Presentation to the House Committee on Defense and Veteran Affairs

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Texas Veteran Population

• In 2018, Texas had approximately 1.6 million veterans ranging in age from 17 to over 100 years old
• Estimated 1,392,619 men and 181,402 women
• Includes individuals who entered service in Texas, were stationed at a Texas installation and remained after discharge, or who moved to Texas post-discharge
• The highest concentration of veterans are in Austin, Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, and San Antonio
• Mission: Coordinate, strengthen, and enhance services for veterans, service members, and their families across state agencies

• Goal: Veteran Services interfaces with a broad array of entities to provide comprehensive outreach, referral, and access to needs and services of Texas’ service members, veterans, and their families

• Primary focus is to prevent our service members, veterans, and their families from ever reaching the crisis point
• Represents HHSC on the Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services and contributes to a biennial report

• Collaborates with Texas Veteran Commission to provide information on HHSC services to Texas veterans

• Serves as state lead for the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) and U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Service Members, Veterans, and Families national initiatives
HHSC Office of Veteran Services

• Serves on the University of Texas System Veteran Leadership Task force

• Serves on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center national advisory council and the American College of Research Medicine’s Committee on Service Members, Veterans and their Families

• Serves on the Houston Veteran and Service Member Continuity of Care Committee that ensures no one in crisis is turned away from services

• Member of Suicide Prevention Council
In March 2014, HHSC launched the Texas Veterans mobile application (app)

The app is free for Texas veterans, active duty personnel, military families, and service providers

The app allows quick, easy, and portable access to crisis lines, online resources, personal connections with local veterans, and assistance with accessing services
Improvements to Veterans App

Projected Launch - Spring 2019

- Specific button to connect Women Veterans to programs
- Currently the “Connect with Texas Veterans” button links with 2-1-1 for information and referral to benefits and services
- HHSC is working toward implementation to connect App users with veteran call specialists leveraging the 2-1-1 platform
- Callers will receive a follow-up call to verify they received the information and contact they expected
Texas Veterans App Outreach

• Office of Veteran Services is developing a comprehensive statewide veteran outreach and marketing plan

• Development of Public Service Announcements (PSA) for statewide broadcast projected for summer 2019

• Posters and flyers will be produced for distribution
External Partnerships & Initiatives

• Participate in the design and relaunch of the Texas Veterans Portal and continue to sit on the advisory committee

• Member of Advisory Council to North Texas VA System

• Member of Advisory Council to the VA’s Center of Excellence Research Center in Waco for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury

• Develop veteran and family retreats for Post Traumatic Stress

• Consult with equine therapy programs on design and implementation for veteran mental and physical health needs

• Assist with the establishment of veteran resource centers around Texas