



THE MEADOWS MENTAL HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

**Joint Legislative Committee on Aging:
Improving How Texas Meets the Mental Health Needs of Veterans and Their Families**

Kyle Mitchell | August 28, 2018

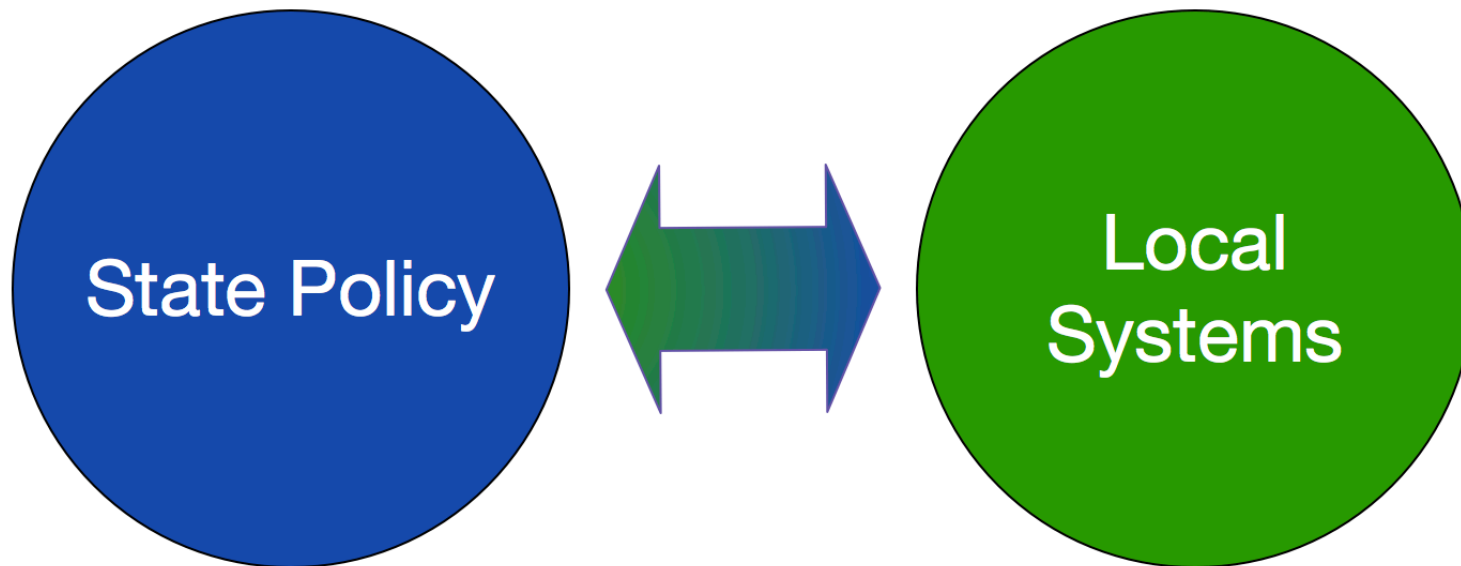
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Vision

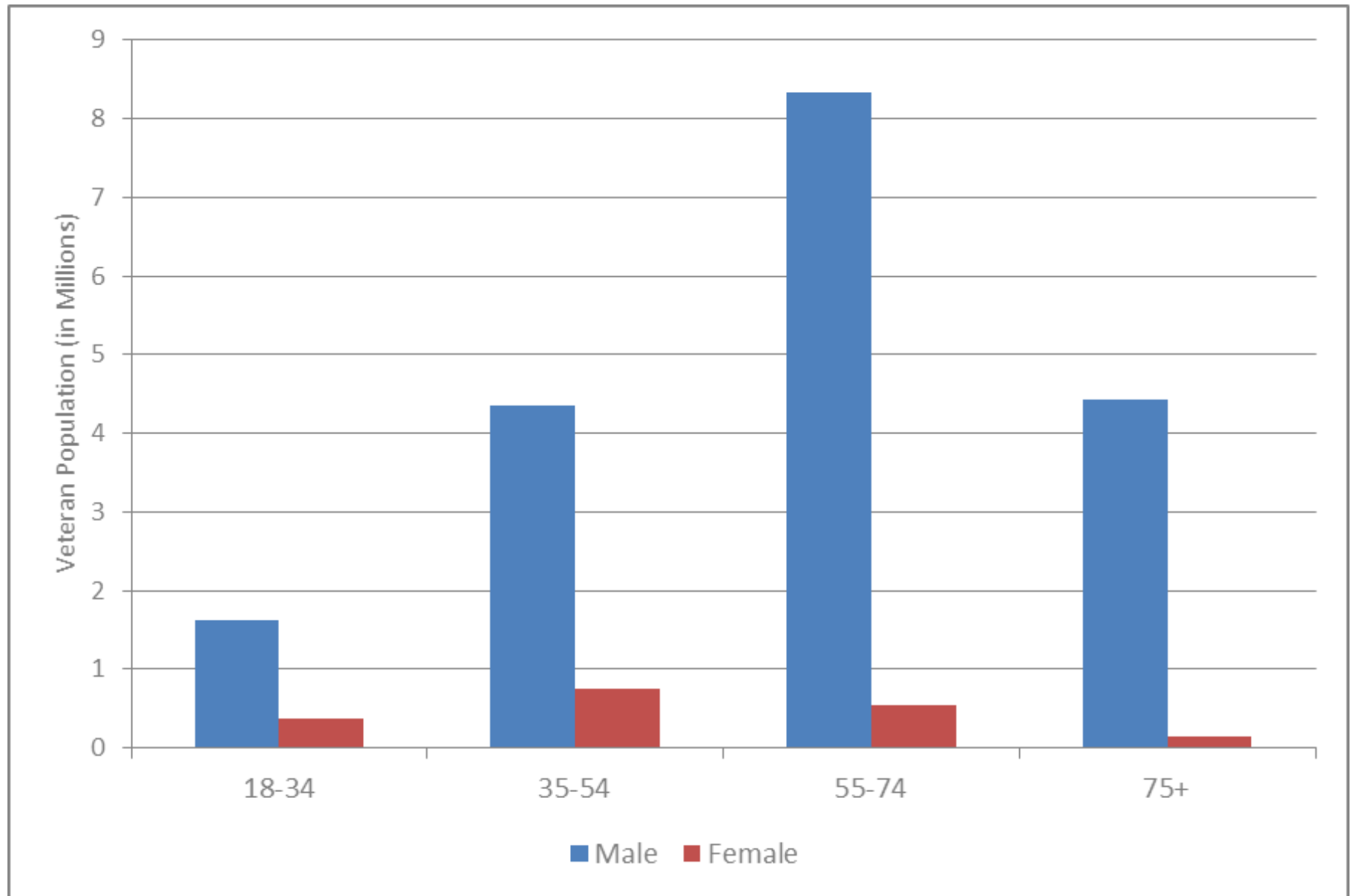
We envision Texas to be the national leader in treating people with mental health needs.

Mission Statement

To provide independent, non-partisan, and trusted policy and program guidance that creates systemic changes so all Texans can obtain effective, efficient behavioral health care when and where they need it.



U.S. Veteran Population: Age and Sex (2015)



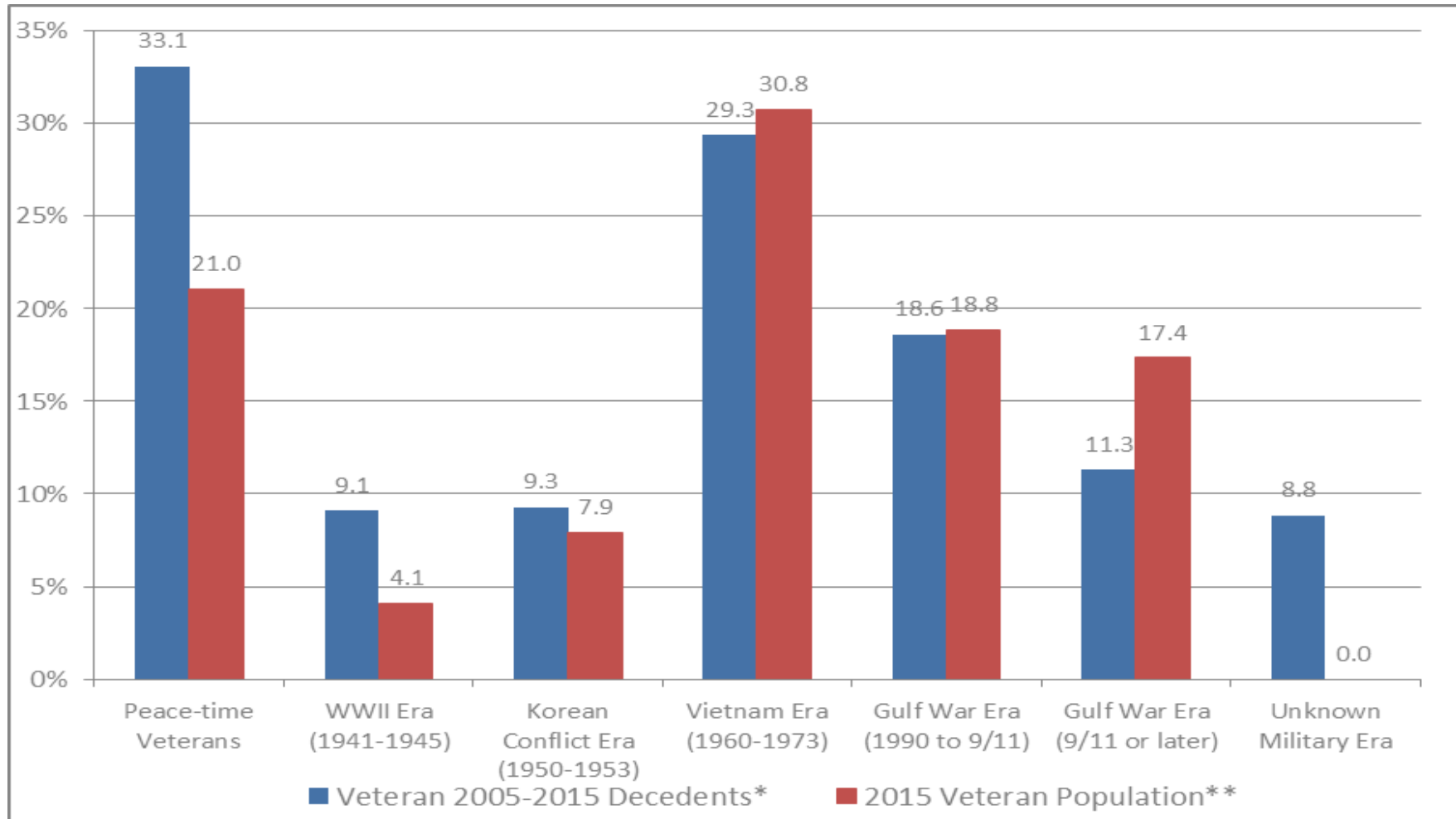
Texas Veterans: Prevalence Data (55 & Older)

Mental Illness Estimates Texas Veterans 55 Years and Older (2016)		
Total Population (55 Years and Older)	910,000	
Any Mental Illness	170,000	18.7%
Serious Mental Illness	30,000	3.3%
Major Depression	50,000	5.5%

Texas Veterans: Prevalence Data (55 & Older)

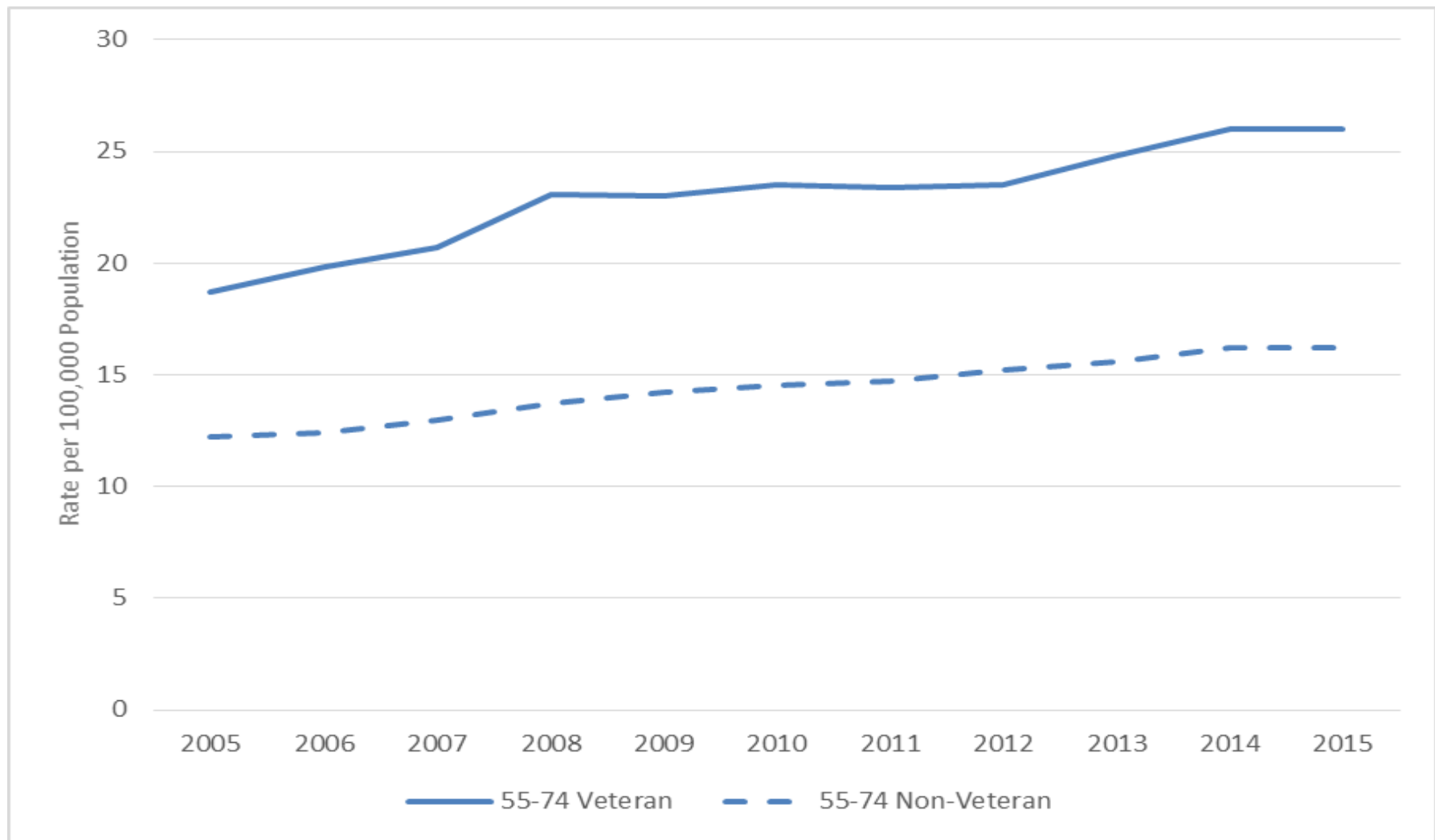
Substance Use Estimates Texas Veterans 55 Years and Older (2016)		
Total Population (55 Years and Older)	910,000	
Illicit Drug Use	55,000	6.0%
Nonmedical Use of Psychotherapeutics	15,000	1.6%
Nonmedical Use of Pain Relievers	15,000	1.6%
Illicit Drug Dependence or Abuse	6,000	0.7%
Alcohol Dependence or Abuse	60,000	6.6%

Veteran Suicide Decedents by Service Era



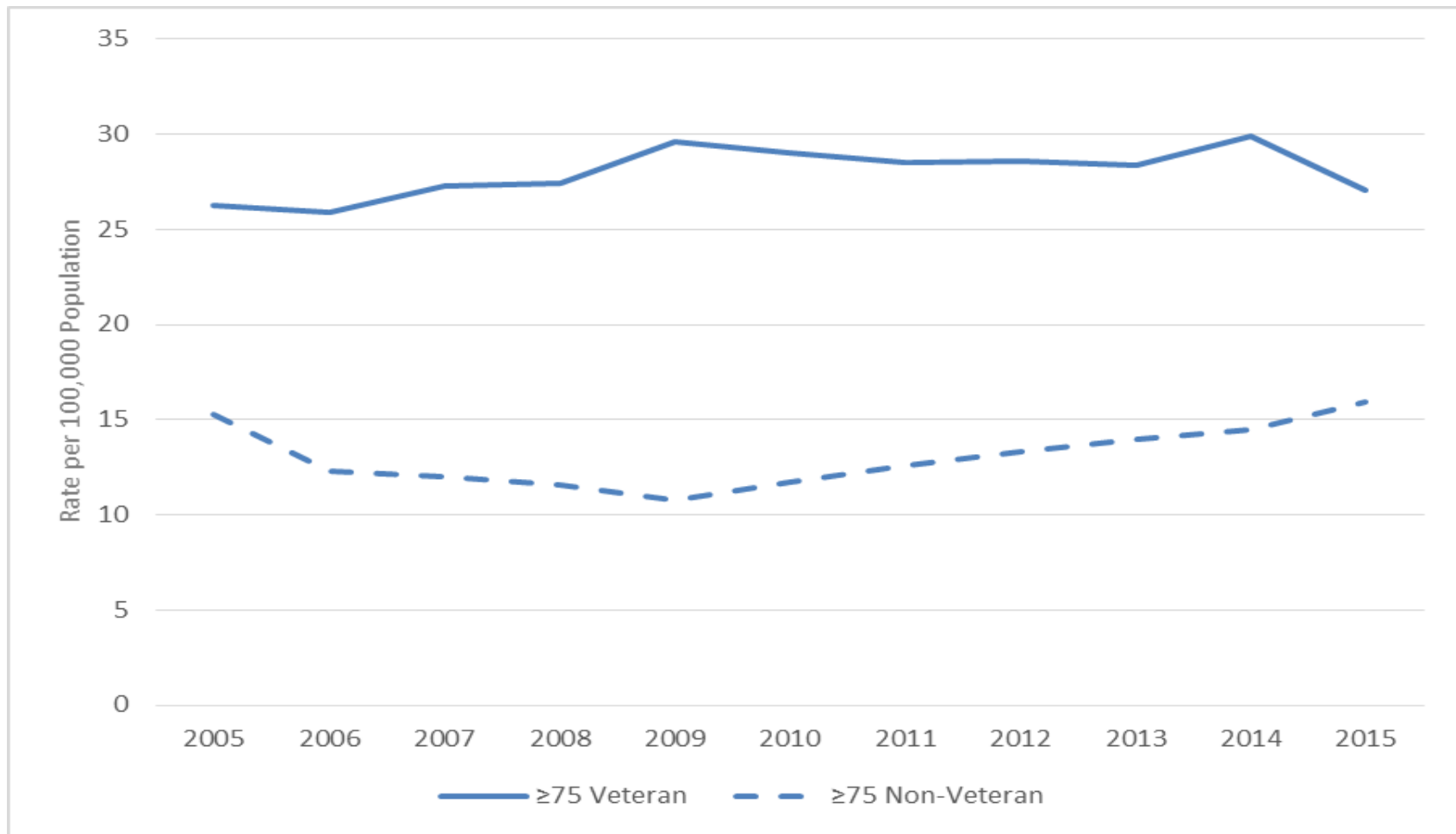
Vietnam-era veterans represent the largest percentage of veterans by era and had the second-highest rate of deaths by suicides between 2005 and 2015.

Rates of Suicide: Ages 55 – 74 (2005 – 2015)



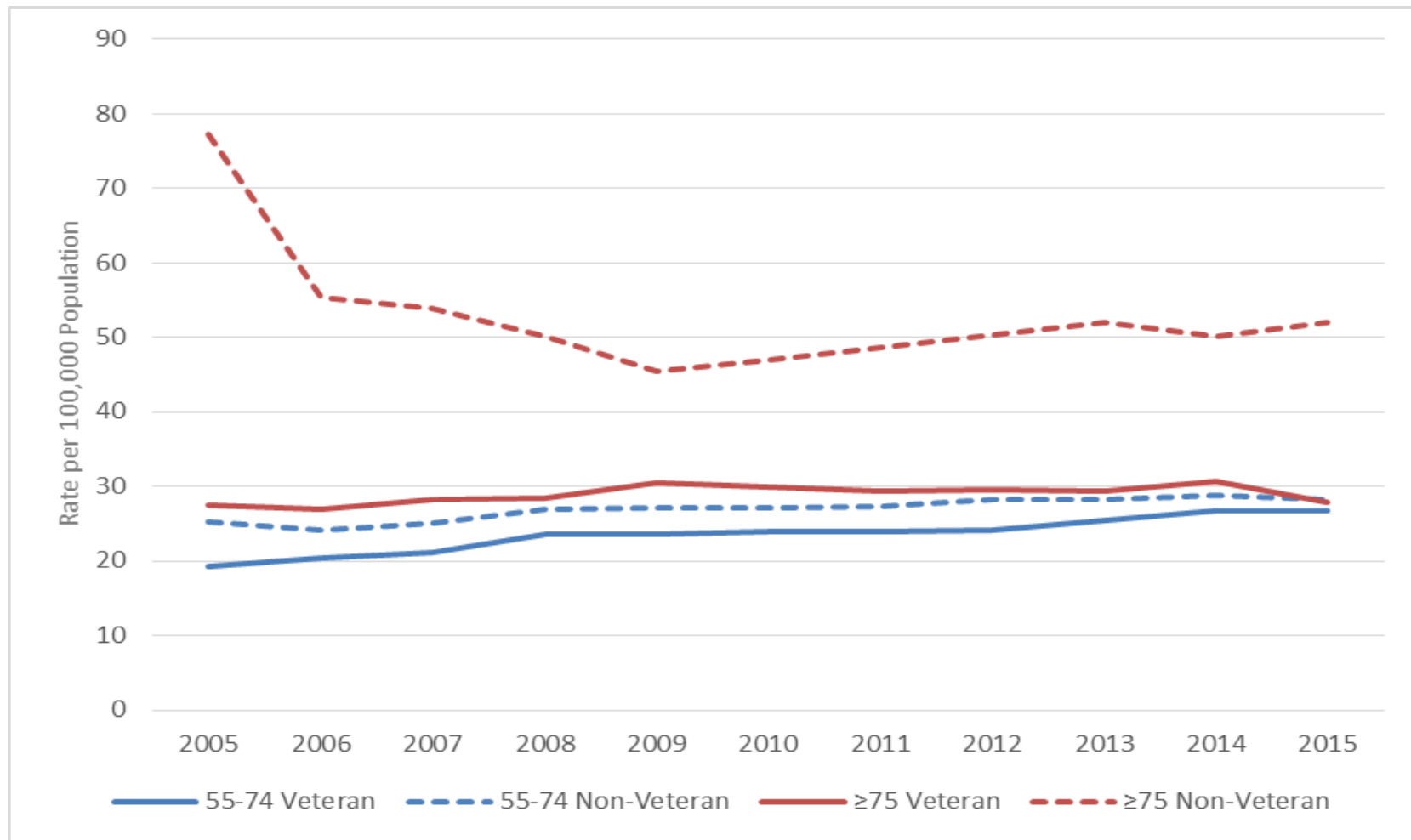
Suicide rates among both veterans and non-veterans ages 55–74 increased between 2005 and 2015.

Rates of Suicide: Ages 75 and older (2005 – 2015)



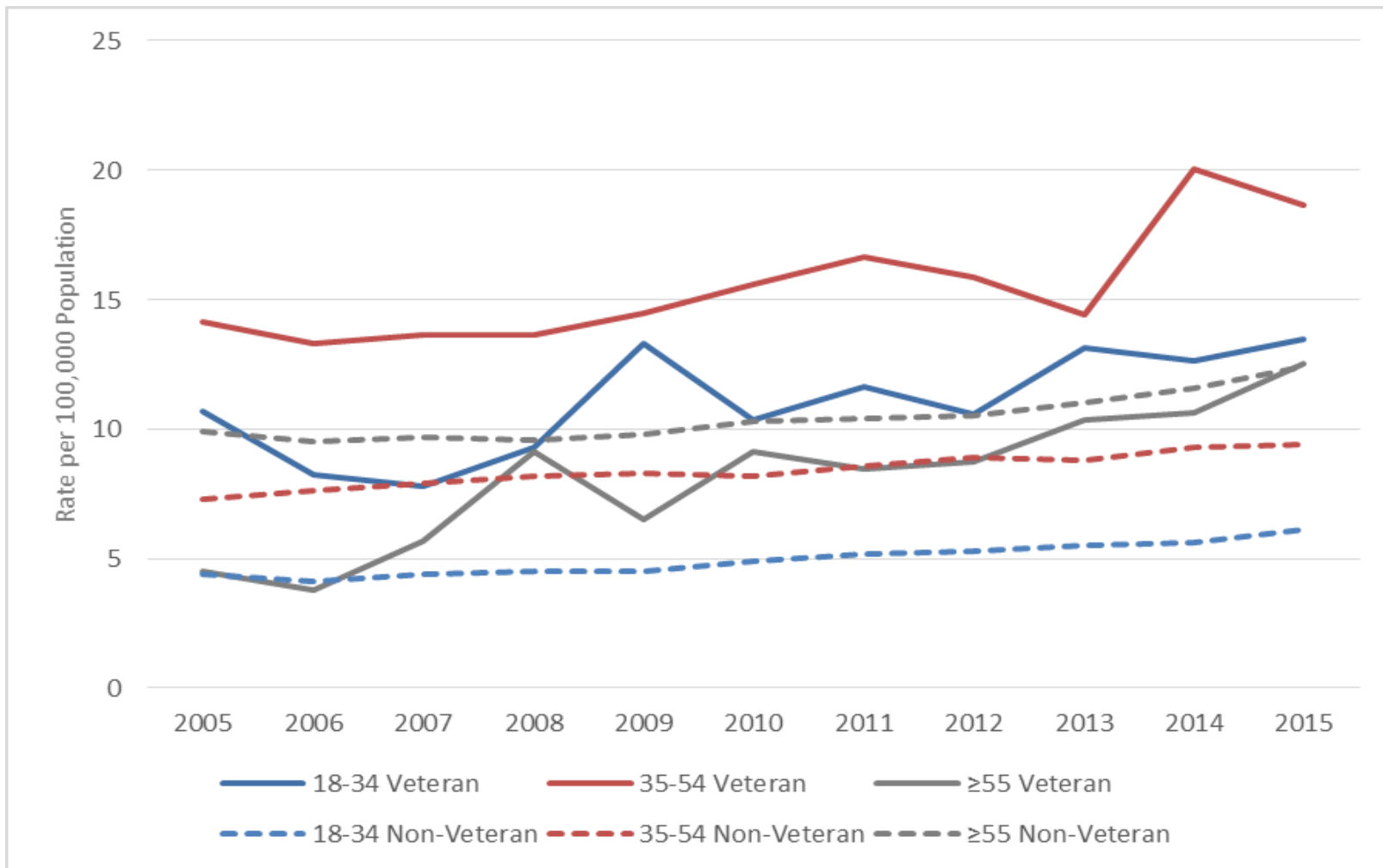
Rates of suicide in 2015 among veterans and non-veterans ages 75 and older are consistent with their respective rates in 2005, though there were fluctuations in the intervening years.

Rates of Suicide: Males, Ages 55 and older (2005 – 2015)



Rates of suicide for older veterans were lower than the respective rates for older non-veterans, particularly for those ages 75 and over.

Rates of Suicide: Females (2005 – 2015)



Except in the case of older females, the rates of suicide for female veterans were higher than those of female non-veterans.

Addressing Needs Through Peer Services

81(R) SB 1325 (Nelson) established the **Mental Health Program for Veterans** to provide peer-to-peer counseling for veterans.



The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) **coordinate to administer the program.**

The program provides **peer counseling services** to service members, veterans, and their families through contracts with **local mental health authorities (LMHAs)**, **local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs)** and the **Texas A&M University Health Science Center (TAMUHSC)**.

Expansion to Meet Additional Needs

The Legislature has continually supported important expansions in this program – most recently through 85(R) SB 27 (Campbell).

What are others ways the Legislature can continue to support this program?

- Examine the **funding streams**.
- Additional support for the **justice-involved veterans** and **faith-based** work at TVC.
- **Additional funding** for peers or focused populations.



Addressing Veteran Suicides

- **85(R) SB 578 (Hinojosa)** directed HHSC to create a **Veteran Suicide Prevention Action Plan** – a comprehensive action plan with short- and long-term goals to increase access to, and availability of, professional veteran health services to **prevent suicide among the population**.
 - HHSC plans to have **all goals identified** by September 1, 2018, with **short-term goals implemented** by September 2021 and **long-term goals implemented** by September 2027.

Addressing Needs Through Community Grants

- **84(R) SB 55 (Nelson)** directed HHSC to establish a grant program to support **community mental health programs** that provide and coordinate **mental health services and treatment** for **Texas veterans and their families**.
 - The **Texas Veterans + Family Alliance (TV+FA)** provides grants to existing or developing **community collaboratives** to fund delivery and coordination of mental health and supportive services.
 - Communities must match state grants on a **dollar-for-dollar basis**, demonstrating their commitment to addressing mental health needs of veterans and their families.

Texas Veterans + Family Alliance in Action

Two **Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinics at Endeavors™** - in **El Paso** and in **Killeen** - provide high-quality, accessible, and integrated mental health care to veterans and their families, regardless of discharge status or ability to pay.

Veteran “one-stops” in the **Rio Grande Valley, Waco, and Central Texas.**

Increased access to a **broad range of mental health care services** for veterans and their families across the state.

Changes Affecting TV+FA

- **85(R) HB 13 (Price)** created the **Community Mental Health Grant Program** to provide incentives for state-local collaborations to *help Texas communities tailor solutions to fit the mental health challenges they face.*
 - Communities must match state grants in an amount equal to **50 percent of the grant amount** if the community mental health program is located **in a county with a population of less than 250,000.**
- In October 2017, HHSC and MMHPI mutually agreed to terminate MMHPI's role as the **no-cost administrator** for the Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Program.

Addressing Needs Through TVC Grants

- **Veteran Mental Health grants** focus on the *mental health needs of veterans and their families* through projects that emphasize **direct services to veterans and their families**.
- **Veteran Treatment Court grants** *assist Texas veterans* in obtaining services through **Veterans Treatment Court programs**.
- TVC and HHSC should *continue their close coordination* to achieve the goals of their grant programs and to prevent duplication in funding.

Addressing Needs Through Coordination

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL sanantonio.americaserves.org. The page features a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT, SERVICES, BLOG, and CONTACT. A prominent 'GET ASSISTANCE' button is located in the top right corner. The main content area includes a large background image of a restaurant patio with colorful umbrellas. The TXServes San Antonio logo is displayed, along with a descriptive paragraph: 'TXServes offers service members, veterans and their families access to a class-leading continuum of providers that runs the gamut from superior housing and emergency service providers to employment, recreation and fitness, financial capabilities and more!'. Below this is a dark blue section with the heading 'GET ASSISTANCE NOW' and a form with fields for First name, Last name, Date of birth (with a calendar icon), and Phone number.

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okay
to say

The truth is: mental illness affects more people than you may think, and we need to talk about it. It's Okay to say..." okaytosay.org
