

Soldiers Health

After WWII several war veterans came back home with injuries, amputations and chronic illnesses. However, not all cases were extreme; other soldiers were affected by infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and venereal disease. During the 1940s the term PTSD had not yet been adopted; it was labeled as “combat fatigue”. Stigma at the time was massive and there were very limited options that could aid and help war veterans even though the need for it was clear. The healthcare system also wasn't invested in by the government in order to properly help veterans. They were severely underfunded and overcrowded by millions of soldiers returning home. Veterans had special hospitals dedicated to them, by the late 1940s scandals broke out over the poor conditions of these hospitals.

Harry Truman (Democrat, Incumbent president). The GI Bill (1944) was heavily backed by Truman it aimed at giving veterans better education, low interest home loans, and job training which all improved veterans health by giving them stability. He expanded the Veteran Administration(VA) hospitals due to the severe overcrowding and also called improvements in health. One key point of his campaign was his stance on not just improving physical but also mental health. He tried to propose a national health insurance plan however the bill did not pass. Thomas Dewey (Republican) had built a reputation for strong public service. As governor of the state of New York he expanded state programs in sectors like healthcare, housing, and education. He also supported the GI Bill and fought for improved veteran programs. While both candidates agreed on the bill Dewey opposed the national health insurance plan calling it “socialized medicine”. He promised Republican candidates he would do a better job at running VA hospitals due to the scandals the institutions faced during Truman's time in office. While Dewey supported veterans he did not interfere at the federal level rather his approach was one of efficiency and reform not expansion.