No Wrong Door for Michigan Veterans
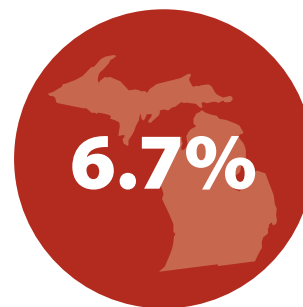
The Need

660,000

660,000 Veterans. Michigan had the 11th largest Veteran population by state in 2013.

50,000

50,000 post-9/11 Vets have returned, with 30–50,000 more expected to transition to Michigan over the next 3–5 years.

6.7%

Michigan's Veteran population comprises 6.7% of the state's population.

These returning Veterans, and the current population of aging Veterans, have multifaceted needs, which are met by a number of independently administered services, including:

education	**health care**	**care giving**
social services	**employment and training**	**housing**
vocational rehabilitation	**independent living assistance**	**family support**

Veterans' services are limited. Resources to administer programs are limited. And resources to integrate services across programs are more limited. *Crain's Detroit Business* reported that **there remains a persistent lack of coordination among those services**. Yet this integration of services is what Veterans and their families need most!

The Initiative

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is committed to providing our state's Veterans with the services, benefits, care, and support they have earned, whether they are transitioning to civilian life or connecting with services for their specific needs. To accomplish this, MVAA has partnered with Altarum Institute in Ann Arbor to implement its **Veterans Community Action Teams (VCAT) Model** with a no-wrong-door approach enhancing the system of care for Veteran services.

The VCAT Model

The VCAT model is a national best practice at work for more than 5 years in San Diego, California and San Antonio, Texas. Service providers, advocates, volunteers, and Veterans come together to find ways to better integrate services for Veterans in need.

This system is characterized by a comprehensive network of service providers, empowered with knowledge, information, and tools to ensure that Veterans and family members are quickly connected to the right service providers.
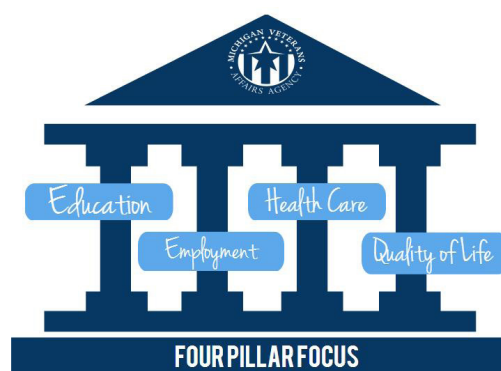
The no-wrong-door philosophy creates a system of care that improves connectivity and coordination of services in the community and provides them with much-needed support in making referrals to providers of different services.

The Communities

2013–2014 Metro Detroit and West Michigan Service Areas Selected as Pilot Communities

Altarum engaged two regions, Detroit Metro Region 10, comprising Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties; and West Michigan Region 4, consisting of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa counties; conducted community assessments, and established partnerships among community leaders and providers that support Veterans. The VCAT Model is working to connect Veterans to services in education, employment, health care, and quality of life.

More than 524 community members and 344 organizations are working to eliminate barriers that separate Veterans from the services that they need. Each VCAT network coordinates assistance and provides information about resources and services to Veterans. In addition, the VCAT supports community service providers in addressing Veterans issues, including unemployment, illness, homelessness, and substance abuse.

What's Next

New VCATs are being formed across Michigan! By fall 2015, MVAA and Altarum will have expanded the VCAT model from two regions to six. VCATs will be created statewide by 2016. MVAA and Altarum seek the participation of Veterans' services leaders, providers, and other stakeholders that support Veterans. We will conduct community assessments and develop partnerships in each region. If you are a service provider, advocate, Veteran, or other individual working on Veterans' issues, we want to hear from you. Contact us at:

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