Home
- » Open Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes
- » Optimize levels of care provided across all Veterans Homes
- » Address veteran homelessness in California through innovative use of Veterans Homes capacity

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Increase West Los Angeles SNF census to 72 by August 2013.
- » Admit first West Los Angeles DOM resident by September of 2013 and increase DOM census to 84 by June 2015.
- » Hire staff, obtain RCFE licensure, and admit the first residents to Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes in October 2013.
- » Hire staff, obtain SNF licensure, and admit the first residents to the Redding and Fresno skilled nursing and memory care facilities in spring and summer of 2014.
- » Conduct statewide bed capacity and veterans needs assessment to determine appropriate number of beds and levels of care offered at each Veterans Home by Dec 2014.
- » Complete West Los Angeles Kitchen project by March 2016.

CalVet is committed to providing premier quality, individualized and affordable long-term care services for all qualified veterans regardless of income. To assist with this, the USDVA has a longstanding, with the states to help build and support state veterans homes. California continues to be a high-needs state for long-term care beds and has received \$364,053,146 in federal construction funds. The department currently operates Veterans Homes in Yountville, Barstow, Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, and West Los Angeles with plans to open new Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding in fall 2013. The Veterans Homes range in size from 60 residents on a 20-acre site to over 1,000 residents on 500 acres. The Veterans Homes are certified by the USDVA and licensed by the



California Department of Public Health and by the California Department of Social Services. When all eight Veterans Homes are at physical capacity, they will house and care for approximately 3,000 veterans.

The initiative to open five Veterans Homes in five years is in progress. In the West Los Angeles Veterans Home, CalVet has successfully filled its licensed Residential Care for the Elderly space. The ramp-up of the first memory care and skilled nursing neighborhoods is underway. Funding has been secured for expansion beyond 156 beds through the construction of a full kitchen, anticipated for completion in 2016. CalVet is also currently converting 84 vacant, unlicensed Skilled Nursing Facility beds at the West Los Angeles Veterans Home into Independent Living beds to address the needs of veterans in the region.

Recently, statewide demand for skilled nursing and memory care beds has increased. This demand will inevitably increase as the age wave advances. CalVet anticipates increased demand for long-term care services by the high percentage of Gulf War veterans who suffered traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI is also one of the most common injuries sustained by soldiers during of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Delayed effects on cognition, judgment, social skills, physical abilities and independent living are expected to surpass its more immediate and obvious effects. Upon licensing of the Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes, CalVet will conduct a statewide assessment of bed capacity, long-term care needs, and the appropriate levels of care for veterans in the Veterans Homes. This will include evaluating the Yountville Veterans Home master plan for opportunities to increase services to veterans.

**J Utilize the Veterans Homes’ unbudgeted space to serve more veterans through collaborative relationships with non-profits, veteran service organizations, and private entities at no additional cost to the State.**

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

**ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES**

- » Serve more veterans by identifying, utilizing, and leasing unused space.
- » Serve more veterans by creating public-private partnerships that are measurable and effective.

**PERFORMANCE METRICS**

- » Complete Yountville facility study, a part of the Yountville Master Study, by December 2013.
- » Generate public-private partnerships to serve more veterans by May 2014.
- » Develop metrics for monitoring the effectiveness of public-private partnerships by May 2014.

Budget constraints have limited the utilization of some of the Veterans Homes’ beds. This has resulted in a “budgeted capacity” lower than the physical or constructed capacity of the Veterans Homes. Honoring veterans and meeting their growing and changing needs will require organizational creativity through developing innovative, public-private partnership programs. We will engage non-profit organizations, veterans service organizations, and the USDVA when considering innovative uses of the unbudgeted beds that are consistent with CalVet’s mission, USDVA construction grant, and state bond constraints. We will also develop metrics to monitor the effectiveness of our collaborations.

CalVet continues to optimize and re-evaluate space at the Yountville Veterans Home to identify opportunities to serve veterans and to generate additional revenue. With input from the Veterans Home’s residents, staff and the community, CalVet is developing a master plan that will help inform and guide future planning. The plan will offer creative options for public-private partnerships to improve resource utilization, services, quality of life programs, and revenue opportunities. It will also provide a thorough assessment of all structures and land so that an efficient and comprehensive facility improvements plan can be developed for short, mid, and long-term planning.

CalVet will develop and implement procedures for periodically evaluating all of the Veterans Homes to identify opportunities to enhance its use of unused space and increase revenue. CalVet will also create formal processes for systematically tracking and utilizing unused space, as well as formalizing the evaluation procedure and measures for potential public-private partnerships, and writing procedures to provide periodic measurements of their success.



Veterans Home of California - Lancaster

# K Increase awareness of and expand outreach to minority veterans

CalVet Leads: Minority Veterans Affairs Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Outreach efforts to minority veterans
- » Collaboration with state, local, federal service providers and organizations

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Five new partnerships annually with minority veteran organizations.
- » Increased attendance at conferences and events.

*Note: This metric is yet to be determined pending efforts in 2013-14. Targets will be reported in subsequent Annual Reports.*

California is the proud home to 1.8 million veterans, yet we have only been able to collect contact information for a fraction of those veterans—either through self-reporting or receipt of state or federal veteran’s benefits. We continue to implement new ways to reach the remaining veterans in innovative ways—in particular, by focusing on specific veteran groups.

Of the various minority veterans groups working in the United States, there is a proportionate number of minority veterans groups working in California and representing African American, Mexican American, Asian American, and American Indian veterans. These groups have not been effective in outreach to minority veterans because the groups are all membership based and, traditionally, have neither tried to increase membership nor helped minority veterans attain benefits and services. Most of these minority veterans groups have historically been socially oriented as opposed to being service oriented.

Our plan is to increase the participation and engagement of every minority veterans’ group and organization in California by inviting their leadership to collaborate and work with us in connecting veterans with their benefits and services. The department will then be able to present a united front that encourages the commitment and collaboration of the public and private sector organizations that can connect veterans with jobs and other opportunities.

Resources and assets available to help us accomplish this objective include the CalVet Connect web portal, face-to-face engagements, with veterans at town hall meetings, veteran group gatherings and events (such as Stand Downs), and veteran group conferences. Internally, the CalVet executive team discusses operational issues and collaborative efforts that increase effectiveness within the organization.

We expect these efforts to result in an increase in membership numbers for minority veteran groups (based on the identified veterans returning to California), and an increase in the number of veterans in the CalVet database.





# STRATEGIC GOAL 2

PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF CALVET-SPONSORED CARE AND SERVICES TO VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

As times change, so will the needs of California's veterans and their families. To meet those changing needs, CalVet is committed to continually updating and improving the level of care and services we provide. CalVet strives to provide industry-leading care and services through our Home Loan Program and Veterans Homes.

## OBJECTIVE A

Provide premier long-term care and residential services in each Veterans Home.

## OBJECTIVE B

Improve the Home Loan Program to provide industry-leading services that best meet the needs of our veterans.

## OBJECTIVE C

Improve the Home Loan Insurance Program to reduce program risk and maximize benefits.

## OBJECTIVE D

Provide the highest quality care in the Veterans Homes by utilizing technology.



# A

## Provide premier long-term care and residential services in each Veterans Home.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Provide advanced and efficient health care by utilizing technology
- » Collaborate with the California Department of Public health and VA to ensure best practices and quality care
- » Corporate compliance
- » Quality Assurance/Improvement
- » Policy and Procedure standardization

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 100% Regulatory survey success- no substandard care findings.
- » CMS Quality Rating of 4 or 5 stars.
- » 98% resident satisfaction on annual survey.
- » Implement Ew-VHIS as the official chart of record by December of 2014.
- » Write an Ew-VHIS Phase II grant or other means to secure additional funding for ongoing system development to achieve “meaningful use” by December 2015.
- » Implement TeleHealth in Yountville by December 2013 and all Veterans Homes by December 2016.
- » Implement TeleMedicine in Barstow by July 2013 and all Veterans Homes by December 2017.
- » Implement TALYST pharmaceutical dispensing machines at:
  - » Chula Vista by January 2014, Barstow by March 2014, West LA by May of 2014, Yountville by January 2015, Fresno by April 2015, Redding by June 2015.
- » Implement and enhance Barstow’s wander/elopement system by December 2013.
- » Enhance Yountville’s re-thermalization meal delivery system by January 2015.

**PERFORMANCE METRICS**

- » Implement clinical to business audits and training to improve care by December 2013.
- » Provide quarterly reports on all associated compliance and quality programs including plan to address recommendations.
- » Develop standard and wellness metrics by December 2013.
- » Improve resident's quality of life by addressing the unique health needs of veterans and develop standard wellness metrics by December 2013.
- » Track wellness exam and target 95% completion.

Not only has California shaped how the nation takes care of its aged, disabled, and homeless veterans, it leads the nation by serving the largest population of veterans in long-term assisted living and skilled nursing care. California is the most populated and diverse state in the nation. This translates into a diverse veteran population with a wide range of needs in the Veterans Homes. Each Veterans Home, while part of a system of care, offers a unique environment and leverages the community resources to engage local veterans.

The number of veterans 85 years of age or older is projected to increase 20% between 2010 and 2019. While the population of World War II veterans is declining, veterans from the Korean, Vietnam, and even the current conflicts are in need of assisted living and skilled nursing care. Veterans from each generation have different needs and expectations and CalVet has always adapted to fulfill those needs through changes in programs, technology, and staffing. Aged, disabled, and homeless veterans need access to earned long-term care services, including assisted living, licensed nursing care, and geriatric medical care.

Veterans Homes provide premier care to California's veterans in a home-like environment that fosters dignity and honors veterans. The quality rating scale from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is the industry standard. The Veterans Homes Division's goal is to maintain at least a 4-Star quality care rating in all Veterans Homes with a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) or Intermediate



Care Facility level of care. The maximum rating is 5-Stars. Maintaining this rating keeps the Veterans Homes in the top 33% of long-term care facilities nationally. Maintaining quality care is essential to ensure ongoing federal funding support from CMS and the USDVA and, most important of all, it is what our veterans deserve.

To ensure consistently high quality care, CalVet is standardizing policies and practices. This will include adopting standards that compare the Veterans Homes to best practices in private industry for quality care and resident satisfaction outcomes. Food service menus and delivery systems are being standardized.

A fully integrated electronic health record (the Ew-VHIS) will help to ensure efficiency, accountability and high quality care. To do so, it is essential that this system is fully developed, user friendly, integrated into the clinical workflow, and that information exchange reduces duplication of effort and paper-based processes. With the projected growth of the Veterans Homes across eight campuses, efforts to manage, scale up clinical operations and concurrently improve health care delivery become even more critical. The fully developed Ew-VHIS Phase II will result in “meaningful use.” This means that patient care will be coordinated among all practitioners who see the patient. Patient privacy will be maintained while information will be available to residents, clinicians and management to help make the most informed decisions. Improved documentation flow will result in optimized efficiency and billing for delivered services.

CalVet’s standard quality assurance and quality improvement programs’ goals and metrics ensure that veterans receive premier quality care that is on par with the best in the nation. The data and ideas generated by this process enable CalVet to make more informed health care decisions, reduce variation and errors and allocate resources more efficiently. Finally, customer satisfaction is a

standard measure for success in the long-term care industry. CalVet's goal is that every resident respond positively to the question "Overall, are you satisfied with the care provided at the Veterans Home?"

The use of technology to ensure premier care will continue in such areas as memory care units, where we will ensure that an effective "wander/elopement" system is in place. This will allow residents the highest level of independence and safety in memory care areas of the Veterans Homes. CalVet is installing TALYST pharmaceutical dispensing machines interfaced with Framework LTC software at each of its Veterans Homes with SNF that provide significant efficiencies for dispensing and administering medications by nursing staff. CalVet, in collaboration with the USDVA, is implementing TeleMedicine and TeleHealth at its Veterans Homes to allow residents greater access to a wide range of providers and specialists. This creates a significant efficiency by reducing transportation costs and will offer unprecedented access to USDVA healthcare providers. SilverChair, education software is being used to standardize nursing employee orientations and education, and enhancements to food service delivery systems.

CalVet is committed to delivering coordinated health care services that focus on wellness and the veteran population's unique needs. Piecemeal outsourcing of health care can result in the fragmented management of co-morbid diseases and unnecessarily high costs. Coordinated, patient centered care is a partnership among practitioners, patients, and their families. It improves decisions, respects patients' preferences, provides education, and improves patient participation in their own care and reduced disease management can be the result.

The Veterans Homes Division has been developing clinical staffing standards. Our goal is to realign staffing to best meet residents' needs. We presently track the hours per patient day for each site and have been able to identify appropriate standards that are in line with high quality community standards for long-term care. Our goal is to enhance each Residential Care for the Elderly resident's independence and self-esteem by transitioning to a social model of care, which encourages greater activity and self-care. In addition, this transition will save money by rightsizing how we assign our professional clinical staff.

CalVet is committed to health care which targets the veteran population's unique needs including PTSD, TBI, substance abuse, depression and military sexual trauma. Clinical staff are taking advantage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act, which allows the Veterans Homes to expand the wellness and prevention services to our veterans at no cost to the General Fund. This initiative focuses on proper nutrition, regular exercise, smoking cessation, and obesity reduction. The annual wellness visit helps to build a personalized prevention plan and includes wellness education to improve health outcomes. CalVet will develop detailed wellness performance metrics and incorporate these into the standardized quality assurance program.

# B Improve the Home Loan Program to provide industry-leading services that best meet the needs of our veterans.

CalVet Lead: CalVet Home Loans Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Improve communications for better customer service.
- » Implement a Statewide Marketing Plan.
- » Improving customer used software/ services.

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 25% response rate for online customer satisfaction survey by 2015-16.
- » 100% increase in the CalVet loan volume annually through 2015-16.
- » Implement new CalVet Home Loans website by January 2014.
- » Annually publish at least 3 educational/ how to presentations on CalVet website.

Even the best veteran loans and housing programs will not accomplish their goals if they are unknown or difficult to use. To ensure this is not the case, CalVet will be implementing a statewide marketing plan. This plan will focus on improving communications to veterans by establishing and maintaining a statewide marketing/outreach program to educate veteran homebuyers, real estate agents, and brokers, in a cost-efficient manner. CalVet’s Home Loan Program website will be updated to make it more user friendly with the latest website software available. The website will provide educational materials to veterans utilizing tools such as how-to videos and PowerPoint presentations.

CalVet will optimize access to its loan programs. The CalVet Automated Phone System used to direct veterans calls will be updated to minimize wait times and misrouted calls. CalVet will implement an online application process that will streamline the pre-approval process and a process for refinancing loans for new customers. CalVet will also explore the use of electronic banking to automate payment processing and loan funding to more efficiently serve our contract holders.

Finally, to ensure veterans customer service concerns are properly addressed, CalVet will develop and implement online surveys, such as customer satisfaction surveys, to gain valuable feedback from veterans on how to better improve and streamline the loan process. CalVet will also implement a process to decrease the customer call wait times and improve the experience for all loan related inquiries.



## Improve the Home Loan Insurance Program to reduce program risk and maximize benefits.

CalVet Lead: CalVet Home Loans Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Explore and evaluate various optional life insurance programs that will better meet the needs of our veteran contract holders in our current economic environment.
- » Focus on providing affordable Property Insurance to our veterans by exploring Reinsurance/Risk Based Pricing.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 30% enrollment in the optional life insurance program for all new loans for participants under the age of 62, by June 30, 2015.
- » Create a survey for current contract holders for feedback on current insurance needs with a 25% response rate, by January 31, 2014.
- » Administer a phone survey for all new contract holders for feedback on insurance coverage needs with a 75% response rate, by January 31, 2015.

Risk is inherent when loans are involved. Although CalVet has always taken steps to ensure the solvency of our program while minimizing risk to veterans, opportunities for improvement exist. As CalVet expands its housing options, the insurance coverage must expand as well to mitigate increased risks. Some of CalVet's newest housing expansion opportunities are more concentrated, such as Habitat Community Projects, and therefore have different risk profiles. CalVet will review risk-based pricing for high-density exposures and ways to keep the rates low and explore cost savings measures to the veteran, such as higher deductible options and group pricing based on locational risk.

Choices are important to everyone, especially when it involves the single most significant financial investment most people will make. CalVet will poll veteran loan holders, both electronically and by phone, for feedback on desires, needs, and affordability of insurance offered in conjunction with their loan. Based on survey results CalVet will: 1) work with insurance brokers to explore the viability of maintaining the strength of group pricing for Disaster Indemnity and/or Fire and Hazard insurance where participation is optional; 2) explore other property insurance models with our insurance consultants that may help to meet the needs of today's contract holders; and 3) explore the availability of additional types of insurance such as mortgage payoff, disability insurance, and job loss benefits.



## Provide the highest quality care in the State Veterans Homes by utilizing technology.

CalVet Lead: Information Services Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Enterprise-wide Veterans Health Information System (Ew-VHIS).
- » Upgrade wireless infrastructure for Yountville (project partners: Veterans Homes Division/Yountville Management).
- » Perform assessment and upgrade fiber optics infrastructure for Yountville.
- » Establish load balancing (LB) between the Ew-VHIS Applications
- » Establish Disaster Recovery Plan, processes and procure technology for Ew-VHIS.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Ew-VHIS is fully implemented at Redding/Fresno and Yountville Veterans Homes on schedule.
- » Fully utilize Yountville wireless devices as needed with Ew-VHIS via the wireless network by 2014.
- » Validate network throughput of 1 gig (up from 100 mg) by September 2013.
- » Decrease number of phone calls in Yountville to the help desk for slowness issues by 50% by December 2013.
- » Implement LB by August 2013. Reduce production system downtime by 50% by utilizing load balancing options by transferring the Ew-VHIS application load to another set of servers while patches/upgrades are performed.
- » Fully develop and test a plan to achieve disaster recovery operations at a second site by April 2014.

The Enterprise-wide Veterans Homes Information System (Ew-VHIS) replaces the current Veterans Homes Information system (Meditech) and provides both new and existing Veterans Homes with a health care and financial system that fits their mission of providing the highest standard of comprehensive long-term care to California veterans. Due to the inconsistent and limited use of the Meditech system across the Veterans Homes and its lack of long-term care functionality, CalVet developed a plan to implement a commercial, off-the-shelf product. Implementation of the Ew-VHIS will improve Veterans Homes operations and aid in the better delivery of care to residents. Ew-VHIS will also assist with the reimbursement process and provide more consistency.

Yountville’s wireless infrastructure must be upgraded to support the new Ew-VHIS project. Approximately 170 mobile devices will be part of the project implementation to provide wireless access to the medical staff for patient record information. The infrastructure needs to be robust enough to maintain data integrity and provide reliable connectivity. Cabling services will also be required for this effort. As part of the project, iPads were determined to be the primary tool for end users.

The Yountville fiber optics infrastructure is also in need of an upgrade. A minimum of nine network communication points have been found to operate at substandard speed. A full analysis of the site and retrofit of the identified fiber optics is necessary to guarantee a computing environment that is fast and efficient. Work will start summer of 2013.

The Ew-VHIS computing infrastructure will include software that balances the use-load of system applications and the 900 virtual desktops that are part of this effort. This will enable upgrades and patches to be applied to the virtualized environment and applications without experiencing down time. This effort will be completed by August 2013.





# STRATEGIC GOAL 3

MAKE CALVET AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE BY INVESTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR EMPLOYEES.

CalVet will continue to invest in our employees by providing a supportive work environment. This will help ensure that we are prepared for our future and able to achieve our mission. This involves having the right people with the right skills who view CalVet as a valuable organization. Developing our employees through training, development, and recognition, while providing the technological tools that employees need to be effective and succeed, is a strategic imperative.

## OBJECTIVE A

Prepare our workforce to accomplish our mission through effective planning, evaluation, and communication.

## OBJECTIVE B

Improve the employee training and development program to ensure our staff is prepared for our future.

## OBJECTIVE C

Enhance employee recognition and incentive program.

## OBJECTIVE D

Transform CalVet's computing environment by utilizing state of the art technology.

# A

## Prepare our workforce to accomplish our mission through effective planning, evaluation, and communication.

CalVet Lead: Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance Unit

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Workforce and Succession Plan
- » Employee Perception Survey
- » New employee and exit interview surveys
- » Leadership communications and engagement
- » Strategic action plans

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 5% annual increase in overall employee satisfaction with CalVet as an organization.
- » 5% annual increase in employee satisfaction with leadership communications.
- » 90% of all functions/processes documented at headquarters by 2015-16.
- » 100% of divisions have an action plan for Goal #3.
- » 2 action items implemented annually to increase employee satisfaction and engagement.

As of 2013, 20% of the American workforce is currently over the age of 55. By 2020, that number is projected to grow to 25%.<sup>5</sup> Currently, 24% of the State workforce is 55 years old or older.<sup>6</sup> The CalVet headquarters workforce is significantly older with 32% of staff at or above age 55. We are at risk of losing 65% of our workforce in the next five years. In a workforce plan survey conducted in 2013, supervisors at CalVet headquarters said that the highest workforce risks were recruiting and retaining employees with proper skills, having proper workforce and succession plans, and not appropriately transferring institutional knowledge. CalVet must take action to increase knowledge retention and employee retention efforts through effective planning, evaluation, and communication.

We will ensure that the workforce and succession plan is effective through periodic evaluation, updates of the data, and implementation of action items from the plan. We are working to document at least 90% of our functions/processes at headquarters by fiscal year 2015-16 (10% accounts for new processes and process improvements). This will ensure that we have at least one vehicle for

5. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employee Projections for 2010-2020

6. CalHR State Workforce Age Data by Occupational groups as of 7-18-2011



institutional knowledge transfer for succession planning. Other methods to increase knowledge transfer include cross training and job sharing, which will be described within the future workforce action plan each division develops. Progress will be reported quarterly to ensure that the plan is an active part of our business.

Evaluating employee perceptions of the organization is essential to ensuring we are on track to accomplish our mission. To that end, we will conduct employee perception surveys annually. Focus groups or town hall meetings with executives will help provide ideas for improving employee satisfaction. New employee surveys and exit interview surveys will also provide insight into how we are doing and how we can improve the work experience of our staff.

Effective communication affects how our workforce performs and is critical at all levels of the organization. Improving the communication between our leadership team and staff at all levels is our focus. We want employees to be satisfied with how managers and leaders encourage communication and share information through various work units. In the past year, we have initiated semi-annual “All Hands” meetings, monthly executive team meetings, and a monthly e-mail from the Secretary to all employees describing what is currently going on at the department-level and within each division. We continuously look for new ways to improve communication.

# B Improve the employee training and development program to ensure our staff is prepared for our future.

CalVet Lead: Human Resources Division

## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Annual budget plan for training programs
- » Annual Training Plan
- » Enterprise-wide (non-clinical) training program
- » Upward mobility program
- » Career development program
- » Automated training request program
- » Workshop on training and development opportunities
- » IDP training for supervisors
- » Additional e-learning opportunities such as PACE and Microsoft e-learning (project partner: Information Services Division)

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 95% completion rate of probation reports at headquarters by 2015-16.
- » 95% completion rate of Individual Development Plans at headquarters by 2015-16.
- » 90% compliance by 2015-16 of meeting mandated state training including ethics, driver's and supervisory training.
- » Increase training effectiveness scores in employee evaluations annually (TBD).

*Note: TBD metrics will be benchmarked in 2013-14 and targets reported in the subsequent Annual Reports.*

CalVet's Human Resources Division is working to improve the way we develop, coordinate and monitor all non-clinical, mandatory and upward-mobility employee training and development programs for headquarters and district office employees.

The Headquarters Training Office will develop a marketing plan to publicize training and upward mobility/employee development opportunities and to promote their value. We will continually review the training program to ensure training is consistent with strategic and workforce planning goals. We seek to offer a variety of learning solutions, including in-house, instructor-led and online training. The Training Unit will also communicate the importance and availability of individual training plans and our upward mobility program during all New Employee Orientation Training sessions. We will conduct

training workshops regarding the Annual Training Plan Process. We will review and assess employee course evaluations to ensure the appropriate return on investment objectives are met.

All CalVet divisions will work to support this objective because they know how best to develop their own staff. Each division will develop an action plan for how it will train and develop employees and how they will measure their efforts..





## Enhance our employee recognition and incentive program.

CalVet Lead: Human Resources Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Restructure departmental monetary and non-monetary awards program
- » Awards program workshop for all staff
- » Annual budget plan for awards programs
- » Employee appreciation and activity committee (project partner: Women Veterans Affairs)

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » 50% Increase in number of employees receiving awards by in 2015-16.
- » 50% Increase in number of award nominations submitted by in 2015-16.
- » 5% annual increase in overall employee satisfaction with CalVet as an organization.
- » 4 new workshops conducted in 2013-14 to market the awards program to all CalVet staff.

CalVet is committed to conceiving, developing, implementing and sustaining workforce excellence programs for employees, managers and staff. CalVet will hold two awards ceremonies per year. Our Human Resources Division (HRD) will revise the employee recognition and nomination form to include employee nominations of peers through the nominated employee's supervisor/chain of command. Previously, only supervisors and managers were allowed to nominate staff.

We are also expanding the Veterans First Award to include thank you letters and other commendations from outside agencies. Previously, Veterans First Awards were only granted for community service and volunteerism "outside of normal job duties". CalVet will meet these workforce excellence goals by monitoring employee perception surveys and industry trends to develop an effective employee recognition and awards program. We will promote a workplace that honors diversity and the unique strengths, cultures and values of our employees creating a positive working environment where employees feel valued, are recognized and rewarded for excellent performance.

In addition to the efforts of our HRD, our plan includes action plans and initiatives from all divisions within CalVet. An initiative from the Women Veterans Affairs Division involves developing an employee appreciation and activity committee for CalVet. This committee would promote the annual holiday party and other employee events to boost morale and recognize the hard work of CalVet employees. All divisions will support this objective through strategies they deem most appropriate and effective given the culture of their staff.





## Transform CalVet’s computing environment by utilizing state of the art technology.

CalVet Lead: Information Services Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Complete and ensure all desktops have MS Office Professional installed
- » Upgrade Microsoft SharePoint to the latest version (2013).
- » Work with CalVet Business areas to set up collaboration sites based on their program needs.
- » Data classification effort to establish retention criteria on CalVet program area documentation.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Incorporate the Intranet into the new SharePoint 2013 Environment by August 2014.
- » 20% reduction in the number of manual workflow/approvals by December 2014.
- » Fully develop and test a plan to achieve disaster recovery operations at a second site by April 2014.
- » 80% overall user satisfaction rating of Good or Excellent for the Help Desk ticket process by April 2015.
- » 75% overall user satisfaction rating of Good or Excellent for the IT Service Request process by April 2015.

By transforming the computing platform to an enterprise toolset, we will be able to manage content and determine which what needs to be retained and archived. This will reduce the shuffle that occurs with paper-based processes. Not having to print, sign, mail, open the mail, approve and send back to the originator will improve business efficiency. Additionally, web-based tools will enable staff to meet, review documents, share ideas, and make edits in a collaborative online environment.

We plan to increase overall employee efficiency and user satisfaction by utilizing a modernized intranet site that allows content to be located easily using search features. This can be measured through an employee satisfaction survey, and our target is 60% satisfaction.





---

# STRATEGIC GOAL 4

PROVIDE PREMIER LONG-TERM CARE WITH FISCAL EFFICIENCIES.

---

CalVet is constantly looking for ways to reduce costs and increase revenue while improving our long-term care services. When the efficiencies are increased and risks are reduced, costs go down. Ultimately, we are able to serve more veterans without an additional burden to California's taxpayers.

## OBJECTIVE A

Increase revenue to offset costs to the General Fund.

## OBJECTIVE B

Reduce the cost of care

# A

## Increase revenue to offset costs to the General Fund.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Complete and ensure all desktops have MS Office Professional installed
- » Upgrade Microsoft SharePoint to the latest version (2013).
- » Work with CalVet Business areas to set up collaboration sites based on their program needs.
- » Data classification effort to establish retention criteria on CalVet program area documentation.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » A 7% a year revenue increase in Yountville, Barstow, and Chula Vista Veterans Homes to offset costs to the General Fund by 70% by 2016-17.
- » Evaluate the revenue potential for each Veterans Home annually and submit through the Governor's Budget Process.
- » Implement ICD-10 coding by October 2014.
- » Develop a standardized charge master by December 2013.
- » Improve collection of fees by December 2013.
- » Develop best practices for the billing, claim, and collection of USDVA Per Diem by December 2014.
- » Improve revenue through automation by implementing Ew-VHIS by 2014-15 and training staff for optimum system use.
- » Analyze and realign the cost recovery model to decrease dependence on the General Fund by 2013-14.
- » On an ongoing basis, update policies and procedures in PolicyTech related to changing healthcare and revenue issues.
- » Update State Regulations by December 2014.
- » Assist in updating the Military and Veterans Code department-wide by December 2015.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Write an Ew-VHIS Phase II grant or other means to secure additional funding for ongoing system development.
- » In line with the Coordinated Care Initiative, ensure that all dual eligible veterans receive both Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits and if needed secure additional health coverage in line with the Affordable Care Act.
- » Identify mechanisms for measuring participation in all available health care coverage and track the percentage of improvement.

Access to long-term care homes is a benefit available to qualified aged, disabled, and homeless veterans and is a commitment California has made to them. While CalVet has done an exceptional job of providing premier care to our veterans, we must address the high cost of Veterans Homes through an enterprise-wide business approach. Health care costs are rising, and we expect an increased need for long-term care with the aging veteran population. With current budgetary constraints, it is critical to optimize best long-term care business practices and cost recovery models. CalVet is faced with the same fiscal constraints as other health care providers given rising health care needs from a co-morbid aging population.

CalVet relies on funding from the State's General Fund, the federal VA, reimbursements for care and resident fees. We are implementing initiatives to improve business processes, increase revenue and lower the net General Fund impact of cost of care system-wide. Specifically, we will increase revenue by 7 percent a year in Yountville, Barstow, and Chula Vista Veterans Homes to offset costs to the General Fund by 70 percent by 2016-17.

A sustainable revenue cycle is one of CalVet's long-term fiscal goals. Revenue cycle specialists have been assigned to run revenue cycle task forces in collaboration with all Veterans Homes' administrators. These efforts will include optimizing USDVA per diem reimbursement, Medicare and Medi-Cal reimbursement, dietary services, rehabilitation services, pharmacy, patient benefit services, and others. CalVet is using financial modules within the Enterprise-Wide Veterans Health Information System (Ew-VHIS) for revenue cycle analysis. Veterans Homes will implement staffing



standards, pending approval by January of 2015. CalVet is increasing service efficiency by rightsizing all departments that deliver service to the veterans through the Veterans Homes system; Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE) which have not already been converted will convert from a medical to a social model to realize cost savings without reduction in quality of care. The West Los Angeles RCFE conversion will be complete by August of 2013. Lancaster and Ventura conversions will be complete by December 2015. Revenue cycle specialists are standardizing and implementing financial and revenue policies and procedures and implementing the PolicyTech database by November 2014.

CalVet is also actively evaluating the Military and Veterans Code and State Regulations. To meet changing healthcare challenges and revenue issues, CalVet will update the Military and Veterans Code and State Regulations by July 2015.

Success with revenue goals is dependent on a well-integrated Electronic Health Record system to provide accurate, automated medical billing and cost accounting. This will require Ew-VHIS Phase II development since many fiscal tools needed in the system were not included in Phase I. Funding of all phases of this project until it can provide all the necessary tools is a priority. The department will apply for a USDVA technology grant to supplement current funding.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) have proposed that all medical coding and billing be done using the new International Classification of Diseases-10 (ICD-10) used nationwide. CalVet's successful transition to ICD-10 by October 2014 is critical to the treatment of residents and the revenue cycle. Once the CMS transition is complete, CalVet will not be reimbursed for any costs until the new coding system is properly implemented and utilized. This will require major retraining for clinical and business staff to ensure proper documentation and accurate coding. We have formed an ICD-10 Steering Committee to address this initiative and meet the deadline.

Based on best practices of the health care industry, the Veterans Homes will adopt a corporate model for administrative resources that increases CalVet's revenue cycle responsibility and accountability. The fiscal efficiencies created by using this new model will allow us to serve more veterans.

Healthcare providers must incorporate evidence-based best practices to address the illness and diseases that result in increased costs of care. CalVet will use the new electronic health record system to further manage diseases and coordinate care delivery. This will help CalVet reduce the cost of care per resident. More importantly this will increase the quality of life for the residents.

# B

## Reduce costs of care.

CalVet Lead: Veterans Homes Division

### ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

- » Research, develop, and implement best practices and business efficiency.
- » Standardize staffing models for efficient staffing resource utilization.
- » Developing a clinical-to-business peer review/audit/training team.

### PERFORMANCE METRICS

- » Leverage the benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) to focus on wellness and reduce the cost of treating preventable diseases.
- » All RCFE staffing models converted from medical to social by June 2015.
- » All Veterans Homes staffing standards designed and implemented by January 2015.
- » All standardized business policies, procedures, and forms through implemented through PolicyTech by November 2014.
- » Reduction in facility costs through energy efficient technologies by June 2014.

Piecemeal outsourcing of health care can result in the fragmented management of co-morbid diseases and unnecessarily high costs. CalVet will deliver coordinated, patient-centered health care using evidence-based best practices. This partnership among practitioners, patients, and their families will improve decision making, respect patients' preferences, increase patient participation in their own care, and reduce disease management costs.

To ensure that financial practices are consistent with federal Office of Inspector General and Health and Human Services guidelines, CalVet implemented a survey-ready Corporate Compliance program in March of 2013. This program helps prevent fraud and abuse and decreases the cost of health care. It also ensures that we are compliance with the Medicare and Medi-Cal rules of appropriate billing and our financial processes are transparent.





---

# APPENDICES

PROVIDE PREMIER LONG-TERM CARE WITH FISCAL EFFICIENCIES.

---

## APPENDIX A

Strategic Plan Overview

## APPENDIX B

Program Descriptions

## APPENDIX C

Veteran Partners and Stakeholders

## APPENDIX D

Acronyms



## Appendix A: Strategic Plan Overview

### STRATEGIC GOAL

1. Increase the accessibility and utilization of benefits and services through advocacy and education.

### OBJECTIVES

- a. Expand and improve the methods for identifying and contacting veterans and their families.
- b. Connect veterans with the benefits and services they need through outreach and advocacy.
- c. Ensure ongoing support for veterans and their families through continuous communication.
- d. Increase the points of access to information about benefits and services through community partnerships and greater social media activity.
- e. Improve current services and support the development of future services for women veterans and their families.
- f. Increase outreach to women veterans through recurring events and outreach materials.
- g. Collaborate with federal, state, local, and non-profit organizations to enhance veteran housing opportunities.
- h. Increase Veterans Homes' census to 94% of budgeted/licensed capacity excluding Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes.
- i. Increase Veterans Homes' budgeted and licensed bed capacities.
- j. Utilize Veterans Homes' unbudgeted space to serve more veterans through collaborative relationships with non-profits, veteran service organizations, and private entities at no additional cost to the State.
- k. Increase awareness of and expand outreach to minority veterans.

## STRATEGIC GOAL

## OBJECTIVES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>2. Provide the highest quality of CalVet-sponsored care and services to veterans and their families.</p> | <p>a. Provide premier long-term care and residential services in each Veterans Home.</p> <p>b. Improve the Home Loan Program to provide industry-leading services that best meet the needs of our veterans.</p> <p>c. Improve the Home Loan Insurance Program to reduce program risk and maximize benefits.</p> <p>d. Provide the highest quality care in the Veterans Homes by utilizing technology.</p> |
| <p>3. Make CalVet an employer of choice by investing in the development of our employees.</p>               | <p>a. Prepare our workforce to accomplish our mission through effective planning, evaluation, and communication.</p> <p>b. Improve the employee training and development program to ensure our staff is prepared for our future.</p> <p>c. Enhance our employee recognition and incentive program.</p> <p>d. Transform CalVet's computing environment by utilizing state of the art technology.</p>       |
| <p>4. Provide premier long-term care with fiscal efficiencies.</p>  | <p>a. Increase revenue to offset the cost to the General Fund.</p> <p>b. Reduce costs of care.</p>  |

## Appendix B: Program Descriptions

### VETERANS SERVICES DIVISION

The Veterans Services Division administers CalVet programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the CalVet Home Loan Program. The division has offices in Sacramento (Headquarters), Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego, and provides for veteran claims representation at each of the Veterans Homes. The Division also operates the State veteran cemeteries in Redding and Yountville.

In addition to working to connect veterans and their families with the benefits and services they are entitled to, the Division administers or supports several state- sponsored benefits for veterans and their families, including:

- » Veteran Claims – Collaboratively, with County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO).
- » College Tuition Fee Waiver
- » Property Tax Exemptions
- » Veteran License Plate Program
- » Fishing and Hunting License Discounts
- » Employment and Unemployment Insurance Assistance
- » State Parks and Recreation Pass

*Note: All benefits are subject to eligibility requirements.*

The Division administers the following programs:

- » **Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program (DVBE)** – State law established a DVBE program that encourages state agencies to expend not less than 3% of their annual contracts with DVBE firms. With the establishment of the 3% goal, the Legislature sought to ensure that disabled veteran business owners had an opportunity for full participation in the state’s economy and to foster increased competition in the marketplace.
- » **Veteran Cemeteries** – The Northern California Veterans Cemetery in Shasta County is the state’s first owned and operated veterans cemetery. The cemetery serves the veteran population in 18 Northern California counties and provides sufficient burial space for more than 20 years. Any eligible veteran, along with spouses and eligible dependents, may be interred at the cemetery. There is a State Veteran Cemetery at the Yountville Veterans Home, but interment is limited to residents at the Veterans Home.
- » **California Veterans Memorial Registry** – The Division supports the California Veterans Memorial Registry by acting as the point-of-contact for veterans or their families who wish to submit individual biographical data for inclusion in the registry.

- » **California Memorial Registry** – State statute requires CalVet to establish and maintain a registry of veteran memorials throughout the state. The registry currently identifies more than 400 veterans memorials throughout the state and is accessible through the CalVet website.
- » **CalVet’s Reintegration Form** program, in collaboration with partners across the state, collects veteran contact information and makes referrals based on their expressed needs for benefits and services.

### WOMEN AND MINORITY VETERANS AFFAIRS

Similar to the Veterans Services Division, the Offices of Women Veterans Affairs and Minority Veterans Affairs administer programs not directly related to Veterans Homes or the CalVet Home Loan Program but specifically targets its efforts to the women veterans and veterans from ethnic minorities. The offices are located at the Sacramento Headquarters in the Secretary’s office. In partnership with the Veterans Services Division, the Deputy Secretaries for women and minority veterans provide the same level of services and advocacy as the larger Veterans Services Division outlined above. The Women Veterans Affairs Office also sponsors an annual Women Veterans Conference that provides networking opportunities, information about benefits and services and workshops for those women veterans who need assistance.

### VETERANS HOMES DIVISION

The State veterans homes provide quality, individualized and affordable care for veterans regardless of income. The Department currently operates Veterans Homes in Yountville, Barstow, Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, and West Los Angeles. New Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding are scheduled to open in fall of 2013. The Veterans Homes range in size to accommodate 60 residents on a 20-acre site to over 1,000 residents on 500 acres. When all eight Veterans Homes are completely occupied, they will house and care for approximately 3,000 veterans.

Thanks to a close working partnership with the USDVA, veterans in a Veterans Home are eligible for USDVA funding, which pays about 30% of their cost of care. This helps to make CalVet the most cost-effective care provider for veterans since this funding is not available to veterans who reside long-term in community nursing homes. In addition, all residents receive assistance from veterans claims representatives to ensure that each veteran receives all the benefits and services to which they are entitled.

The Veterans Homes are certified by the USDVA and licensed by the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Social Services, and the California Department of Health Care Services. The Veterans Homes offer semi-private rooms; limited private rooms are available. The Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding will offer private rooms exclusively. Admission preference is given to veterans who are aged, disabled, unable to support themselves or homeless.

## VETERANS HOME SERVICES

### The Need for Care and Services

Every war period has created unique challenges for those veterans who transition back into civilian life. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses. Men and women returning from more recent wars have unique and unanticipated needs. Improved medical care and protective equipment have resulted in a higher percentage of veterans surviving serious injury and trauma. Some veterans have experienced multiple deployments and prolonged periods of combat and stress. The following factors have contributed to a huge increase in veterans' disability claims.

- » Surviving more severe and debilitating combat wounds;
- » Traumatic brain injury (TBI) resulting in disabilities that will worsen over time;
- » Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
- » Depression;
- » Military sexual trauma;
- » Difficulty finding suitable employment or education;
- » Significant family readjustment issues;
- » Disability claim delays, often as long as two years;
- » Risk of homelessness.

Never in the 129-year history of California Veterans Homes has the Department been able to offer the full range of services required to meet the long-term care needs of veterans, yet, never has the need for those services been greater.

### Continuum of Long-Term Care

The Veterans Homes' continuum of long-term care gives residents support during the changes that occur with aging, illness and/or memory decline. Our goal for each resident is to live at his or her highest level of independence. The Veterans Homes offer a range of health care services provided by on-site licensed medical staff. For more complex treatment or diagnosis, residents are referred to medical specialists within the local community or to hospitals operated by United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). Once admitted to a Veterans Home, the veteran will benefit from a broad range of services throughout his or her life.

## LEVELS OF CARE SERVICES

### Domiciliary Care (DOM)

This is also known as "Dom" or independent living. It is offered at the Veterans Homes in Yountville, Chula Vista and Barstow. Domiciliary Care provides basic services like meals, medical appointments, dental care, social activities, counseling and transportation to sponsored activities and USDVA appointments.

**Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE)**

A Residential Care Facility for the Elderly, also called “assisted living,” is available for residents who require minimal assistance and supervision with some activities of daily living. Those include bathing, dressing, eating, personal hygiene and medication management. Assistance may be offered with shopping and banking, access to pharmacy and reminders to take daily medications, and transportation to medical and dental services, rehabilitation services and recreational activities. Services may include care by licensed nurses. A memory care program also provides a supervised environment for veterans who are fairly independent but have symptoms of memory loss, severe traumatic brain injury, confusion or poor decision making. Residential care is available at Chula Vista, Yountville, West Los Angeles, Lancaster and Ventura. It will also be available at Fresno and Redding.

**Intermediate Care Facility (ICF)**

Residents in this care level often require licensed nursing assistance with medications and treatments, and generally require unlicensed nursing assistance with several daily living activities. ICF services are currently offered at Barstow and Yountville.

**Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)**

SNF care provides 24-hour services of licensed nurses and certified nursing assistants. It is more comprehensive than intermediate care. SNF residents have greater access to rehabilitation therapies, nursing care, pharmacy management, structured activities and clinical dietary services. A memory care program within this level of care provides a supervised, safe environment for veterans with symptoms of memory loss, confusion or difficulty making decisions. SNF care is available at Barstow, Chula Vista, Yountville, West Los Angeles, and will be available in Fresno and Redding.

**Memory Care / Dementia Care**

CalVet is expanding its memory care programs for those suffering from dementia. The Veterans Homes in Yountville, West Los Angeles, Redding and Fresno have neighborhoods specifically designed and constructed to allow the greatest degree of freedom, mobility, enjoyment and dignity. The amenities include enclosed gardens and protected walking areas, appropriate furnishing and soothing color combinations and enriched activity programs. Memory care staff is specially trained to understand and provide for the needs of this growing population.

**Community-Based Adult Services**

The Adult Day Health Care program ended on February 29, 2012, and was replaced by a new program called Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS). The CBAS program is an outpatient program available to Medi-Cal beneficiaries who meet medical necessity criteria and:

- » meet nursing facility level of care criteria or above; or
- » have moderate to severe cognitive impairment, including dementia; or
- » have a developmental disability; or

- » have a mild or moderate cognitive disability, and need assistance or supervision with two activities of daily living (ADLs); or
- » have a chronic mental illness or brain injury, and need assistance or supervision with two ADLs; or
- » one ADL need from a list provided, plus one of the following needs: money management, accessing resources, meal prep, or transportation.

The CBAS program is funded through the “Bridge to Reform” Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Waiver. Under this waiver, federal Medicaid matching funds are available over a five-year period to assist states and counties in implementing the health care coverage expansions that will occur in 2014 under the Affordable Care Act. CBAS services are provided through managed care plans or fee-for-service providers, depending on the county structure. Providers must provide a bundled service package as specified in the veteran’s individualized plan of care for a minimum of four hours per day. The goal of the CBAS program is to maintain or improve the health and functional status of the veteran, and to support the caregivers who continue to provide care at the veteran’s home.

#### **CALVET HOME LOAN PROGRAM**

CalVet began making low interest rate farm and home loans following the enactment of the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1921. The Legislature enacted the Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1943 which modified the program to meet new needs of veterans. The Veterans Farm and Home Purchase Act of 1974 superseded the 1943 Act and, once again, modified the program. The 1943 Act established the 1943 Fund in the State Treasury, which remains as the main fund utilized by the program.

The Home Loan Program was established to recognize the service and sacrifice of California veterans. Since the program’s inception, CalVet’s goal has been to become the loan of choice. The program has helped more than 421,000 veterans purchase farms and homes throughout the state. Funds used to finance the purchases are raised through the sale of Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds. The CalVet headquarters office in Sacramento administers the program. CalVet finances new and existing single-family homes, farms, condominiums and mobile homes on land owned by the veteran or in rental parks by acquiring legal title to property selected by the veteran. The department also provides home improvement, rehabilitation, and construction loans. Under a contract of purchase, the veteran holds an equitable interest, and the department holds legal title to the property.

All CalVet contract properties are covered under a master policy for the Disaster Indemnity Program that provides coverage for flood and earthquake. Additionally, all properties, except mobile homes and condominiums, are covered under the Fire and Hazard program. Loans funded prior to February 1, 2013, required all veterans under age 62 to participate in the CalVet Home Loan Protection Life Insurance Program and could choose other life and disability options available through the program. For loans funded after February 1, 2013, the life insurance program is optional.

A veteran who qualifies under the California Military and Veterans Code and the Federal Internal Revenue Code may be able to obtain a subsequent CalVet loan so long as any previous loan has been paid-in-full as agreed or the veteran lost his/her interest in the previous loan through divorce or dissolution of marriage. A veteran must meet qualifications established under state law in Military and Veterans Code Sections 987.50 through 989.5 and Title 12 of the California Code of Regulations to meet eligibility requirements for the program to qualify for a CalVet farm or home loan. Those qualifications are subject to change by the Legislature.

Three types of loan funds are available through the program:

1. **Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond Proceeds**, are derived from proceeds of Veterans General Obligation Bonds. This source is used to finance loans for veterans who served on active duty, who qualify under provisions of the Military and Veterans Code as a wartime era veteran, and who were released from active duty less than 25 years from loan application. These funds can only be used to finance loans for eligible wartime veterans.
2. **Qualified Mortgage Bond Proceeds**, are derived from Revenue Bond proceeds. These funds are used to finance loans for any veteran who qualifies under the Veterans Code (including peace-time veterans) and meets certain requirements (federal limitations) with regard to family income, purchase price, and previous home ownership.
3. **Pre-Ullman**, are derived from certain moneys in the 1943 Fund, certain proceeds of Pre-Ullman Revenue Bonds and Veterans General Obligation Bonds, and certain future issues of taxable bonds, if any. This source is used to finance loans for earlier war veterans, Vietnam Era veterans, and recent war veterans who do not qualify for other funding sources. These funds can only be used to make loans to veterans and ultimately to satisfy outstanding bond debt.

## APPENDIX C: VETERAN PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

CalVet's relationship with its partners and stakeholders is a very important factor in determining mission success. The commitment to provide high quality advocacy and services for all of California's 1.8 million veterans and their families is greatly enhanced when CalVet collaborates with partners and stakeholders, and leverages the enormous talent and capabilities that each group possesses. Through this strategic plan, CalVet rededicates itself to continually improving and strengthening its relationship with federal, state and local partners and stakeholders, including:

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (USDVA)

CalVet's partnership with the USDVA, specifically their day-to-day working relationships with the Veterans Health Administration and the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) of USDVA healthcare facilities throughout California, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), is vitally important to their success. There are several key components to this partnership: the USDVA provides the vast majority of direct benefits and services to veterans and their families. CalVet relies on USDVA's federal funds to build, maintain, and operate the Veterans Homes; collaborates with the VISN healthcare facilities that provide world-class healthcare to California's eligible veterans; works closely with the VBA in the compensation and pension determination process to ensure our veterans are professionally represented; has co-located the Veterans Services District Offices with the VBA's Regional Offices in Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Diego to enhance their ability to impact that process; and rely on the NCA's resources to build and operate our state-owned and operated cemeteries.

### CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

The California Veterans Board serves as the policy setting body for the department. An advocate for veterans, the Board works to ensure that their rights and benefits are protected. CalVet actively supports, is involved with, and attends all Board meetings. CalVet continually informs the Board of its programs, progress, and issues. The Board determines policy for department operations, including significant changes affecting on-going programs, proposed programs, and long-range planning. In the development of the department's strategic plan, CalVet was guided by, and aligned their goals and objectives with, the Board's vision – "To be recognized as one of the prime advocates for California's veterans' rights and benefits."

### COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICES (CVSO)

County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) are a critical component in the state's efforts to interface with individual veterans and their families; they are our strategic partners in reaching veterans. They are on the front lines for this important mission and play the key role in ensuring that veterans and their families are aware of, apply for, and receive their benefits. Together, the CVSOs, through claims

initiation and development, and the department, through claims development and representation, provide assistance to veterans and their families in preparing and submitting claims and in representing claimants before the federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits. CalVet values its partnership with the CVSOs. It is a relationship that ensures veterans and their families are served and represented by trained and accredited professionals.

#### **VETERANS SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS (VSO)**

To successfully meet the needs of California's veterans and their families, and to meet the special needs of returning combat veterans, the department will continue to strengthen and enhance its working relationship with our state's Veterans Services Organizations. The department cannot place a monetary value on the advocacy, services and support these partners and stakeholders provide to our veteran community. They are a valuable resource, and their strong voice in the California Legislature helps ensure veterans benefits are maintained and enhanced when warranted.

#### **CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON VETERANS (ICV)**

On August 23, 2011, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Executive Order B-09-11 directing the Secretary of CalVet to establish the California Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV). The purpose of the ICV is "to identify and prioritize the needs of California's veterans, and to coordinate the activities at all levels of government in addressing those needs." ICV Appointees include State Agency Secretaries, Departmental Directors, two Members of the Legislature, a member of the judiciary, and a member from each of the Community College, State College, and University of California systems. The ICV also includes a vast array of participants invited to represent all levels of government, Indian Tribes, veteran service providers, private-sector businesses, and individuals. Many ICV meeting attendees are veterans.

The functional structure of the ICV includes four Primary Workgroups (Housing, Education, Health, and Employment) and multiple Sub Workgroups, each of which is Co-Chaired by attendees with relevant professional and/or personal experience. This structure allows for the simultaneous coordination of multiple pathways leading towards achieving multitude of priorities. To provide for process transparency, the ICV maintains a website that includes past meeting agendas and minutes, annual updates, a roster of meeting attendees, and an ever-growing list of ICV successes.

## APPENDIX D: ACRONYMS

ADHC	Adult Day Health Care
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
CalVet	California Department of Veterans Affairs
CAVSA	California Association of Veterans Service Agencies
CBAS	Community-Based Adult Services
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
CRB	California Research Bureau
CVSO	County Veterans Service Office (or Officer)
CVSRA	California Veterans Service Representative Academy
D2D	Digits to Digits
DD214	Report of Separation Form
DMV	Department of Motor Vehicles
DOM	Independent Living
DPRIS	Defense Personnel Records Information System
DVBE	Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise
EHR	Electronic Health Record
Ew-VHIS	Enterprise-Wide Veterans Home Information System
FDC	Fully Developed Claim
HCD	Housing and Community Development
HHS	Health and Human Services
HPPD	Hours Per Patient Day
HRD	Human Resources Division
ICD-10	International Classification of Diseases
ICF	Intermediate Care Facility
ICV	Interagency Council on Veterans
IDP	Individual Development Plan
ISD	Information Services Division
LB	Load Balancing
LINC	Local Interagency Network Coordinator
LTC	Long Term Care
MHSA	Mental Health Services Act (aka Prop 63)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	National Cemetery Administration
NCVC	Northern California Veterans Cemetery
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations

---

OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PACe	Premier Advantage California E-Learning
PARIS	Public Assistance Reporting Information System
Prop 63	Mental Health Services Act
PSA	Public Service Announcement
QA	Quality Assurance
QI	Quality Improvement
QMB	Qualified Mortgage Bond Proceeds
QVMB	Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond Proceeds
RCFE	Residential Care Facility for the Elderly
SNF	Skilled Nursing Facility
TALYST	Pharmaceutical Dispensing Machine
TBD	To Be Determined
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TVR	Tribal Veteran Representative (not in the document)
UR	Pre-Ullman
USC	United States Code
USCS	United States Code Service
USDVA	United States Department of Veterans Affairs
VBA	Veterans Benefits Administration
VBRO	Veteran Business Resource Office
VetPro	Veterans Benefit Case Management System
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VISN	Veterans Integrated Services Network
VSO	Veterans Service Organization
VSR	Veteran Service Representative

