



Veterans and Transit – The Health Connection

Indiana Veterans

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there were nearly 500,000 veterans living in Indiana in September 2012, with over 360,000 serving our country during a time of war.¹ Many of these veterans depend upon the Veterans Administration Healthcare system to receive their healthcare, and a growing number of them have disabilities due to their military and wartime service to our country.¹ One significant barrier to veterans receiving care through the Veterans Administration Medical Centers (VAMC) in Indiana is the distance between VAMC facilities.²

Veterans live in all counties and congressional districts in Indiana¹, making this a significant issue for all Hoosiers who would choose to honor and help those who have given so much for their fellow Americans.

Transit – the Health Connection

Why is the current proposal for increased public transit so important for Hoosier Veterans?

- Veterans discharged from VA facilities following heart attacks who lived greater

than 20 miles away were less likely to use follow-up services and 25% more likely to die within the following year.³

- Veterans with spinal cord injuries utilize VA services less, the greater the travel barriers, even though their needs of services are significant.⁴
- Older veterans and those living 30 miles or more away show a significant decline in the number of outpatient visits overall, especially veterans 50 years and older, right at a time when they should use services more to stay healthy.⁵
- Travel barriers significantly reduce veteran alcohol inpatient aftercare visits and continuing mental health outpatient visits of all kinds.^{6,7,8}
- Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans transitioning from active duty reported an average time gap of 3.83 months before receiving care in a VA facility – 50% had a service-connected disability; transportation was cited as a barrier to their receipt of care.⁹

So, What Can We Do?

A more robust public transit system in Indiana will help Hoosier Veterans make the connections to meet their healthcare needs.

For more information, please email info@indianacat.org or visit us online at www.indianacat.org.

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