

# Community Fact Sheet

## Hope 2009: A VA Sponsored Event for Northwest Arkansas' Homeless

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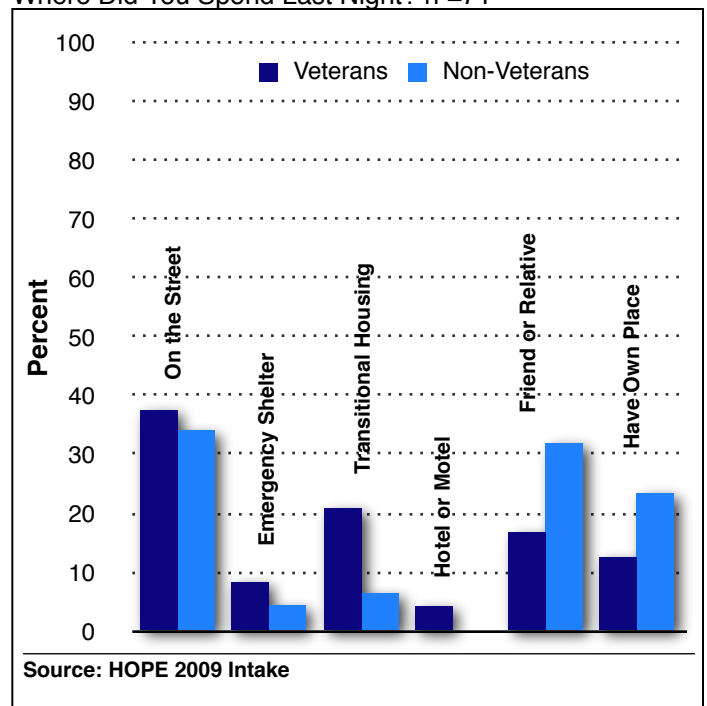
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**veterans** (24) and the median age of those attending was 47 years; interestingly these characteristics of persons using *HOPE 2009* services are very similar to those described in the sociodemographic profile of persons interviewed in the 2009 PIT Homeless Census in Northwest Arkansas.

The housing status data found in Figure 1 shows some distinct differences between veterans and non-veterans. Veterans reported staying outdoors slightly more than non-veterans and were primarily persons using transitional housing in the area. Nearly twice as many non-veterans said they stayed with family and friends the previous night compared to veterans.

**Figure 1. Current Housing Status**  
Where Did You Spend Last Night? n =71



### Who Participated and Where Are They Staying?

On September 17, 2009 a one-stop service provision event for homeless took place in Fayetteville, AR. *HOPE 2009* was sponsored by the Veterans' Administration designed to serve those in need throughout the region. Besides the VA services available to veterans, a range of other services were provided to participants including: blood pressure checks, employment assistance, credit counseling, eye exams, eye glasses, haircuts, legal aid, massages, social security claims, and shelters/housing options. A lunch was provided, and all those participating received a bag of donated groceries, canned goods, and a toiletry kit with essential items.

Seventy-one persons attended the event. The majority in attendance were males (63.4%), Whites (83.1%), homeless (78.9%), and single individuals (73.2%). **Thirty-four percent of participants were**

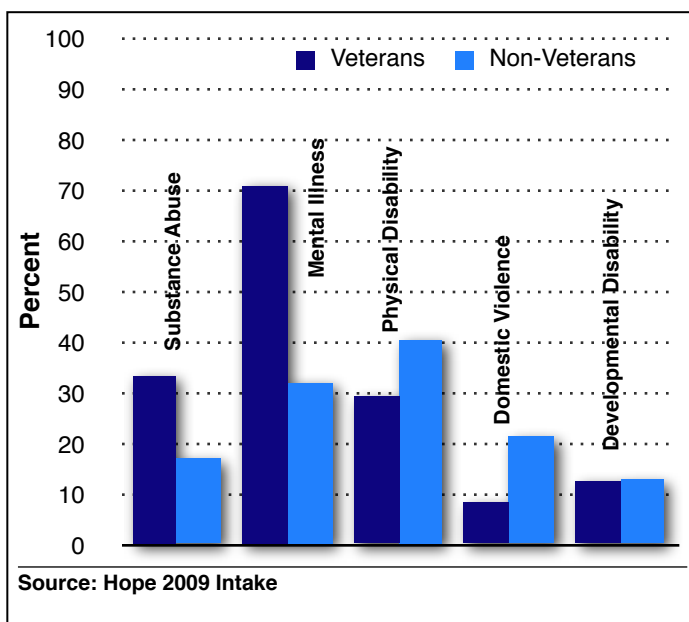
Of the seventy-one respondents, 79 percent reported being without their own home at least once in the past three years and those responses ranged from one to nine times in the past three years. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they had been homeless only once or twice in the past three years. This finding again mirrors our earlier findings in the PIT report regarding the average number of times persons reported being homeless.

**What Are Their Challenges and Needs?**

The data in Figure 2 illustrate some important differences between veterans and non-veterans regarding chronic conditions. Twice as many veterans reported substance abuse problems compared to non-veterans; differences between these two groups were even more dramatic in the reporting of mental illness. Nearly 2.5 times as many veterans reported mental health problems compared to non-veterans. While there are other differences between these two groups, the overwhelming majority of veterans reporting one or both of these problems (substance abuse/mental illness) is noteworthy. Finally, while most respondents reported at least one disabling condition, more than one-third reported multiple conditions; co-morbidity was higher among veterans than non-veterans.

Though nearly 75 percent of respondents reported some disabling condition, more than 60 percent said their condition remained untreated. This gap continues to be an important piece of the complicated service delivery puzzle.

**Figure 2. Self-Reported Disabling Conditions**  
Chronic Conditions n =71



**Services Offered and Used**

Of the seventeen civilian services offered during HOPE 2009, the most popular services are listed below in Figure 3. Forty-one eye exams given, 33 requesting eye glasses, 32 BP check-ups, 31 haircuts, and 20 massages given. It is interesting that the most requested services were mostly related to respondent well-being or physical health/appearance. Future service provision events may want to focus more on health-related services including dental, diabetes screening etc., particularly for a population where **80 percent reported having no health insurance.**

**Figure 3. Top Five Services Used at HOPE 2009**  
All Participants n =69

