

6. HEALTH CARE

This chapter discusses results from the NSV 2001 on use of health care services. The NSV collected information about veterans' current health insurance plans or programs, including Medicare (Part A, Part B); Medicare managed care; HMO; Medigap/Medicare supplemental health insurance; Medicaid (Medi-Cal); CHAMPUS; TRICARE; other government health care programs; or private health insurance. Information was also collected on veterans' use of VA and non-VA health care services within the past 12 months. These included emergency room use, outpatient care (number of visits), and inpatient care (number of overnights hospitalized). Additionally, NSV collected data on how services were paid for (CHAMPUS/TRICARE, HMO, Medicare, private health insurance, VA). If VA health care benefits had not been used in the past year or were not used, veterans were asked why they did not use them.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the nation's largest integrated health care system. The VHA mission is to serve the needs of America's veterans by providing primary care, specialized care, and related medical and social support services. VHA employs approximately 180,000 health care professionals at 163 hospitals, more than 800 community and facility-based clinics, 135 nursing homes, 43 domiciliaries, 206 readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities. Historically, VA's health care has been provided through a hospital-based delivery system. However, in recent years VHA restructured health care delivery to emphasize managed care through an extended network of community-based clinics and ambulatory care units.

Demographic trends indicate that VHA will continue to face the challenge of providing efficient and effective long-term care and geriatric services to an aging veteran population over the next decade. The percentage of older veterans is increasing as the percentage of younger veterans is declining.

6.1 Health Insurance Coverage

As seen in Table 6-1, veterans report having a number of health insurance coverage types. These types fall into the following five major modes:

Medicare,
Medigap or Medicare supplemental,
CHAMPUS or TRICARE,

Other government-provided health service plans, and
Private insurance.

Some veterans report more than one type of coverage. For example, some report coverage by both Medicare and a supplemental Medigap plan.¹ The table also shows subsets of coverage within these major modes of coverage, such as Medicare Part A only and Part B only coverage. Nearly two out of three veterans (63.0 percent) report coverage by some form of private insurance, either non-HMO (37.2 percent) or HMO (25.8 percent), while more than one out of three (39.3 percent) report some form of Medicare. Another type reported frequently was Medigap or Medicare Supplemental insurance (18.0 percent). Ten percent of veterans did not mention any insurance coverage.

Health Care Priority Group and Health Insurance Coverage. Table 6-1 also compares priority groups in terms of their insurance coverage. The pattern of coverage varies by priority group. A larger percentage of veterans in Priority 1, 4, and 5 report Medicare coverage than report private coverage. The reverse is found among Priority 2, 3, 6, and 7, where more veterans report coverage in private plans than in Medicare.

Age and Health Insurance Coverage. Health insurance varies by age group, as shown in Table 6-2. For example, the proportion of veterans reporting Medicare coverage increases across the age groups, while the proportion of veterans with private health insurance decreases. The percentage of veterans reporting no insurance coverage also decreased as the age of veterans increased. Other types are mentioned by proportionately more veterans in the middle age groups, compared to oldest and youngest age groups (e.g., CHAMPUS or TRICARE).

Medicare eligibility criteria effectively separates the types of coverage reported by the age of veterans. More than 95 percent of veterans age 65 and older (96.0 percent) report Medicare coverage, while only 5.5 percent of veterans under 65 do so. Table 6-3 displays comparisons of health insurance coverage by veteran age, with age divided into less than 65 years and 65 years or older. Nearly three-quarters of younger veterans (74.7 percent) report some form of private medical insurance, compared to only 43.3 percent of older veterans. Younger veterans also reported no insurance coverage more frequently than older veterans (15.3 percent versus 1.0 percent, respectively).

¹ In a small number of cases, veterans did not report coverage by one of the major modes of coverage such as private insurance but did report coverage by one of the major mode subtypes of coverage such as a private HMO.

Table 6-1. Percent distribution of veterans by type of insurance and health care priority group

	Total	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Priority 7
Medicare	39.3	47.1	36.5	38.2	75.0	57.1	19.7	36.2
Medicare managed care or Medicare HMO	11.0	8.7	9.7	10.1	9.0*	17.0	6.1	10.1
Medicare Part A for hospital care only	2.4	6.0	2.5	2.1	7.9*	4.2	1.3	1.8
Medicare Part B for visits to doctor offices only	1.0	1.3	0.9	0.9	5.7*	1.9	0.4*	0.8
Both Medicare Part A and Part B	24.2	28.0	22.8	24.5	52.8	32.9	11.4	23.2
Medigap or Medicare Supplement health insurance plan	18.0	13.8	16.2	18.3	23.3*	23.1	8.5	18.1
Medicaid/Medi-Cal	3.5	3.1	3.2	3.4	13.4*	14.6	0.0	0.0
CHAMPUS or TRICARE	7.1	24.0	30.2	20.6	1.6*	3.3	10.9	4.6
Other government-provided health insurance or health service plan	3.5	8.2	9.5	6.1	1.7*	2.9	3.6	3.0
Private Non-HMO	37.2	23.7	28.6	33.5	3.7*	24.2	40.4	43.0
Private HMO	25.8	11.3	19.5	23.1	1.3*	13.1	35.6	30.1
No insurance coverage mentioned	10.0	17.7	11.3	10.9	15.4	19.1	8.5	6.2
Unknown	0.4	1.2	0.8*	0.4*	3.5*	0.7	0.2*	0.2
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	719,400	580,900	1,441,600	29,000	5,326,400	2,828,300	14,125,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because insufficient data were available to determine a priority group for some respondents; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of insurance.

NOTE: Priority groups were determined by classifying the self-reported data of all respondents according to VA health care enrollee criteria and are not limited to actual VA enrollees.

Table 6-2. Percent distribution of veterans by type of insurance and age

	Total	Less than 35 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or older
Medicare	39.3	1.1*	3.6	6.2	8.0	95.5	96.6
Medicare managed care or Medicare HMO	11.0	0.8*	1.1	1.9	1.8	27.5	26.3
Medicare Part A for hospital care only	2.4	0.0	0.5*	0.6	0.7	6.3	4.7
Medicare Part B for visits to doctor offices only	1.0	0.0	0.2*	0.2	0.2*	2.2	2.7
Both Medicare Part A and Part B	24.2	0.2*	1.6	2.9	4.8	58.6	61.4
Medigap or Medicare Supplement health insurance plan	18.0	0.4*	0.5*	0.5	1.7	43.0	51.3
Medicaid/Medi-Cal	3.5	1.3	1.6	2.1	1.7	7.3	5.4
CHAMPUS or TRICARE	7.1	4.5	9.6	8.9	9.9	5.4	3.4
Other government-provided health insurance or health service plan	3.5	2.3	3.5	3.7	3.5	4.0	3.4
Private Non-HMO	37.2	36.7	37.1	37.9	43.4	34.3	32.8
Private HMO	25.8	35.2	36.5	35.8	34.4	11.3	7.6
No insurance coverage mentioned	10.0	22.1	16.0	15.5	11.6	1.0	1.0
Unknown	0.4	0.8*	0.5	0.7	0.2*	0.1*	0.2*
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	2,288,600	3,030,300	5,415,100	4,946,000	5,256,400	4,116,100

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of insurance.

Table 6-3. Percent distribution of veterans by type of insurance and age (under 65 and 65 or older)

	Total	Less than 65 years	65 years or older
Medicare	39.3	5.5	96.0
Medicare managed care or Medicare HMO	11.0	1.5	27.0
Medicare Part A for hospital care only	2.4	0.5	5.6
Medicare Part B for visits to doctor offices only	1.0	0.2	2.4
Both Medicare Part A and Part B	24.2	2.9	59.8
Medigap or Medicare Supplement health insurance plan	18.0	0.9	46.7
Medicaid/Medi-Cal	3.5	1.7	6.5
CHAMPUS or TRICARE	7.1	8.7	4.5
Other government-provided health insurance or health service plan	3.5	3.4	3.7
Private non-HMO	37.2	39.3	33.6
Private HMO	25.8	35.4	9.7
No insurance coverage mentioned	10.0	15.3	1.0
Unknown	0.4	0.5	0.1*
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	15,680,000	9,372,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health insurance.

Race, Ethnicity, and Health Insurance Coverage. Table 6-4 reports insurance coverage by race. A larger proportion of White veterans are covered by Medicare, compared to veterans of other races. This is not surprising, since White veterans are older as a group, compared to other races. White veterans also more frequently report having some type of private insurance than do veterans of other races, although this difference is less striking. Asian veterans reported the highest percentage of CHAMPUS or TRICARE coverage (17.9 percent), relative to other veterans. Proportionately more Black, biracial American Indian-White, American Indian, and Asian veterans did not mention any insurance coverage (17.6 percent, 16.3 percent, 15.7 percent, and 14.7 percent, respectively) than did White veterans (8.6 percent).

Table 6-5 compares insurance coverage for Hispanic and non-Hispanic veterans. The percentage of Hispanic veterans reporting Medicare coverage is nearly half that of non-Hispanic veterans (23.2 percent vs. 40.0 percent, respectively). Slightly fewer Hispanic veterans reported private non-HMO insurance coverage, relative to non-Hispanic veterans (30.4 percent vs. 37.5 percent, respectively), but more Hispanic veterans reported having private HMO coverage (30.1 percent of Hispanic vs. 25.6 percent of non-Hispanic veterans). More Hispanic veterans did not mention any insurance coverage, compared to non-Hispanic veterans (19.0 percent vs. 9.6 percent, respectively).

Table 6-4. Percent distribution of veterans by type of insurance and race

	Total	One race						Two or more races		Race unknown
		Total one race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total two or more races	American Indian or Alaska Native/White	
Medicare	39.3	40.1	41.5	28.4	23.5	29.4	27.3*	29.0	33.4	22.0
Medicare managed care or Medicare HMO	11.0	11.2	11.3	10.0	7.7*	10.1	17.7*	8.6	9.5	8.4
Medicare Part A for hospital care only	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	1.7*	5.3*	3.1*	3.0	3.3	1.6*
Medicare Part B for visits to doctor offices only	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.9	0.6*	0.9*	0.0	1.2*	1.3*	0.5*
Both Medicare Part A and Part B	24.2	24.8	26.2	13.0	13.1	11.4*	6.5*	15.4	18.5	10.8
Medigap or Medicare Supplement health insurance plan	18.0	18.5	19.7	8.0	4.7	12.6	4.7*	8.4	10.2	8.9
Medicaid/Medi-Cal	3.5	3.5	3.1	6.9	4.8*	5.0*	5.6*	3.4*	2.6	2.9
CHAMPUS or TRICARE	7.1	7.1	6.8	8.7	9.3	17.9	10.5*	9.4	9.3	7.3
Other government-provided health insurance or health service plan	3.5	3.4	3.3	4.0	15.4	9.2*	1.0*	8.0	7.3	2.7
Private Non-HMO	37.2	37.5	39.0	25.3	28.2	27.6	8.4*	32.9	33.1	30.5
Private HMO	25.8	25.6	24.8	33.1	32.1	30.4	41.2*	26.8	21.8	30.4
Percent distribution of veterans by No insurance coverage mentioned	10.0	9.5	8.6	17.6	15.7	14.7	20.3*	15.5	16.3	18.5
Unknown	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5*	1.3*	1.4*	0.0*	1.1*	1.3*	1.2*
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	23,857,100	21,370,900	2,216,600	159,900	73,200	36,500	557,500	360,800	781,400

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health insurance.

Table 6-5. Percent distribution of veterans by type of insurance and ethnicity

	Total	Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
Medicare	39.3	23.2	40.0
Medicare managed care or Medicare HMO	11.0	9.7	11.1
Medicare Part A for hospital care only	2.4	1.6*	2.5
Medicare Part B for visits to doctor offices only	1.0	0.3*	1.1
Both Medicare Part A and Part B	24.2	10.7	24.8
Medigap or Medicare Supplement health insurance plan	18.0	7.3	18.4
Medicaid/Medi-Cal	3.5	3.6	3.5
CHAMPUS or TRICARE	7.1	5.9	7.2
Other government-provided health insurance or health service plan	3.5	2.3	3.6
Private Non-HMO	37.2	30.4	37.5
Private HMO	25.8	30.1	25.6
No insurance coverage mentioned	10.0	19.0	9.6
Unknown	0.4	1.1*	0.4
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	1,122,200	23,990,200

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide a category of Ethnicity; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health insurance.

6.2 Health Care Received in the Past Year

Veterans were asked to indicate types of health care they had received in the past 12 months. Veterans could mention more than one type of health care received in the previous 12 months, so columns may not sum to 100 percent. As Table 6-6, displays, the most frequently mentioned type of health care was for prescriptions; more than three in four veterans (76.7 percent) received this type of care in the past 12 months. Also frequently mentioned were outpatient care (74.1 percent), prostheses (including hearing aids and eyeglasses) (24.6 percent), and emergency room care (23.4 percent).

Health Care Priority Group and Health Care Received in the Past Year. Table 6-6 also displays results that compare health care priority groups in the kinds of medical treatment they received in the past 12 months. Tables include all veterans who reported their medical treatment in the past year, not just veterans enrolled in the national health care enrollment system (see Chapter 5 introduction for further explanation). Prescription services are the most commonly mentioned type across all priority groups. Outpatient care ranges from a low of 69.4 percent for Priority 5 veterans to a high of 86.6 percent for Priority 1 veterans. The incidence of prescription services ranges from 74.2 percent for Priority 7 to 96.4 percent for Priority 4.

The proportion of veterans reporting emergency room and inpatient care varies considerably by priority group. The highest reported rates of emergency room and inpatient care are for veterans in Priority 4 (61.2 percent and 59.6 percent, respectively). Veterans in Priority 4 also report the highest incidence of in-home health care (26.6 percent) and prosthetic services (39.6 percent). Since these veterans are classified into Priority 4 because they are permanently house-bound or catastrophically disabled, these findings are not surprising.

The lowest percentage of emergency room care and inpatient care is found among veterans in Priority 7 (19.0 percent and 11.7 percent). Veterans in Priority 6 also report relatively low incidences of emergency room and inpatient care.

Age and Health Care Received in the Past Year. Table 6-7 compares health care received in the past 12 months by age group of veterans. Some types of health care varied consistently by age. The proportion of veterans reporting outpatient and inpatient services, prescription services, in-home health care, and prostheses increased across the age groups. For example, only 7.2 percent of veterans under 35 years of age reported inpatient care in the past 12 months while 24.1 percent of veterans 75 years or older reported inpatient care. Conversely, psychiatric treatment or counseling is reported by a smaller percentage of older veterans.

Table 6-8 displays age comparisons of health care received in the past 12 months for two groups of veterans, those under age 65 and those age 65 or older. Across all health care types, proportionately more older veterans reported receiving such care, compared to younger veterans. The only exceptions to this are for psychiatric treatment or counseling and treatment for environmental hazard.

Table 6-6. Percent distribution of veterans by type of care and health care priority group

	Total	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Priority 7
Emergency room	23.4	43.9	33.6	29.2	61.2	30.0	21.8	19.0
Outpatient	74.1	86.6	86.1	83.5	81.8	69.4	76.3	73.4
Inpatient	14.3	28.5	20.9	16.1	59.6	19.2	12.0	11.7
Prescriptions	76.7	95.1	91.7	86.4	96.4	77.3	75.6	74.2
Treatment for environmental hazard	1.6	12.7	7.0	3.2	11.5*	1.6	4.3	0.0
Psychiatric treatment/ counseling	6.7	32.9	14.1	9.5	10.5	9.0	7.6	3.7
In-home health care	3.8	9.5	4.8	5.1	26.6	6.1	2.7	2.6
Prostheses	24.6	51.4	37.5	32.6	39.6	22.3	26.1	22.4
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	719,400	580,900	1,441,600	29,000	5,326,400	2,828,300	14,125,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because insufficient data were available to determine a priority group for some respondents; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

NOTE: Priority groups were determined by classifying the self-reported data of all respondents according to VA health care enrollee criteria and are not limited to actual VA enrollees.

Table 6-7. Percent distribution of veterans by type of care and age

	Total	Less than 35 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or older
Emergency room	23.4	23.0	25.9	23.4	18.8	22.3	29.1
Outpatient	74.1	59.7	68.1	71.3	76.6	80.4	79.4
Inpatient	14.3	7.2	7.9	10.8	12.8	18.5	24.1
Prescriptions	76.7	57.4	66.3	73.7	79.2	84.0	87.0
Treatment for environmental hazard	1.6	0.9*	1.2	2.7	1.8	1.2	1.0
Psychiatric treatment/counseling	6.7	8.9	10.6	11.4	5.8	2.7	2.5
In-home health care	3.8	1.1*	1.7	2.4	2.3	4.9	8.9
Prostheses	24.6	13.8	16.8	26.0	26.4	26.9	30.0
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	2,288,600	3,030,300	5,415,100	4,946,000	5,256,400	4,116,100

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

Table 6-8. Percent distribution of veterans by type of care and age (under 65 and 65 or older)

	Total	Less than 65 years	65 years or older
Emergency room	23.4	22.4	25.3
Outpatient	74.1	70.6	79.9
Inpatient	14.3	10.3	21.0
Prescriptions	76.7	71.7	85.3
Treatment for environmental hazard	1.6	1.9	1.1
Psychiatric treatment/counseling	6.7	9.1	2.7
In-home health care	3.8	2.1	6.7
Prostheses	24.6	22.6	28.3
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	15,680,000	9,372,600

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

Race, Ethnicity, and Health Care Received in the Past Year. Differences in type of health care received were found among veterans of different races and ethnicity, as shown in Tables 6-9 and 6-10. Compared to all other races, White veterans had the highest percentage of outpatient care and a high percentage of prosthetic use. Black veterans reported a high percentage of emergency room use, compared to others. American Indian veterans had the highest percentage of inpatient services use and a high proportion of psychiatric treatment or counseling services use. Biracial American Indian-White veterans reported high percentages using outpatient services and the highest percentage of emergency room services, prescription services, psychiatric treatment or counseling and prosthetic use of all racial groups. Compared to non-Hispanic veterans, proportionately fewer Hispanic veterans reported receiving all types of health care, except emergency room, treatment for environmental hazard, psychiatric, and in-home health care. For these four, slightly more Hispanic veterans reported their use, relative to non-Hispanic veterans.

Table 6-9. Percent distribution of veterans by type of care and race

	Total	One race						Two or more races		Race unknown
		Total one race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total two or more races	American Indian or Alaska Native/White	
Emergency room	23.4	23.0	22.3	30.2	25.7	17.4	27.0*	32.4	33.3	28.1
Outpatient	74.1	74.4	75.2	68.3	63.2	65.1	61.2*	72.1	73.9	64.4
Inpatient	14.3	14.4	14.3	15.7	18.5	8.7*	8.9*	14.1	15.7	10.1
Prescriptions	76.7	77.1	77.4	75.2	70.3	65.4	60.0*	76.7	81.4	65.7
Treatment for environmental hazard	1.6	1.6	1.4	2.6	3.4*	4.3*	1.6*	3.3	3.2	1.5*
Psychiatric treatment/counseling	6.7	6.5	6.2	9.3	11.9	2.6*	5.7*	13.0	14.4	8.1
In-home health care	3.8	3.7	3.6	4.9	3.7*	0.5*	12.8*	5.3	4.7	3.0
Prostheses	24.6	24.8	25.2	21.0	22.9	19.8	19.3*	24.0	26.4	20.4
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	23,857,100	21,370,900	2,216,600	159,900	73,200	36,500	557,500	360,800	781,400

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

Table 6-10. Percent distribution of veterans by type of care and ethnicity

	Total	Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
Emergency room	23.4	25.7	23.3
Outpatient	74.1	62.9	74.6
Inpatient	14.3	9.6	14.5
Prescriptions	76.7	67.7	77.1
Treatment for environmental hazard	1.6	2.1	1.6
Psychiatric treatment/counseling	6.7	7.7	6.6
In-home health care	3.8	3.9	3.8
Prostheses	24.6	18.4	24.9
Number of veterans†	25,196,000	1,122,200	23,990,200

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide a category of Ethnicity; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

6.3 Sources of Health Care

Veterans were asked to indicate whether VA provided the health care they received in the past 12 months. A classification of health care source was constructed from survey responses as VA care only, non-VA care only, and use of both VA and non-VA. As Table 6-11 displays, more than three-quarters of veterans (76.6 percent) used only non-VA health care in the past year. Seven point four percent used VA only, while 16.0 percent used both VA and non-VA health care.

Health Care Priority Group and Source of Care. Table 6-11 also compares source of health care received in the past year by priority group. Usage patterns vary considerably by priority group. For example, well over half of the veterans in Priority Groups 1, 2, and 4 received their care either exclusively from VA or from VA plus non-VA sources (82.0, 57.1, and 79.1 percent, respectively). By contrast, over 80 percent of veterans in Priority 6 and 7 report only receiving non-VA care (86.3 and 88.1 percent, respectively).

Age and Source of Care. Table 6-12 compares type of veteran health care received in the past 12 months by age group of veterans. Results show that regardless of age, the proportion of veterans who use VA health care only is very low, between 5.6 and 8.4 percent. The proportion of veterans using both VA and non-VA sources increases across age groups, except among the 55-64 age group.

Table 6-11. Percent distribution of veterans by source of care and health care priority group

	Total	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Priority 7
Use of VA health care only	7.4	30.4	18.6	12.0	33.1	15.5	3.4	2.6
Use of non-VA health care only	76.6	18.0	42.9	57.8	20.9*	60.8	86.3	88.1
Use of both VA and non-VA health care	16.0	51.6	38.5	30.2	46.0	23.7	10.3	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	22,223,200	707,100	557,400	1,353,900	28,200	4,695,600	2,453,800	12,317,500

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because insufficient data were available to determine a priority group for some respondents; percent estimates will not sum to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one type of health care.

NOTE: Priority groups were determined by classifying the self-reported data of all respondents according to VA health care enrollee criteria and are not limited to actual VA enrollees.

Table 6-12. Percent distribution of veterans by source of care and age

	Total	Less than 35 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or older
Use of VA health care only	7.4	6.0	5.6	8.4	7.6	8.1	6.9
Use of non-VA health care only	76.6	85.3	82.6	77.2	79.7	73.0	69.2
Use of both VA and non-VA health care	16.0	8.7	11.8	14.4	12.7	18.9	23.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	22,223,200	1,755,000	2,452,900	4,638,800	4,410,600	4,919,800	3,933,500

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age.

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they used some sort of health care in the last 12 months.

To highlight young-old age differences, Table 6-13 compares source of health care for younger and older veterans (younger than 65 years and 65 years of age or older). When combined into two groups, the difference between younger and older veterans appears to be predominately in terms of using both VA and non-VA care and non-VA care exclusively. Older veterans less frequently report exclusive use of non-VA care.

Table 6-13. Percent distribution of veterans by source of care and age (under 65 and 65 or older)

	Total	Less than 65 years	65 years or older
Use of VA health care only	7.4	7.3	7.6
Use of non-VA health care only	76.6	80.1	71.3
Use of both VA and non-VA health care	16.0	12.6	21.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	22,223,200	13,257,300	8,853,300

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide their age.

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they used some sort of health care in the last 12 months.

Race, Ethnicity, and Source of Care. Table 6-14 compares source of health care for veterans of different races. White veterans have the smallest proportion using exclusively VA health care (6.4 percent) and the largest proportion using exclusively non-VA health care (78.3 percent). More black veterans use VA health care only (13.9 percent), relative to all other races, followed by biracial American Indian-White veterans (10.7 percent).

Table 6-14. Percent distribution of veterans by source of care and race

	Total	One race						Two or more races		Race unknown
		Total one race	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Total two or more races	American Indian or Alaska Native/White	
Use of VA health care only	7.4	7.1	6.4	13.9	9.7	9.0*	10.6*	12.6	10.7	12.0
Use of non-VA health care only	76.6	77.0	78.3	64.3	70.5	71.9	72.4*	65.2	67.1	73.2
Use of both VA and non-VA health care	16.0	15.9	15.3	21.8	19.8	19.1	17.0*	22.2	22.2	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans†	22,223,200	21,112,000	18,987,700	1,910,600	131,100	56,400	26,200	477,200	316,600	634,000

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

† Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred.

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they used some sort of health care in the last 12 months.

Table 6-15 displays a comparison of Hispanic and non-Hispanic veterans' sources of health care. The largest contrast between ethnicities is in the use of VA health care only, which about one in 8 Hispanic veterans use (12.0 percent), compared to about one in 14 non-Hispanic veterans (7.2 percent). Ethnic differences are less striking in use of both and of non-VA health care only.

Table 6-15. Percent distribution of veterans by source of care and ethnicity

	Total	Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino
Use of VA health care only	7.4	12.0	7.2
Use of non-VA health care only	76.6	73.4	76.8
Use of both VA and non-VA health care	16.0	14.6	16.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of veterans [†]	22,223,200	888,900	21,263,700

* Low precision and/or sample size for the denominator between 30 and 59.

[†] Estimates of number of veterans are rounded to the nearest hundred; the total estimate is larger than the sum of the groups because some veterans did not provide a category of Ethnicity.

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they used some sort of health care in the last 12 months.

6.4 Reasons for Not Using VA Health Care

Veterans who did not use VA health care in the past year were asked to give the reasons why they did not use it. Table 6-16 provides the reasons veterans gave for not using VA health care in the past year. The most frequently cited reason for not using VA health care in the past year was that the veteran has other sources for health care; about 40 percent of non-users gave this reason. About one out of five non-users said they did not require health care in the past year (20.9 percent), did not believe they were eligible for health care benefits (20.1 percent), or perceived VA health care as inconvenient (18.2 percent). About 17 percent said they were not aware of VA health care benefits (16.6 percent). Only one in 25 non-users said they did not think VA health care would be as good as that available elsewhere (4.0 percent), while less than two in 100 non-users mentioned having been treated rudely by VA health care providers (1.4 percent) as reasons for not using VA health care.

Veterans who reported that they had never used VA health care were also asked to give the reasons why they had not. Table 6-17 displays these reasons. Whether the time frame is the past year or ever, there is considerable overlap in the most common reasons cited for not using VA health care with the most common being the use of another source for health care.

Almost one out of three non-users said they had other sources for health care (31.8 percent), while nearly one in four said they did not need health care (23.7 percent). About one in five veterans said they were not aware of VA health care benefits (21.6 percent) or they did not believe they were eligible for VA health care (20.4 percent). The least commonly mentioned reasons were: did not think VA health care would be as good as that available elsewhere (3.1 percent); too much trouble or red tape in the application process (3.0 percent); and did not know how to apply (2.3 percent).

Table 6-16. Percent distribution of veterans by reasons veterans did not use VA health care in past 12 months

	Total
Uses other sources for health care	40.2
Did not need any care	20.9
Did not believe self entitled or eligible for health care benefits	20.1
VA care is inconvenient	18.2
Not aware of the VA health care benefits	16.6
Other	10.7
Did not need or want assistance from the VA	7.8
Never considered getting any health care from the VA	5.4
Didn't think VA health care would be as good as that available elsewhere	4.0
Applying for health care benefits too much trouble or red tape	3.5
Did not know how to apply for health care benefits	2.1
Treated rudely in past	1.4
Unknown	0.4
Number of veterans†	19,978,000

† Estimate of number of veterans is rounded to the nearest hundred;. percent estimates will not add to 100 because veterans could indicate more than one reason;

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they had not used VA health care during the past 12 months

Table 6-17. Percent distribution of veterans by reasons veterans never used VA health care

	Total
Uses other sources for health care	31.8
Did not need any care	23.7
Not aware of the VA health care benefits	21.6
Did not believe self entitled or eligible for health care benefits	20.4
VA care is inconvenient	13.3
Other	9.5
Did not need or want assistance from the VA	8.0
Never considered getting any health care from the VA	5.1
Didn't think VA health care would be as good as that available elsewhere	3.1
Applying for health care benefits too much trouble or red tape	3.0
Did not know how to apply for health care benefits	2.3
Number of veterans†	16,396,700

† Estimate of number of veterans is rounded to the nearest hundred; percent estimates will not sum to more than 100 because veterans could indicate more than one reason.

NOTE: This table only includes responses of those who indicated they had never used VA health care.