



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers®

Recommended Wording for Veteran Status Screening Question

UDS Table 4: Selected Patient
Characteristics, Line 25 (Total Veterans)

Prepared: October 2024

Gina Capra, MPA

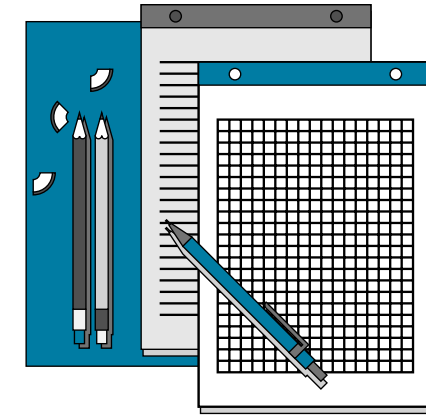
Chief Education Officer, NACHC

Veterans Interest Group Lead



Health centers are required to conduct and use regular needs assessments and patient intake screenings

- To identify special and vulnerable populations
- To identify needed partnerships
- To inform sites, services, changes in hours, etc.
- To make the case for new or different funding
- To engage the board in strategic decision-making
- To inform strategic planning

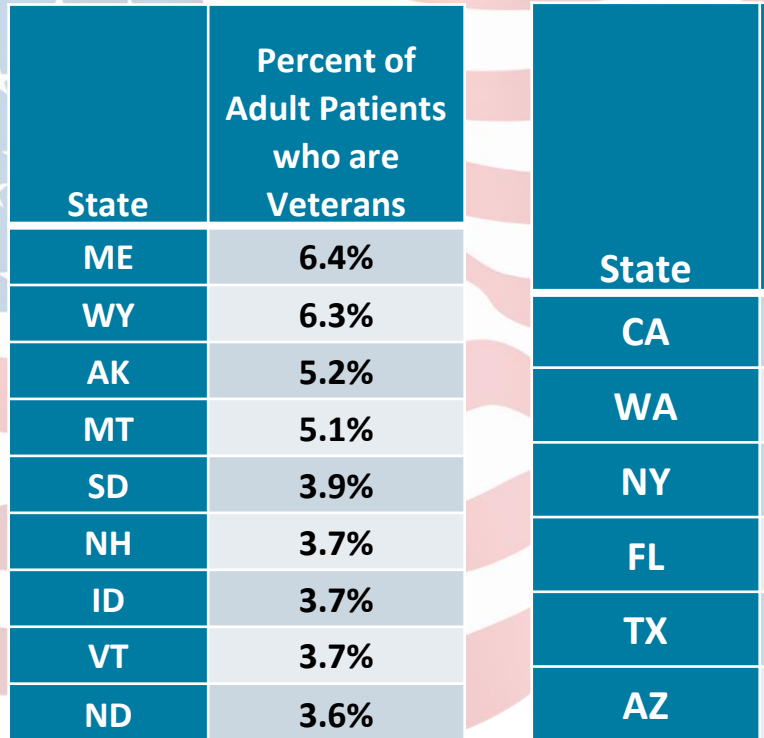


QUESTION: Is your health center accurately assessing the number and percentage of Military Veterans in your community or existing patient population?

WHY ACCURACY MATTERS: Veterans can be a vulnerable population that may need tailored services or require your staff to have military cultural awareness. If you are aware of your patients' Veteran status, you can prepare and better support them/their family's unique needs and concerns.

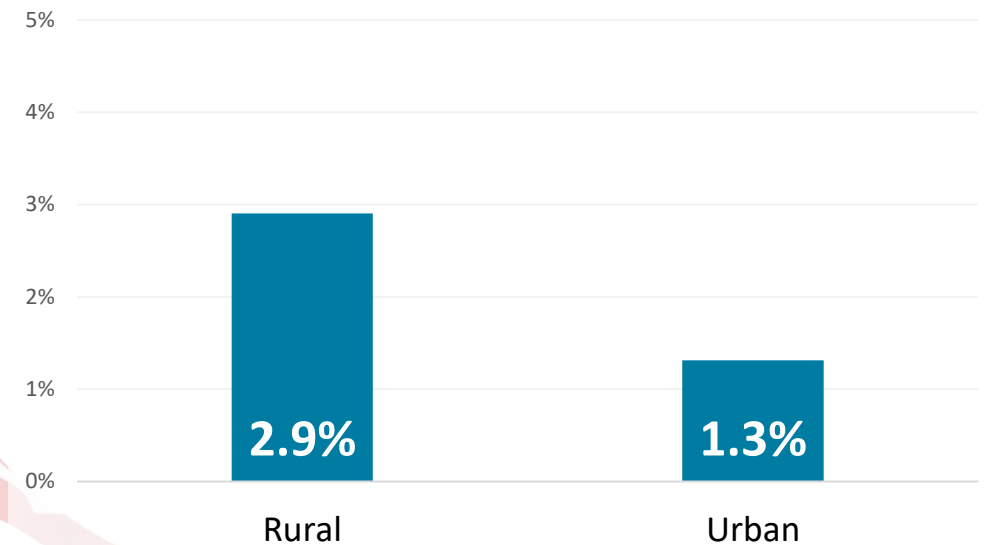
419,020 Health Center Veteran Patients (UDS CY 2023)

Is this an under-report?



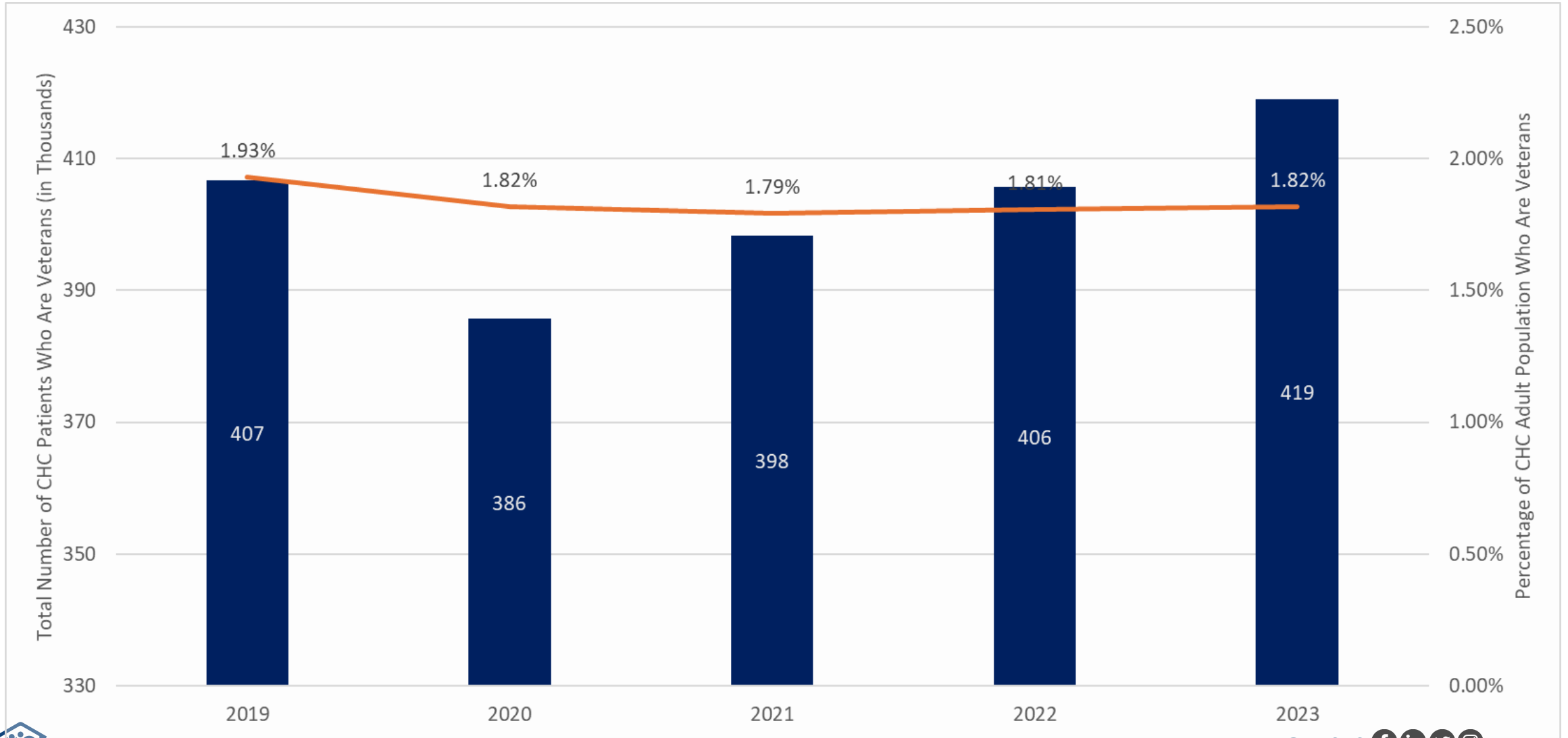
State	Percent of Adult Patients who are Veterans	State	Number of Adult Patients who are Veterans
ME	6.4%	CA	34,186
WY	6.3%	WA	24,211
AK	5.2%	NY	23,018
MT	5.1%	FL	18,186
SD	3.9%	TX	17,166
NH	3.7%	AZ	15,814
ID	3.7%		
VT	3.7%		
ND	3.6%		

Percentage of Patients at Rural and Urban CHCs who are Veterans



Rural health centers see more than double the percentage of adult patients who are Veterans.

Despite the growing number of veterans at CHCs, the percentage of adult patients who are veterans has remained steady.



Veteran Status Screening Question: Wording Matters!

Improved accuracy in Veteran Patient Characteristic is proven when using the recommended wording

RECOMMENDED *(SHORT VERSION)*

Have you served in the United States military, armed forces, or uniformed services? (yes/ no)

RECOMMENDED [ADD ON to SHORT VERSION]

This includes: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, Space Force, National Guard, Reserves, or the US Public Health Service and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Association. (yes/ no)

NOT RECOMMENDED
Are you a Veteran?

RATIONALE: The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has conducted research that shows individuals do not always consider themselves a “Veteran” for a variety of reasons (ie: unsure what a “Veteran” is; misunderstanding that it’s a “VA-designation” or applied only to individuals with honorable discharge).

As a result, VA recommends simply asking “Have you Served”, with the wording provided above.

Example: Community Health Centers of Southeastern Iowa (CHC/SEIA)

Research project between CHC/SEIA and Veterans Rural Health Resource Center/Iowa City VA Medical Center showed doubling and then consistent annual increase of Veteran status in patients upon universal implementation of “HAVE YOU SERVED” in CY2017 (UDS).

Patients Identified as Veterans at CHC/SEIA

Reporting Year	Number of Unique Patients (less children under age 18)	Number of Veterans identified	Percentage of total patients	Percentage of adult patients
2015	17,459 (11,937)	56	.32%	.46%
2016	16,221 (11,306)	229	1.41%	2.01%
2017	16,827 (11,370)	506	3.01%	4.45%
2018	17,976 (12,182)	527	2.93%	4.37%
2019	17,641 (11,461)	555	3.14%	4.84%

The change was made to the EMR in February 2017

Publication: Introduction of Military Veterans Upon Implementation of a Standardized Screening Process in a Federally Qualified Health Center, M. Bryant Howren, et al. Journal of Community Health Published online 16 October 2019

https://articulateusercontent.com/rise/courses/5msBCyAQYyS77tCB7MPuXpfjlpoc-bi/0-2H2XNtEx3ci4rO-Article_Identificationof-MilitaryVeterans_J-Comm-Health.pdf

Health Center Practice & Access Implications

- Workforce training/development
 - Military culture/reintegration
 - Mental health/suicide
 - Community of practice opportunities
- Veterans programs; opportunities for “whole person care”
 - Social Determinants of Health Screening (adding Veteran status to PRAPARE)
- Expansion of clinical services (e.g., behavioral health)
 - Systematic screening: HRSA Uniform Data System 2020 Reporting Change for FQHCs
 - Resource “sharing”
- Expansion to other healthcare organizations (e.g., Critical Access Hospitals)

Call to Action: Utilize the Recommended Veteran Screening Question in CY2024 across your Health Center – Update your Tool

“Have you served in the United States military, armed forces or unformed services”?

For additional clarification and to be consistent with the all-inclusive intent of UDS:

“This includes: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, Space Force, National Guard, or Reserves or the US Public Health Service (PHS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).”

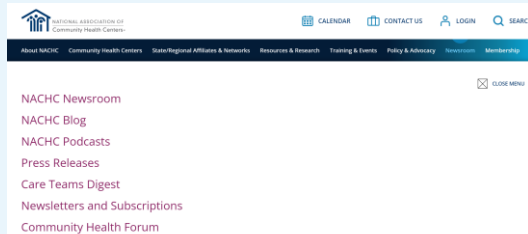
NATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE UNIVERSAL, EVIDENCE-BASED SCREENING QUESTION:

- **UDS REPORTING:** HRSA/BPHC provided technical note to utilize this recommended wording in the [CY2024 UDS Manual, FAQ for Table 4, Q. 11, page 52](#)
- **UDS TRAINING:** PCAs/JSI encouraged to raise awareness with health centers during UDS trainings
- **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Screening Tool:** PRAPARE revising “Personal Characteristics” question to reflect the recommended Veterans wording in its next update (2024)
- **NACHC “Health Centers Serving Veterans” Annual Webinar Series** <https://www.nachc.org/topic/veterans/>

Resources for Health Centers Serving Veterans

Veterans Interest Group Mailing List

Sign up for quarterly updates and opportunities related to serving Veterans! Sign up [here](#), or click “Newsroom” then “Newsletters and Subscriptions” on [NACHC’s webpage](#)



NACHC Veterans Webpage

Visit [NACHC’s webpage](#) for publications, policy updates, and more!



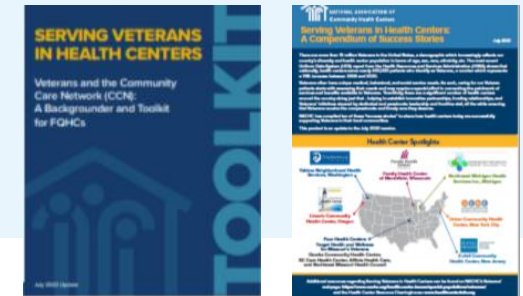
Health Center Resource Clearinghouse

[Search 'veterans'](#) to access toolkits, archived webinars, fact sheets and other resources!



Technical Assistance Resources

- [Serving Veterans in Health Centers: A Compendium of Success Stories](#)
- [Veterans and the Community Care Network \(CCN\): A Fact Sheet and Toolkit for FQHCs](#)



NACHC has tons of great resources! Check out a few above and email trainings@nachc.org with questions!

Review the Health Centers Serving Veterans Webinar Archive

Improving Identification of Military Veterans Patient Characteristic (April 2024)

Description:

This webinar focuses on key aspects of identifying military veteran status, including a discussion of why the wording of screening questions matters and how to apply more accurate patient counts to needs assessment and service delivery to military veterans. In addition, the webinar presents evidence-based, recommended screening techniques.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand why the wording of screening questions to identify military veteran status matters
2. Be equipped to change your health center's screening question with the most evidence-based, recommended screening techniques
3. Apply more accurate patient counts to needs assessment and service delivery to military Veterans

Health Centers Serving Veterans Webinar Series: Go to www.healthcenterinfo.org

Search “Veterans”

THE NACHC MISSION

America's Voice for Community Health Care

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.



“Have you served in the United States military, armed forces or unformed services”?

THANK YOU!

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