

# FACTSHEET

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## Veterans and Alzheimer's Disease

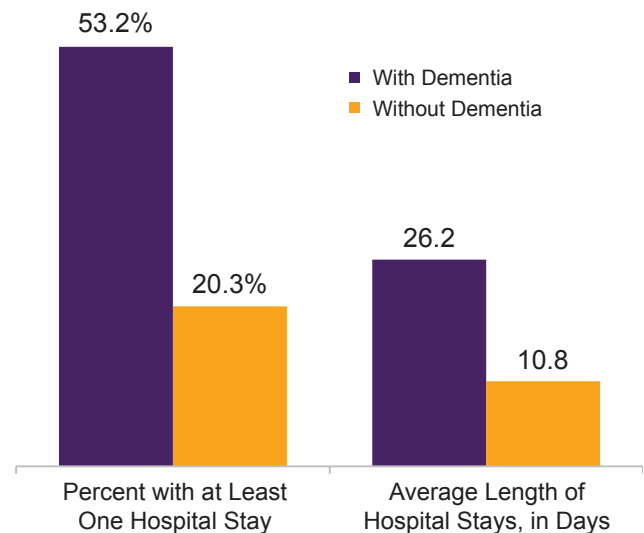
**Nearly half a million American veterans have Alzheimer's—and as the population ages, that number is expected to grow.**

- In 2015, an estimated 486,000 veterans were living with Alzheimer's.
- The annual number of veterans newly diagnosed with dementia has increased more than 22 percent since 2008.

**For veterans, prevalence may grow even faster in future years because they have a higher risk of developing dementia.**

- Solid evidence indicates that moderate and severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) increases the risk of developing certain forms of dementia.
- More than 1 in 5 combat wounds from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq involve brain injuries. Nearly 380,000 veterans have been diagnosed with TBI since 2000—12 percent of them with moderate or severe TBI.
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia, possibly a doubling of the risk.
- PTSD is two to five times more common in veterans compared with the general population. From 2000-2015, more than 167,000 service members were diagnosed with PTSD.

### Hospitalizations Among Veterans With and Without Dementia



**The large increase in the number of veterans with Alzheimer's and other dementias will place a heavy burden on the VA health care system.**

- Veterans with dementia are 2.6 times more likely to be hospitalized than other veterans—and hospital stays are, on average, 2.4 times longer.
- The average number of outpatient psychiatric visits is three times greater among veterans with dementia than veterans without.
- More than 60 percent of the VA's costs of caring for those with Alzheimer's are for nursing home care.