

# Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Agency Activities on Research Specific to Pregnant and Lactating Women

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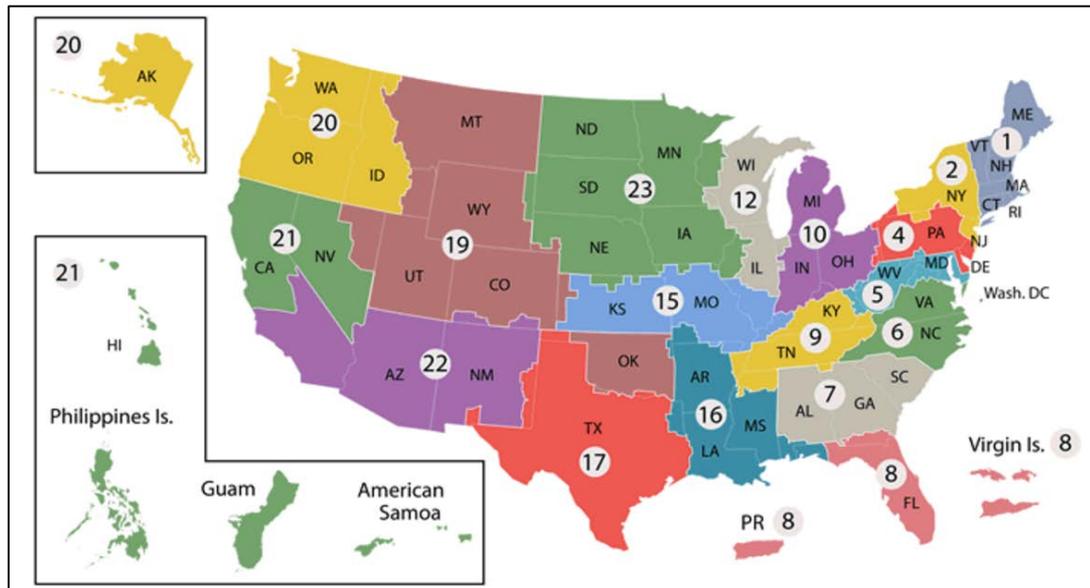
US Department of Health and Human Services Task Force on Research Related  
to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (PRGLC)

August 21, 2017

# Background and Context

# VA Healthcare System

- The VA Healthcare System is the **largest integrated health care delivery system** in the United States



## Over 9 Million Enrollees

- **18** Veterans Integrated Networks
- **Over 1200** Community Based Outpatient Clinics
- **Over 140** VA Medical Centers

# Veterans Health Administration Facts



*97% of those appointments occurred within 30 days*



*Offered 1 million same day appointments a month*



*VA partners with DOD, DHS, and HHS to form the National Disaster Medical System*



*Approximately 70% of all US physicians have received at least some of their medical training with VA*



*VA's groundbreaking medical research has resulted in 3 Nobel prizes, 7 Lasker awards, and numerous other honors*



*VA's many medical accomplishments include the nicotine patch, first successful liver transplants, and a vaccine for shingles*



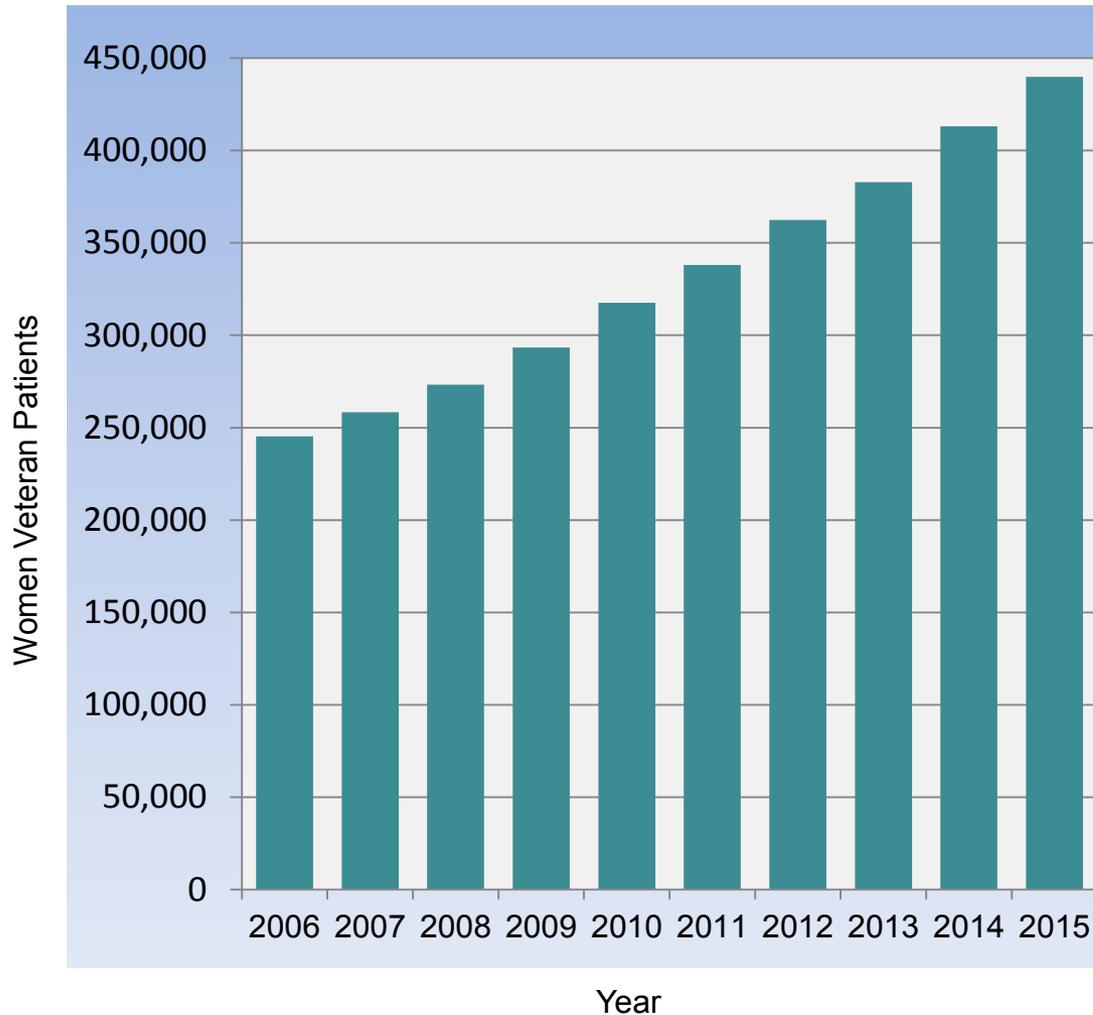
*Provided nearly 107 million outpatient visits*



*Treated nearly 600,000 inpatient medicine/surgery patients*

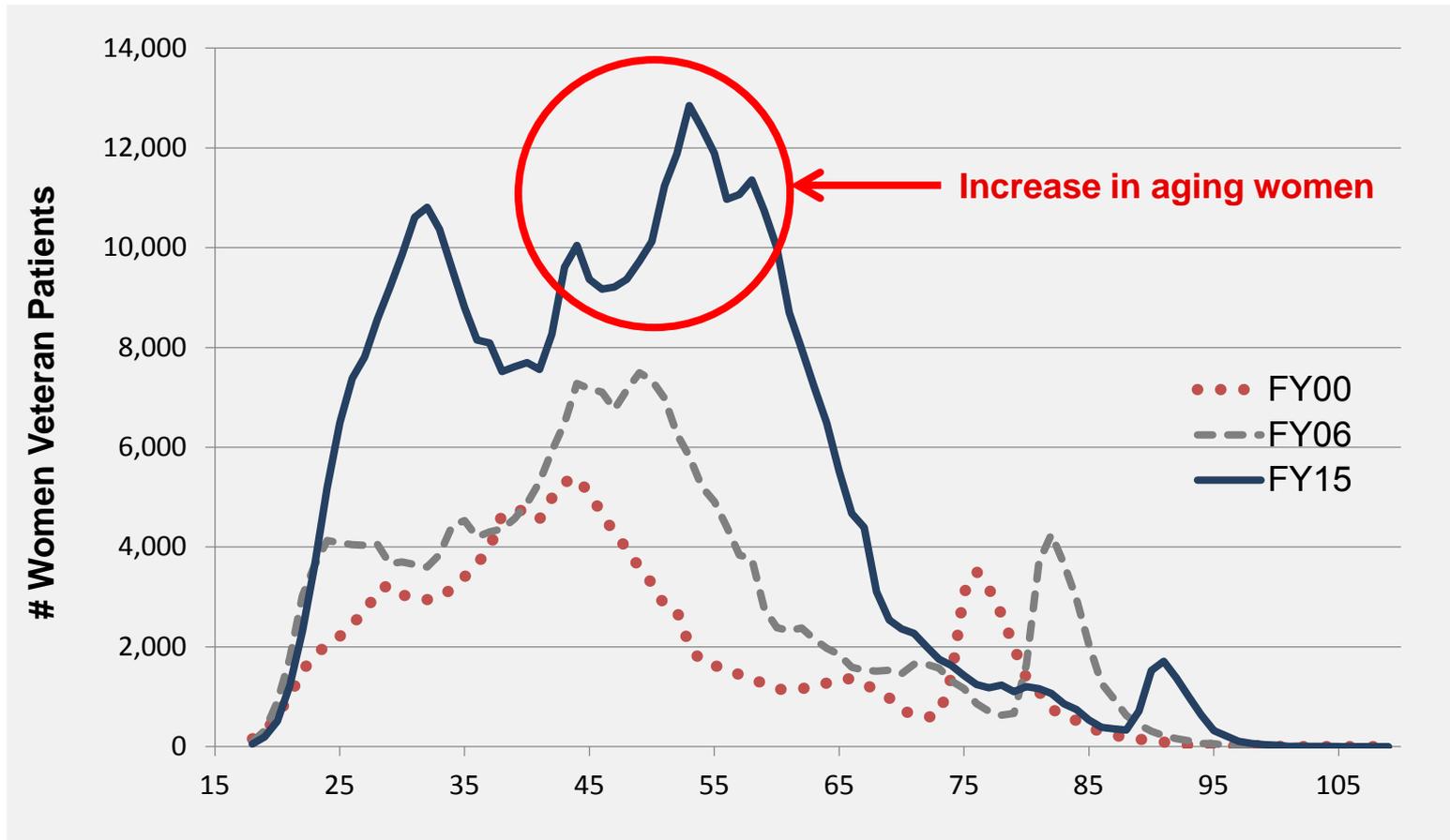
*If VA were a business, it would be in the **top ten** on the Fortune 500 list*

# Women Veteran Patients Utilization



- The number of women Veterans requesting health care from VA has ***increased almost 80%*** over the last decade
- VA is experiencing a greater demand for care and services that have not been traditionally provided at VA facilities (e.g., obstetrics and mammography)

# Age Distribution of Women Veterans



Cohort: Women Veteran patients with non-missing ages 18-110 years (inclusive). Women in F Y00: N=159,553; FY06: N=245,270; FY15: N=439,615.

# Common Conditions in Women Veterans



| Medical Condition                    | %   |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Musculoskeletal                      | 56% |
| Endocrine/Metabolic/Nutritional      | 51% |
| Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder | 44% |
| Cardiovascular                       | 37% |
| Reproductive Health                  | 31% |

**1 in 5 women Veterans report Military Sexual Trauma**

# Care for Women Veterans

- Gender-specific services provided at VA facilities:
  - Gynecologic care (Basic and Specialty)
  - Contraceptive care and counseling
  - Mammography
  - Breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment
  - Menopause-related care
  - Emergency Medicine

- Services *not* provided at VA facilities:
  - Obstetrical/maternity care
  - Specialty Infertility services

*Note: Individual VA facilities are unique in their availability to provide particular services to Veterans. Factors such as **local Veteran demographics, proximate academic affiliates, availability of specialists** affect where women Veterans can go, within and outside of VA, to receive gender-specific care. PCP plays critical role with GYN and mental health providers*

# Research

Unique VA Research Strengths - Integrated comprehensive health system with dedicated research budget

Premiere data capabilities with mix of clinical, administrative and genomic data

Partnership of VA researchers (60% clinicians) and VA healthcare system  
Partnership with DoD, NIH and other federal and private organizations

# Research Overview



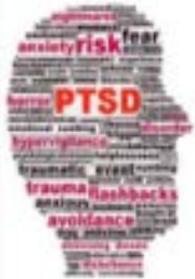
- Intramural Research
  - [VA Office of Research and Development](#)
    - Biomedical Laboratory, Clinical Science, Health Services, Rehabilitation
  - Approximately 2,100 ORD funded research projects at any one time
- Women's Health Topics Include
  - Medication safety
  - Evidence-based psychotherapy for women Veterans with PTSD
  - Effect of military service, trauma, and co-occurring conditions on pregnancy, health care delivery, and care coordination
  - Pregnancy-associated conditions
  - Established new models of care (Women's Health)

# Health and Healthcare of Women Veterans – VA Research Priority

- Since early 1990's, women's health a VA research priority
- 2005 – VA developed a comprehensive research agenda for women Veterans
- Expansive research portfolio to understand the health and healthcare needs of women Veterans
- Establishment of national VA Women's Health Research Network to support research aimed at ensuring accessible, high-quality care for women Veterans, and implement research into practice
- Reproductive health is a key area of research



# Research Examples



Studying the effect of maternal PTSD on birth outcomes, confirming an increased risk of preterm birth



Assessing the coordination of pregnancy care experienced by women Veterans by interviewing women Veterans and their health care providers



Documenting the use of opioids among pregnant veterans; between 2001 and 2010, about 10 percent of pregnant veterans received prescriptions for opioids

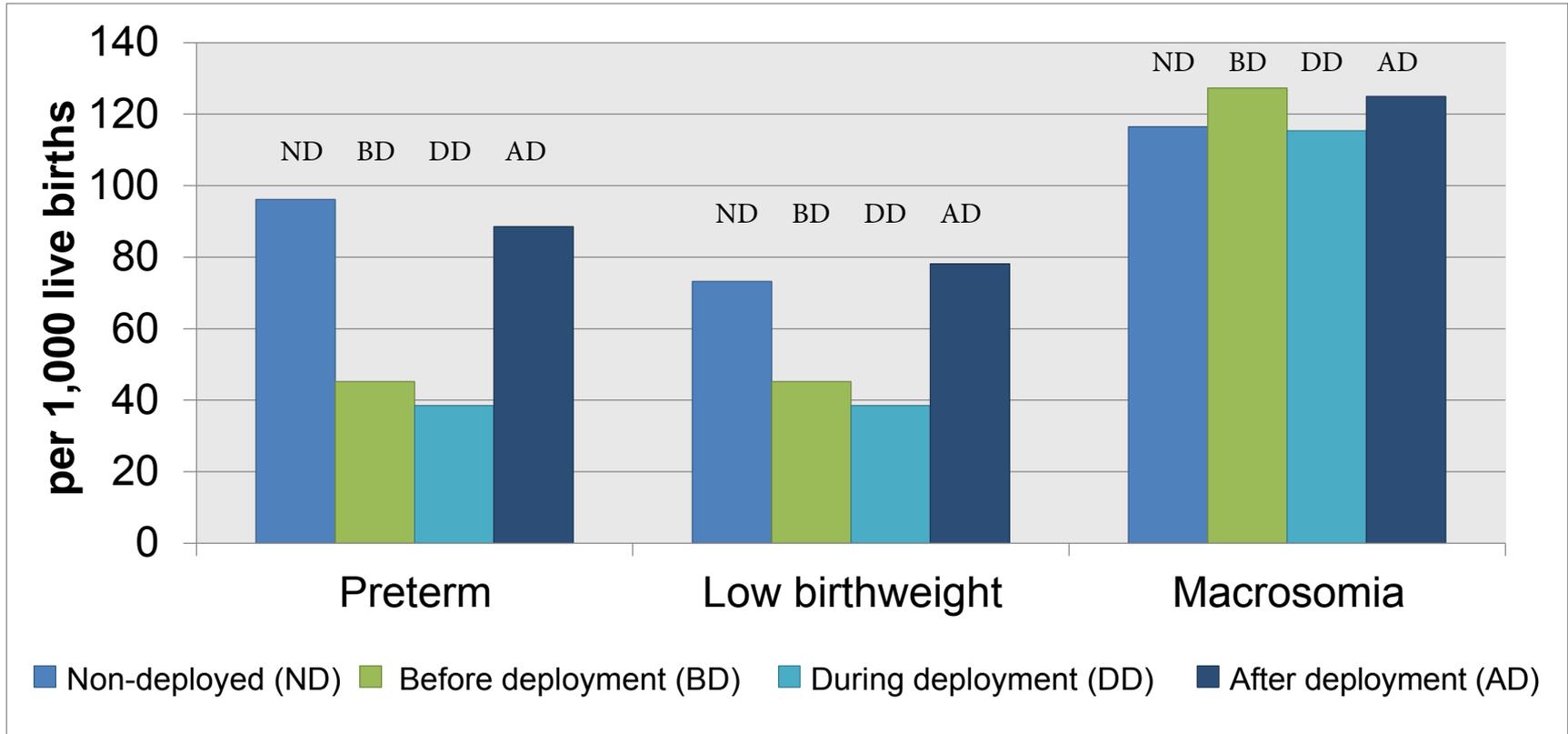


Through the PROVE project, scientists linking VA and CA data to determine the effect of maternal PTSD on birth outcomes, and quantify the distribution and character of preterm births and other outcomes.

# Women Veterans and Pregnancy

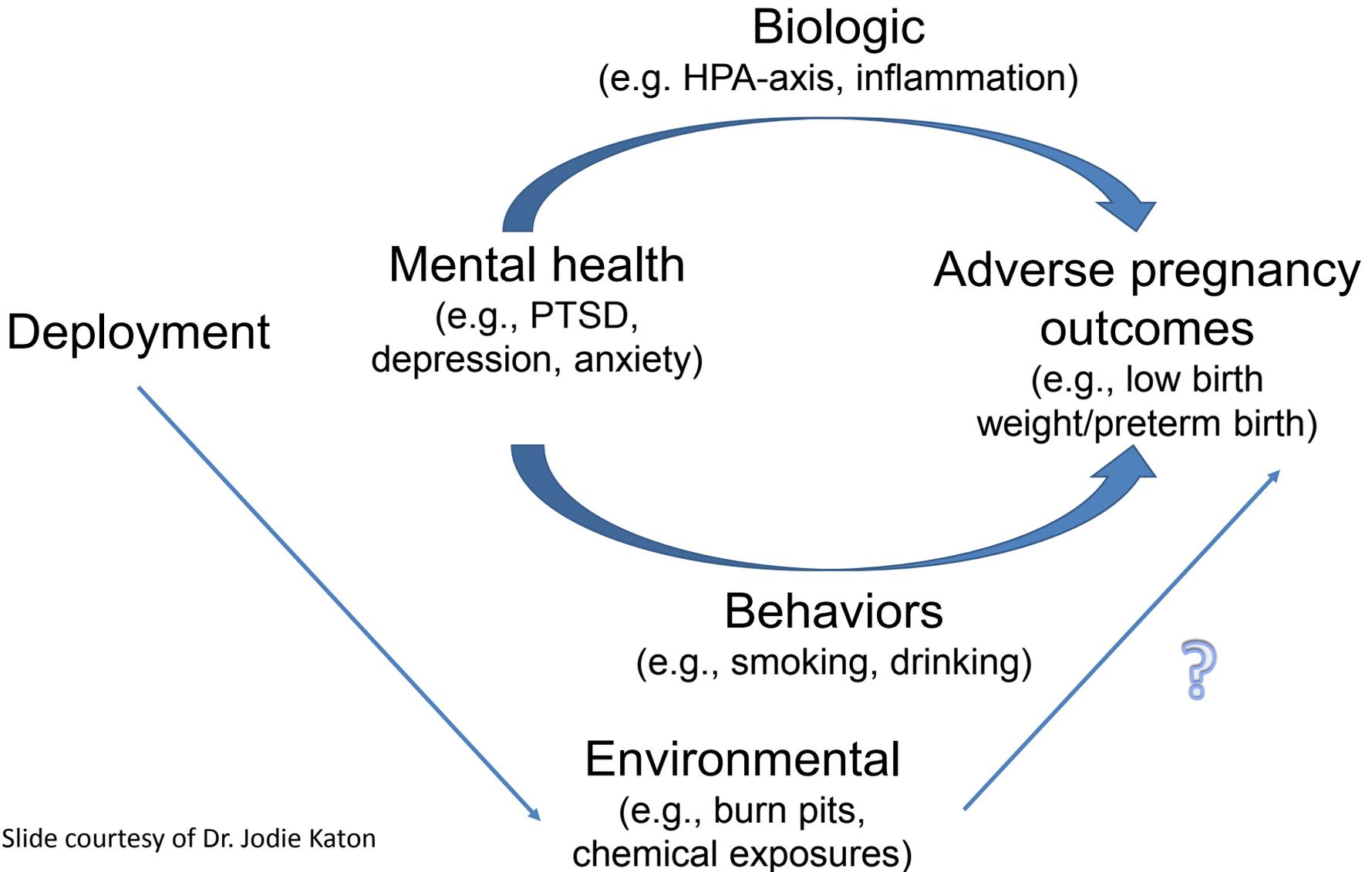
# Is Deployment Associated with Increased Risk of Adverse Pregnancy Outcome?

2,276 live births (1,571 non-deployers, 705 deployers)



Slide courtesy of Dr. Jodie Katon

# Potential Explanatory Mechanisms



Slide courtesy of Dr. Jodie Katon

# Healthy Soldiers and Wounded Warriors

## Healthy Soldiers

Education

Income

Physical fitness

Healthcare

Social support

## Wounded Warriors

Childhood abuse or trauma

Behavioral risk factors

Mental health conditions

Military specific exposures

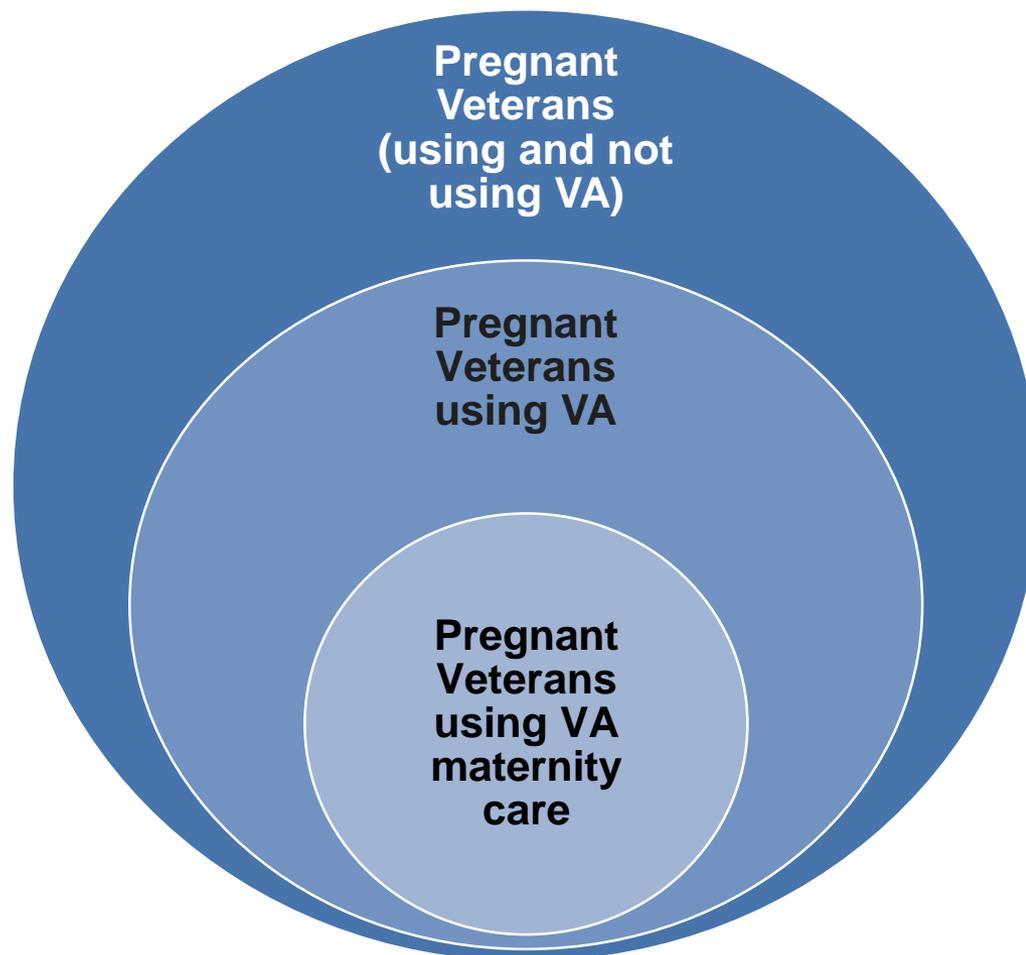
African American women overrepresented in military and women Veterans

Veterans are on average older than non-Veterans

Lehavot, K., et al. (2012). Am J Prev Med 42(5): 473-480  
Katon, J. G., et al. (2015). Am J Prev Med 49(4): 573-582

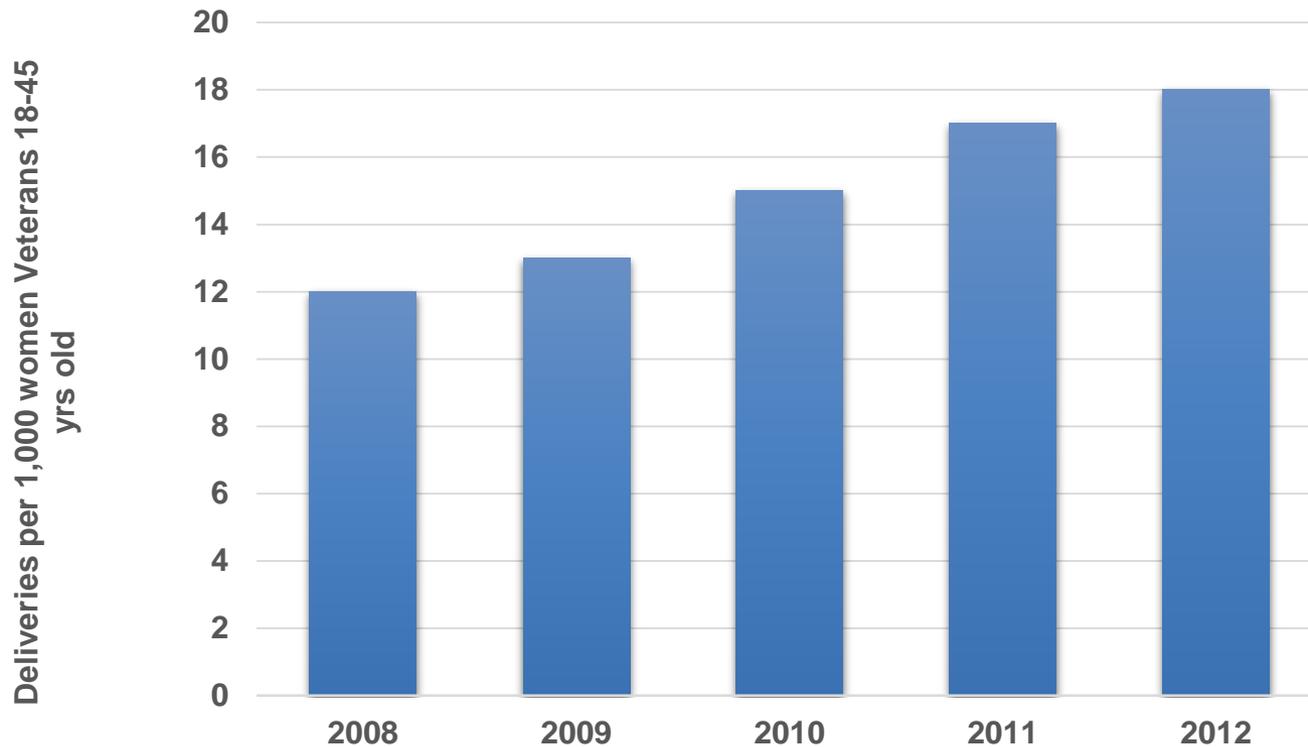
Slide courtesy of Dr. Jodie Katon

# Women Veterans who use VA Maternity Care are a Select Population



# VA Maternity Benefits

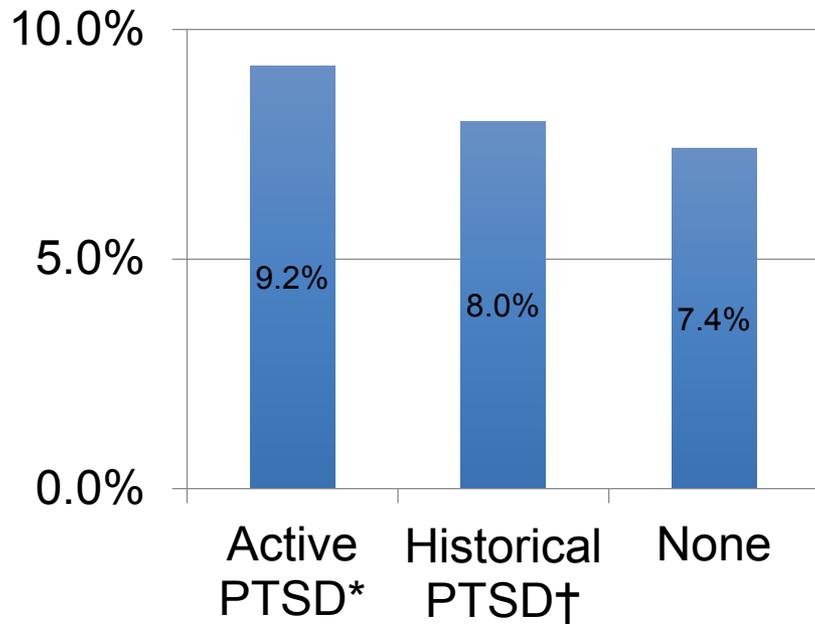
Prenatal, labor and delivery, postpartum care  
Nearly all purchased from non-VA community providers



Mattocks, K. et .al. Womens Health Issues (2014). 24(1): e37-42

# PTSD, Preterm Birth, and Pregnancy Complications

## Spontaneous Preterm Births by PTSD Status

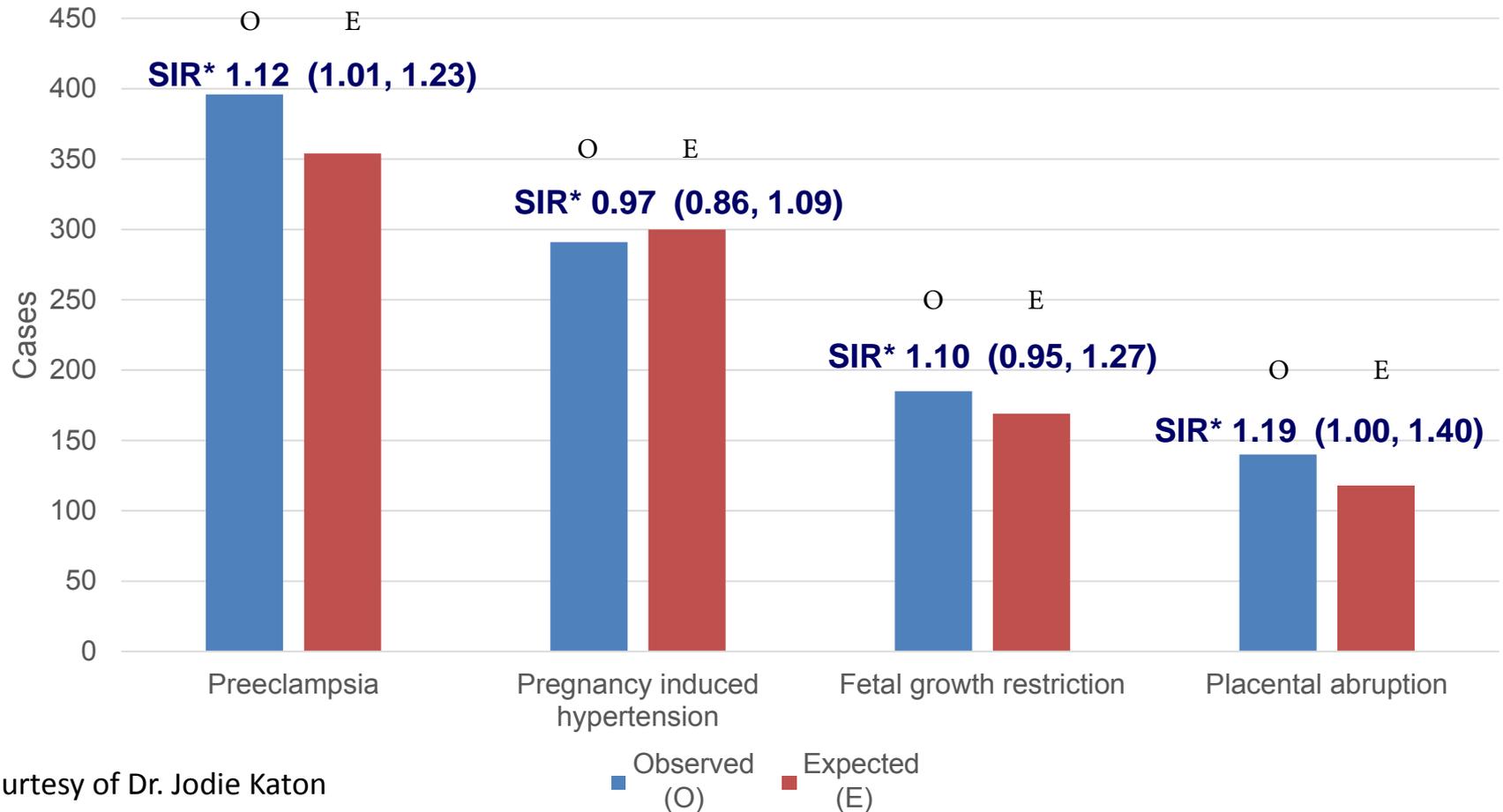


\* Diagnosis present in 365d antepartum † Older Diagnosis, not present in 365d antepartum

## Cohort of 16,000 Deliveries Covered by VA Maternity Care

- 19% had prior PTSD diagnosis
- Active PTSD increased risk of preterm birth, in adjusted models, aOR 1.35 ( $p < 0.001$ )
- Antenatal complications and length of stay also elevated in PTSD-affected pregnancies

# VA Maternity Benefit Users and Pregnancy Complications



Slide courtesy of Dr. Jodie Katon

\*SIR = standardized incidence ratio, standardized by age, year, & race/ethnicity

Shaw, J et. al. Obstetric Outcomes in the VA: Comparison with a Nationally Representative Sample to Guide Future VA Research and Quality Measures. HSR&D National Meeting on Partnerships for Research & Care of Women Veterans: Building the Evidence Base for Clinical and Policy Action. Washington, DC. July 31-August 1, 2014

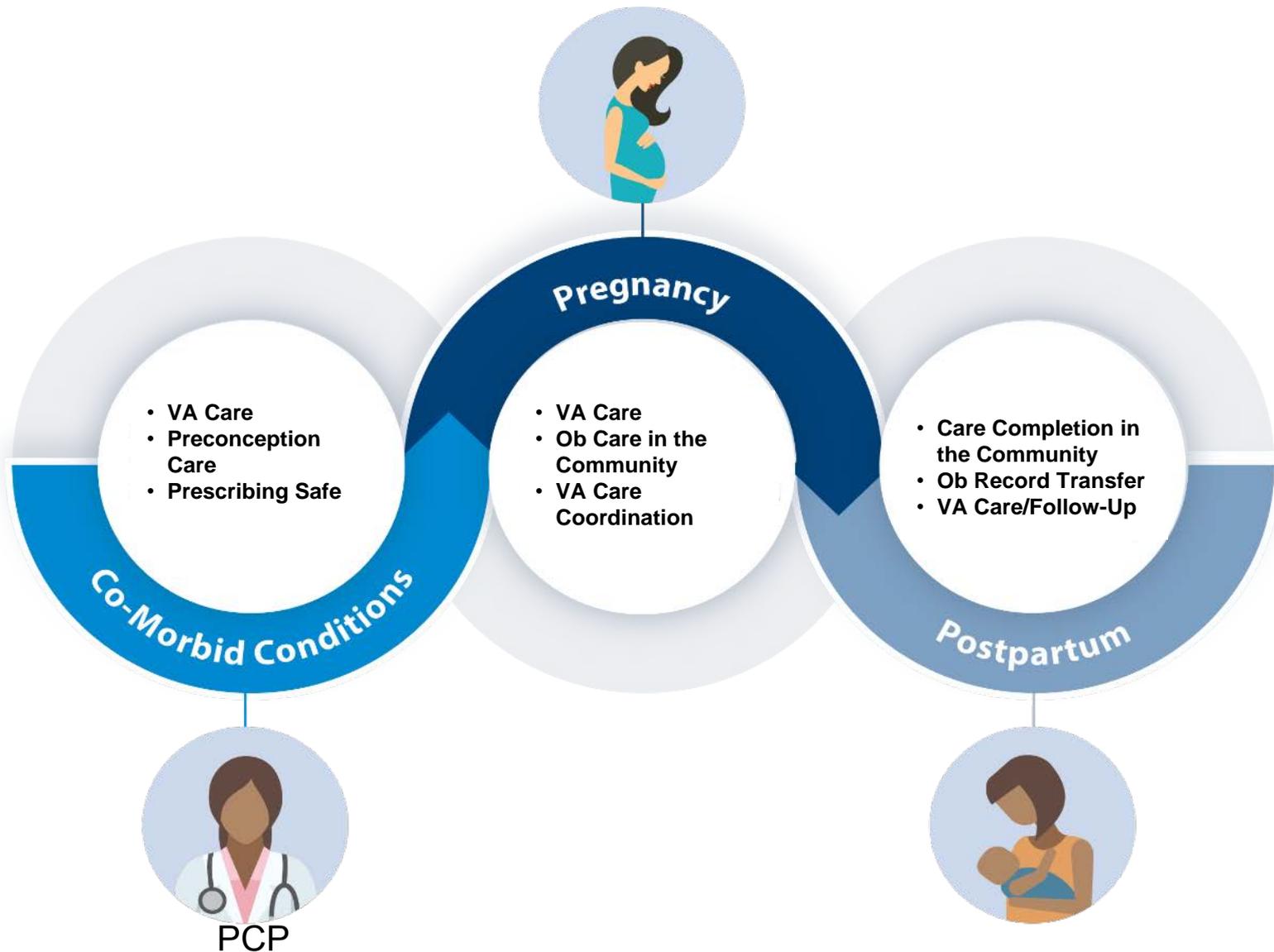
# Target Population – Key Questions

- Are women Veterans using VA maternity care a high risk “vulnerable” population?
- Are quality and outcomes of VA maternity care similar to national averages?



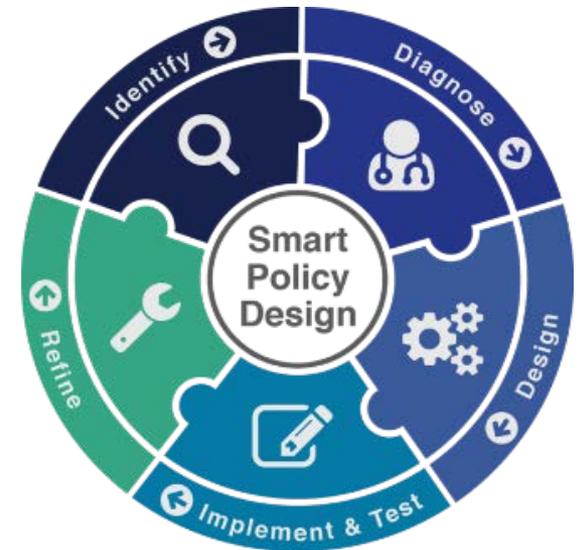
# Translating Research into Policy, Programs and Practice

# Transitions for a High Risk Population



# VA Maternity Care

- First national policy for VA Maternity Care
- Maternity Care Coordinators (MCC)
  - At each VA Medical Center
  - Facilitate communication with community providers and VA providers
  - Provide support and education
  - Screen for post-partum needs
- MCC Community of Support
  - VA maternity care coordinators and reproductive health subject matter experts to share best practices system wide
- MCC Implementation Center
  - Telephone Care Program



# Maternity Tracker Innovation

- Clinical reminders specific to pregnancy
- Note templates designed to support the collection of pregnancy related data
- Gathering and storage of maternity data which includes key reproductive health data elements

| MCC Dashboard                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |        | Tracked Patients                                                                                                |               |                      |                    |          |                 |        |            |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|------------|--|--|
| <br>One Cprsnurse BS<br>Alerts<br>Sign Out<br>Tracking<br><b>Tracked Patients</b><br>Flagged Patients<br>Track A Patient<br>Tracking History<br>Configuration<br>Non-VA Care<br>Education Items<br>Checklist |        | Trimester: <span>1<sup>st</sup></span> <span>2<sup>nd</sup></span> <span>3<sup>rd</sup></span> <span>All</span> |               |                      |                    |          |                 |        |            |  |  |
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Last 4 | Age                                                                                                             | Phone         | Non-VA OB            | L&D                | Pregnant | Tri             | GA     | EDD        |  |  |
| Cprspatient, Eight F                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 0008   | 59                                                                                                              | 555-2222      |                      |                    | Yes      |                 |        |            |  |  |
| Dmpatient, Ten                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 0010   | 59                                                                                                              | 5185551212    | Wednesday Test Obgyn | Smallish Hospital  | Yes      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 21w 0d | 01/10/2015 |  |  |
| Epspatient, Four F                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1956   | 58                                                                                                              |               |                      |                    | No       |                 |        |            |  |  |
| Feebasis, Nine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5576   | 36                                                                                                              |               |                      |                    | Yes      | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 10w 6d | 03/22/2015 |  |  |
| HhZlsxaxfn, Wlsdhsy Tdo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1931   | 83                                                                                                              |               |                      | Testing Hospital Z | Yes      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 14w 2d | 02/26/2015 |  |  |
| Jxyht, Teluny                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4222   | 81                                                                                                              |               |                      |                    | Yes      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 32w 3d | 10/22/2014 |  |  |
| Kuhrm, Kuhhmn                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | XXXX   |                                                                                                                 | 465-054-08816 |                      |                    | No       |                 |        |            |  |  |
| Mnhut, Laguhi K                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 7563   | 81                                                                                                              |               | Test Good            | Great Hospital     | Yes      | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 10w 4d | 03/24/2015 |  |  |
| Sdosxht, Spdybah                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 0556   | 59                                                                                                              |               |                      |                    | Yes      |                 |        |            |  |  |
| Shytdsdqh, Hzwaxnhh                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | XXXX   |                                                                                                                 |               | Wednesday Test Obgyn |                    | Yes      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 20w 4d | 01/13/2015 |  |  |

# Conclusion

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