

# Access to VA Services by Homeless Veterans Following Inpatient Mental Health Bed Closures

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## Background

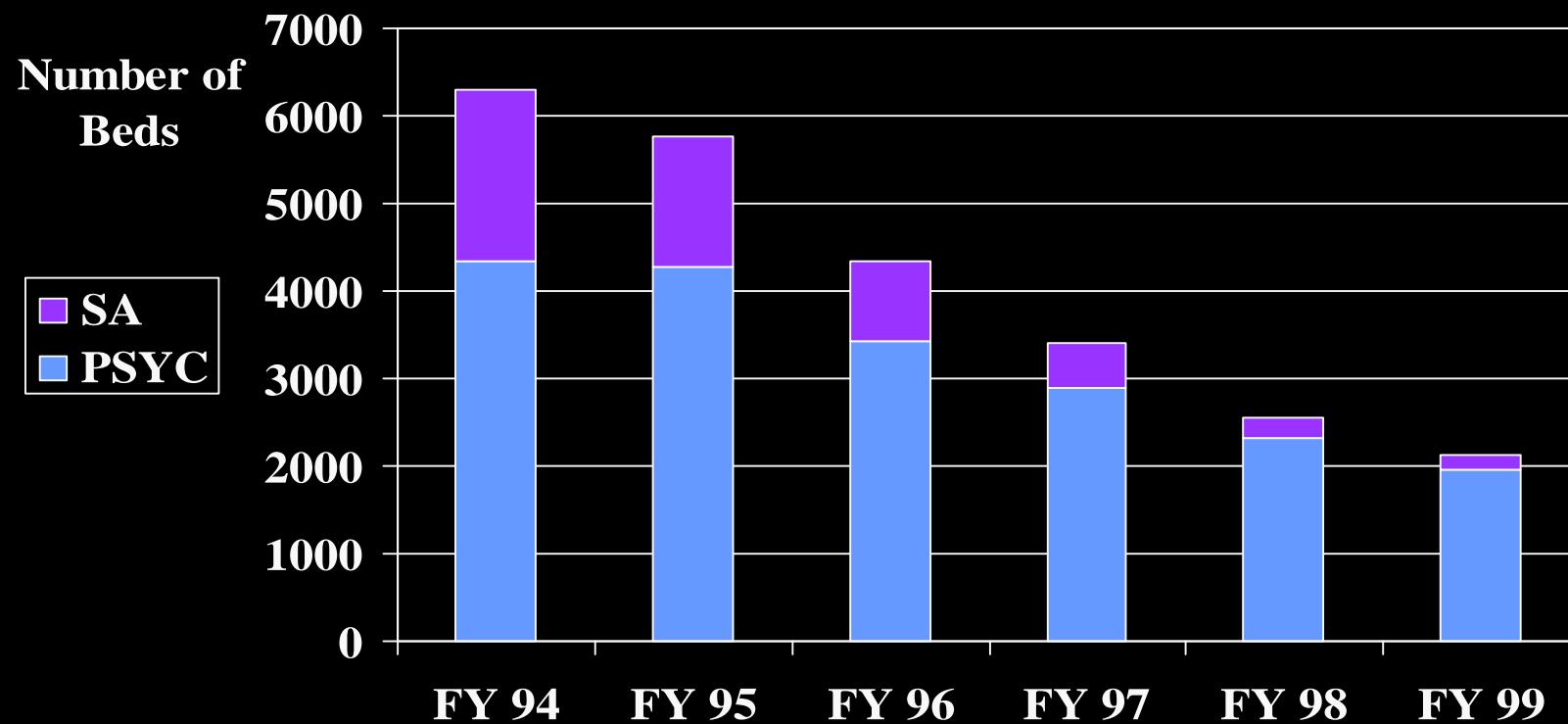
- Traditionally, inpatient mental health treatment (psychiatric and substance abuse) has been viewed as an important resource for engaging homeless individuals in a treatment system

## Background (continued)

- Between 1994 and 1999, VA closed approximately two thirds of its inpatient mental health beds
  - IP psychiatric treatment bed closed: 56%
  - IP substance abuse treatment bed closed: 91%

# Loss of Inpatient Mental Health Beds

## FY 94 – FY 99



## Background (continued)

- Previous research on VA bed closures has suggested limited impact
  - Rosenheck, Banks & Pandiani (2000) investigated effects on NY State hospital services
  - Rosenheck, Frisman & Essock (2001) investigated effects on CT State psychiatric services
  - Rosenheck & Fontana (2001) investigated closure of inpatient PTSD beds

## Background (continued)

- Did loss of inpatient mental health treatment beds adversely impact engagement of homeless individuals into treatment?

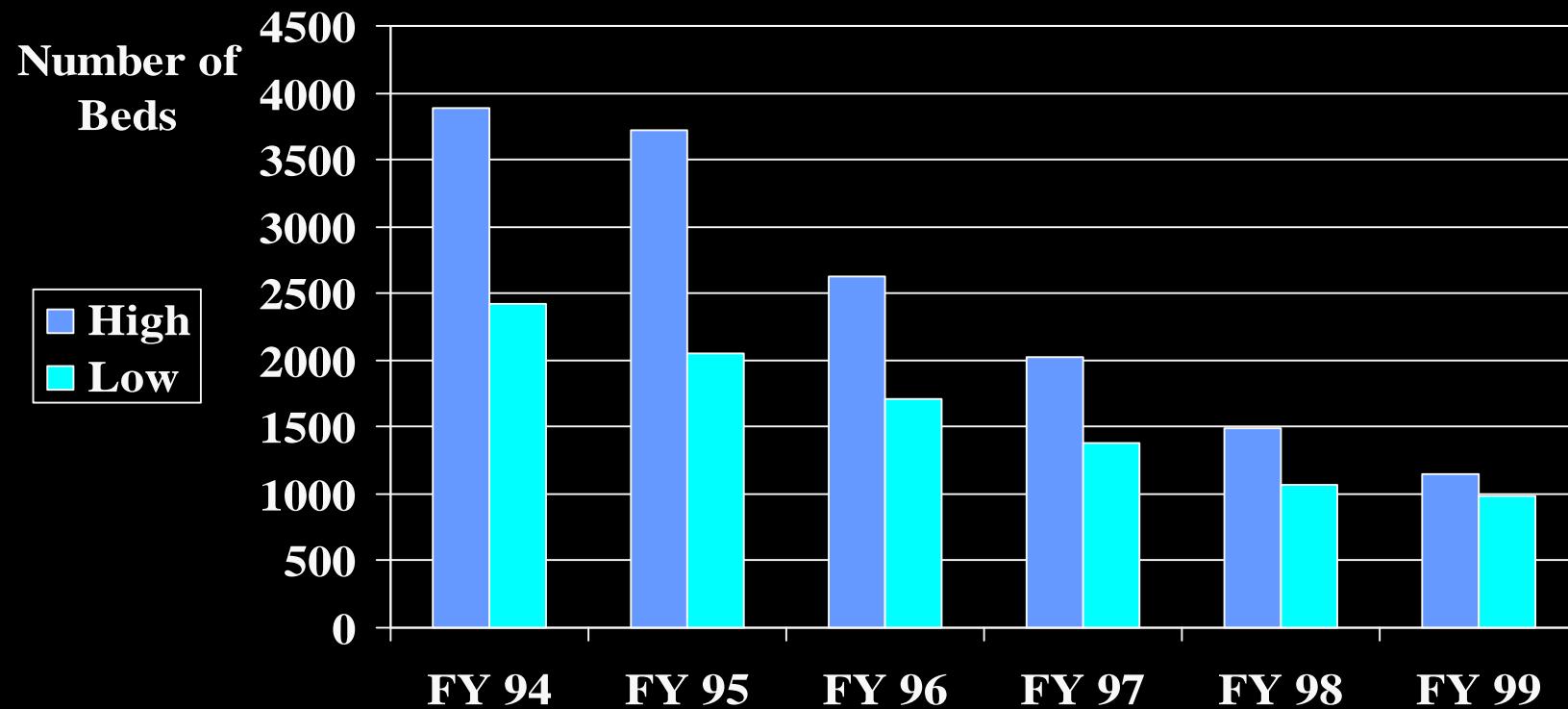
## Methods

- Summarized inpatient and outpatient mental health service use by homeless veterans served by VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program
- Veterans in study group:
  - Were contacted through outreach
  - Had not used any VA services in 6 months prior to outreach

## Methods (continued)

- Main variables of interest:
  - Number of inpatient mental health beds closed
    - High (top third of distribution; closed average of 129 beds per medical center)
    - Low (remainder of distribution; closed average of 33 beds per medical center)
  - Year (94 – 99)

# Loss of Inpatient Mental Health Beds by Group FY 94 – FY 99



## Number of Veterans by Group/Year Cohort

Year	Low Closure	High Closure
94	2,861	1,250
95	3,311	1,578
96	3,322	1,430
97	2,724	1,393
98	3,502	1,749
99	3,446	1,595

# Veteran Characteristics

	Low Bed Closure (n=19,166)	High Bed Closure (n=8,995)
Age	43.8	43.7
% Females	2.0%	2.0%
% African Americans	44.4%	64.6%
% Married	6.0%	6.0%
% Homeless > 1 year	29.4%	28.0%
In 30 days before intake:		
Days homeless	20.1	19.8
Days housed	8.0	8.0
Days In Institution	1.9	2.2
Days Worked	4.5	4.6

## Veteran Characteristics (continued)

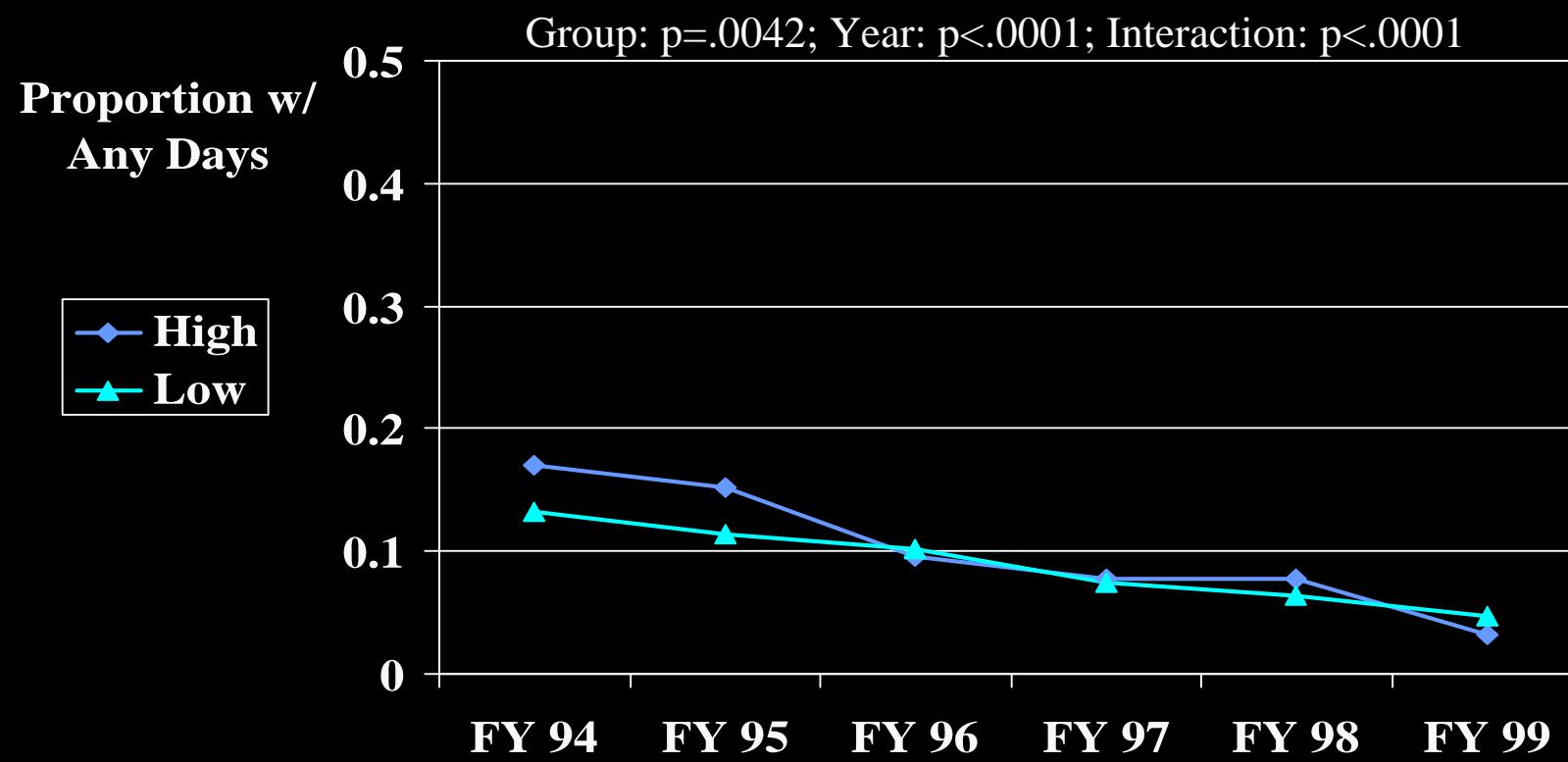
	Low Bed Closure (n=19,166)	High Bed Closure (n=8,995)
Alcohol Abuse/Dependency	58.6%	58.1%
Prior hospitalization	40.9%	40.0%
Drug Abuse/Dependency	39.1%	48.2%
Prior hospitalization	29.3%	36.3%
Serious Psychiatric Problems	34.5%	37.2%
Prior hospitalization	20.3%	20.1%

# Measures

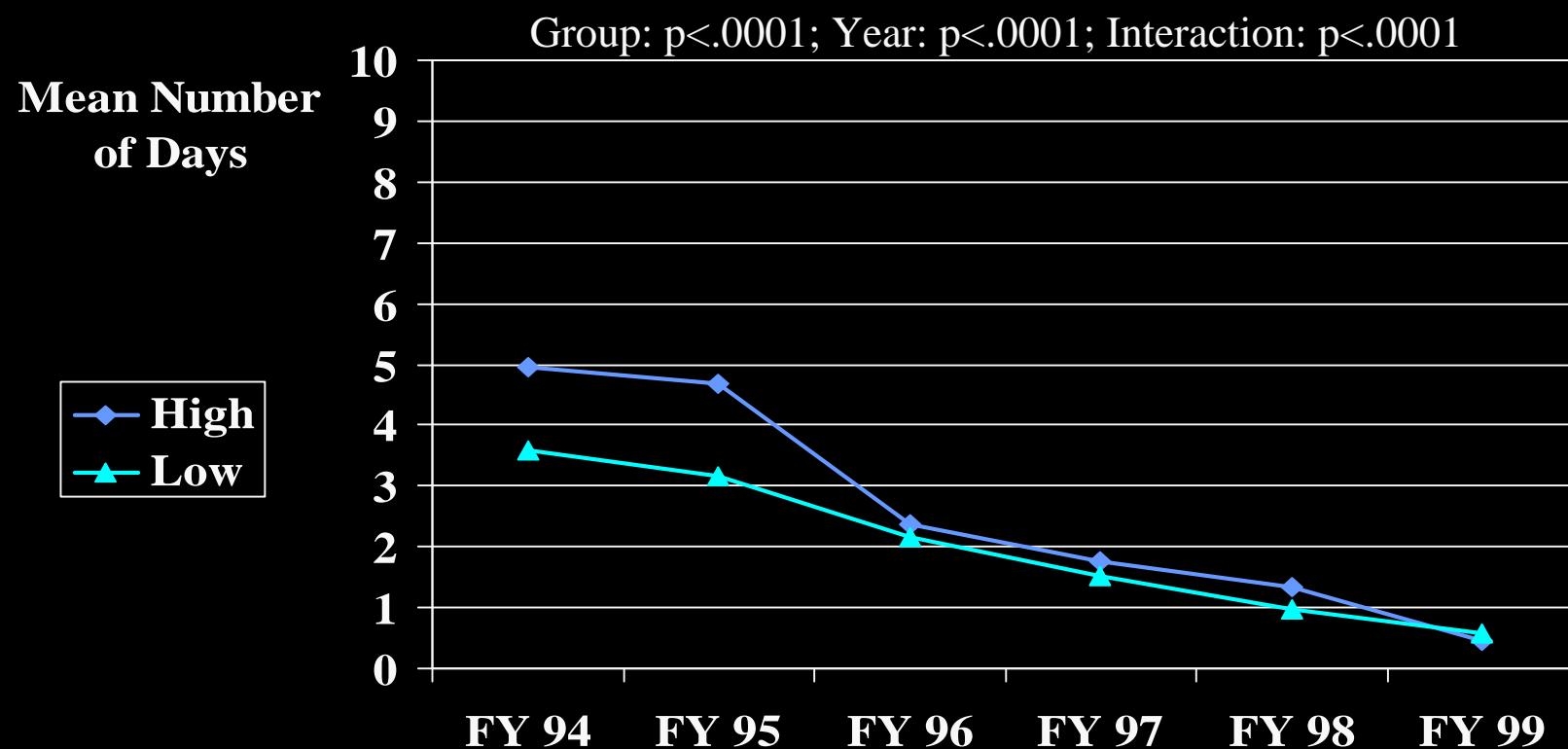
## (from VA Administrative Databases)

- Inpatient Mental Health
  - Any inpatient mental health use
  - Number of days in 6 months following outreach
- Outpatient Mental Health
  - Any outpatient mental health use
  - Number of visits in 6 months following outreach
- Analyses controlled for veteran characteristics

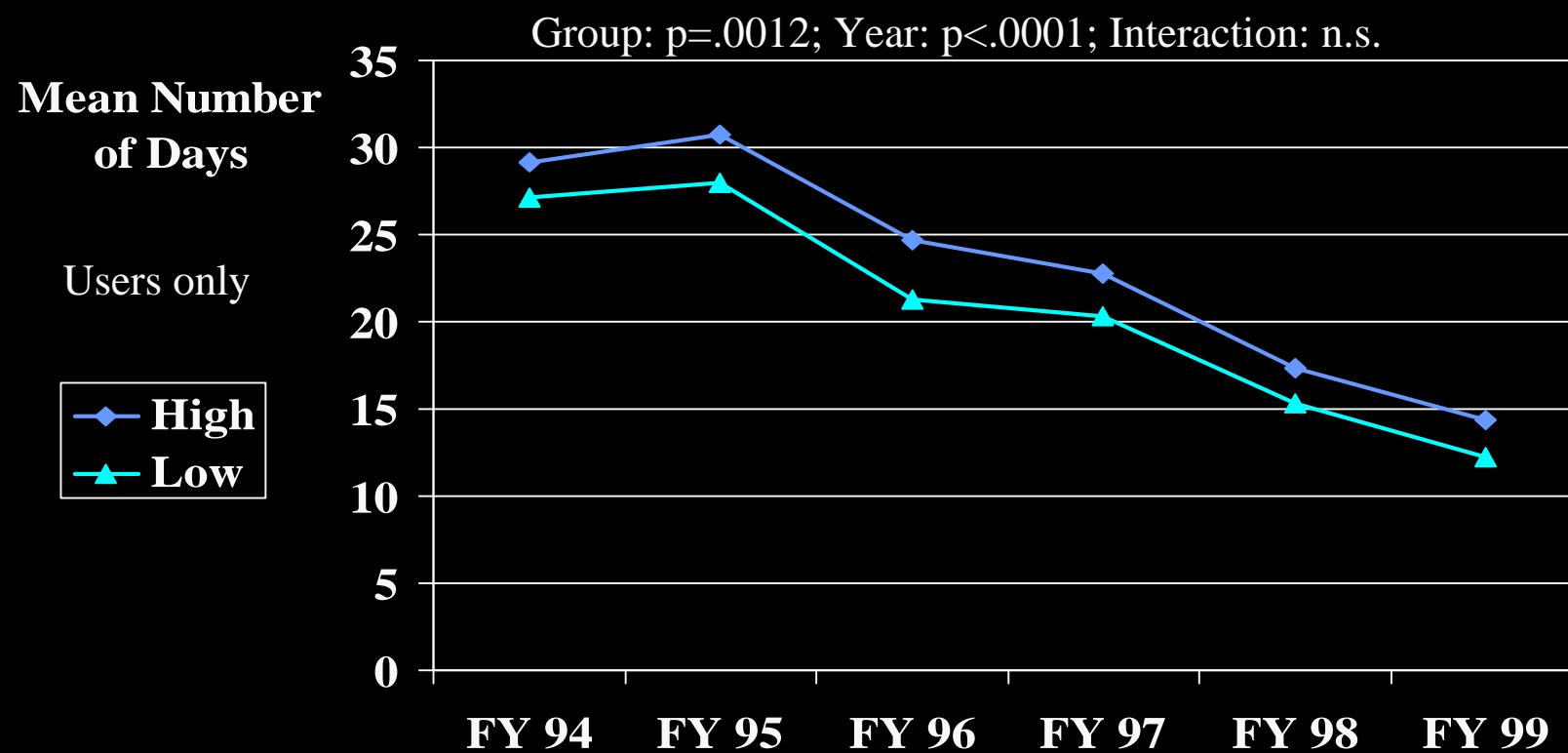
# Any Inpatient Mental Health Days in 6 Months After Outreach



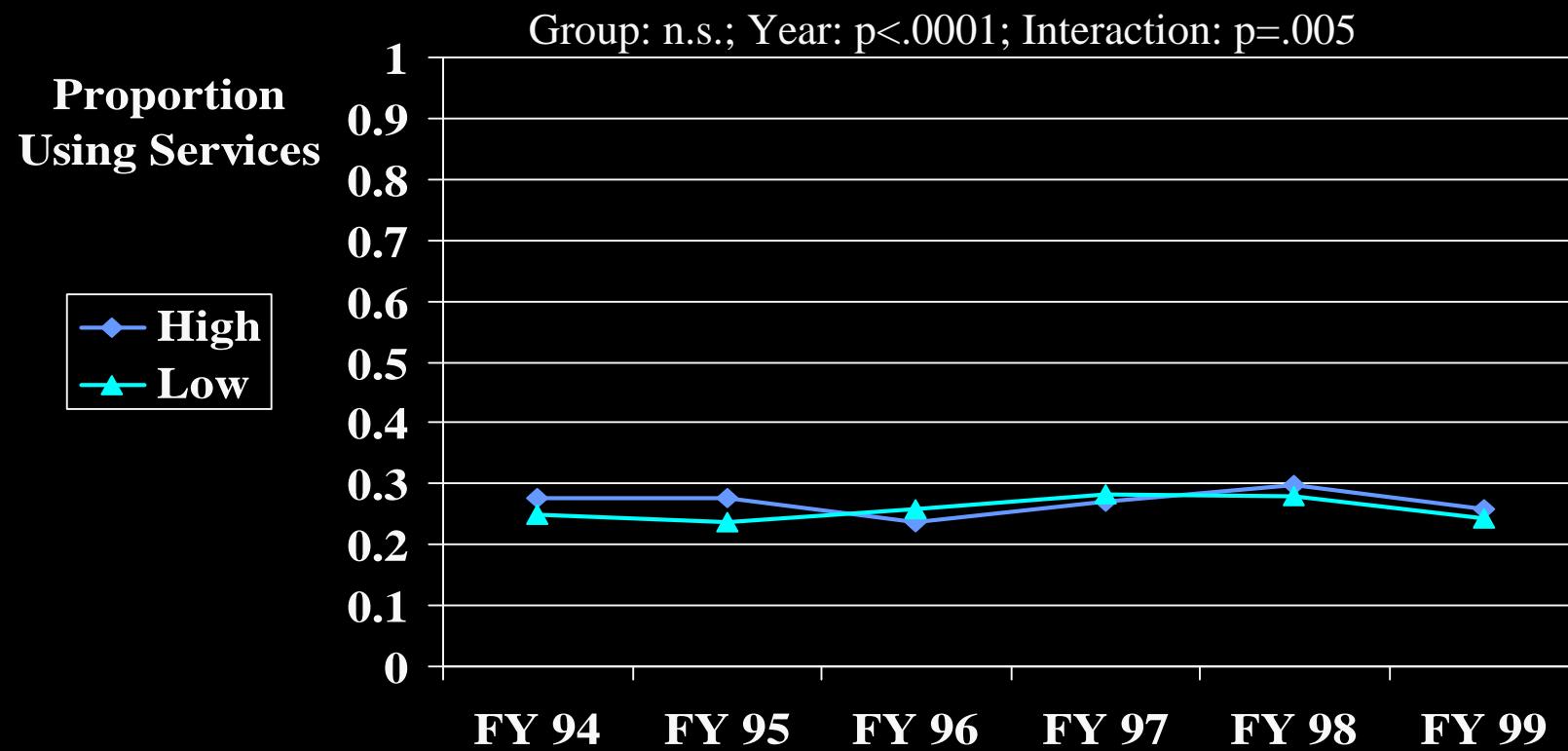
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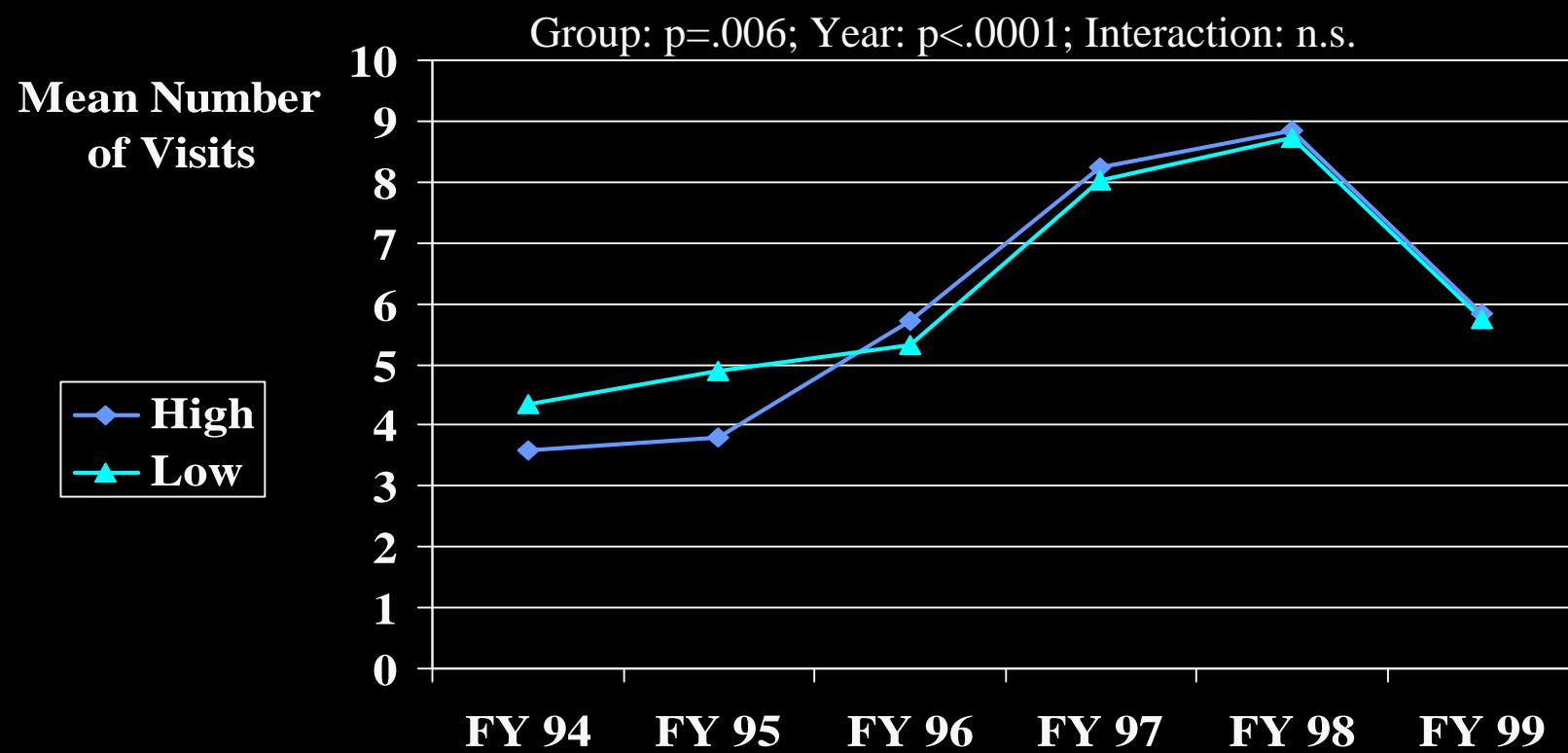
# Inpatient Mental Health Days in 6 Months After Outreach



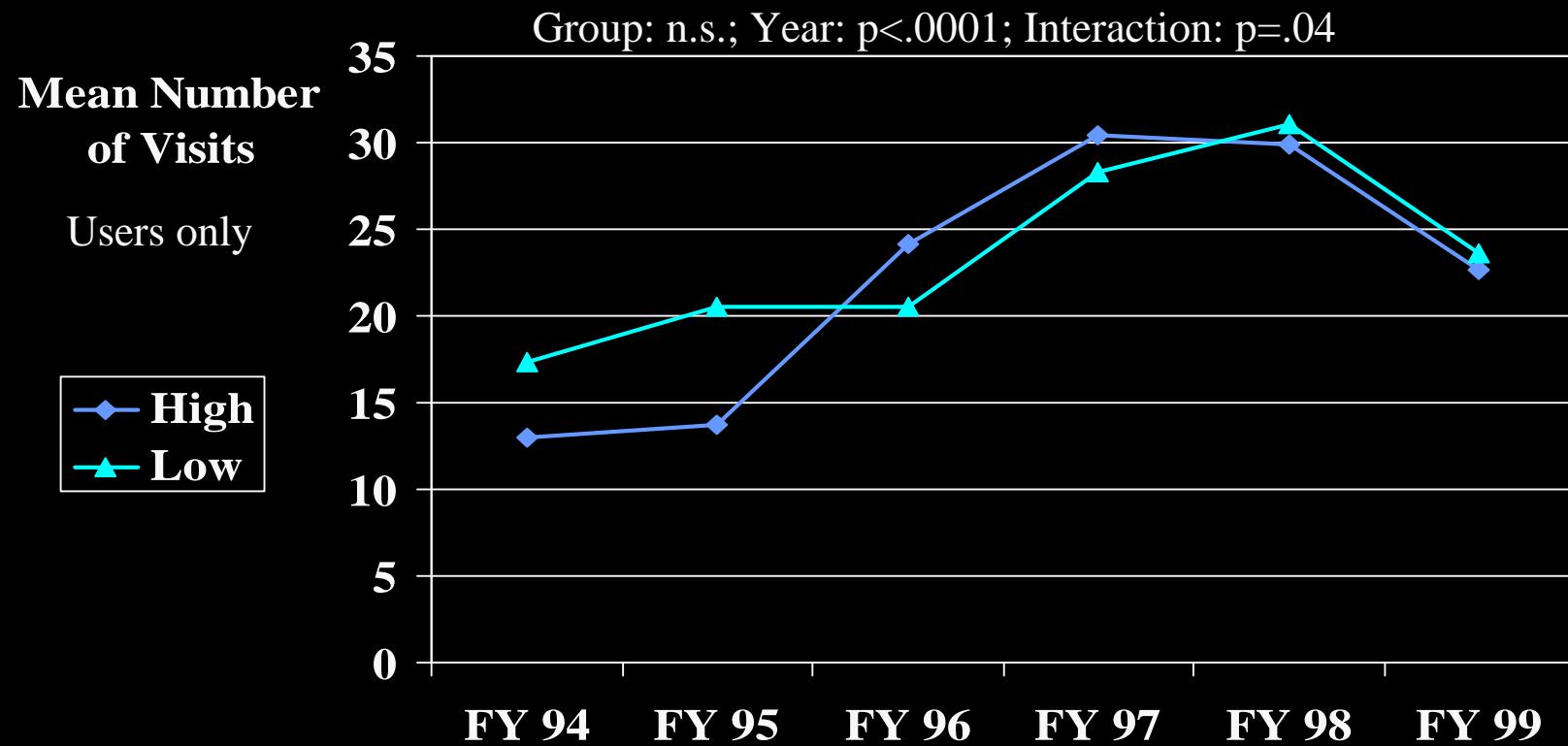
# Any Outpatient Mental Health Services in 6 Months After Outreach



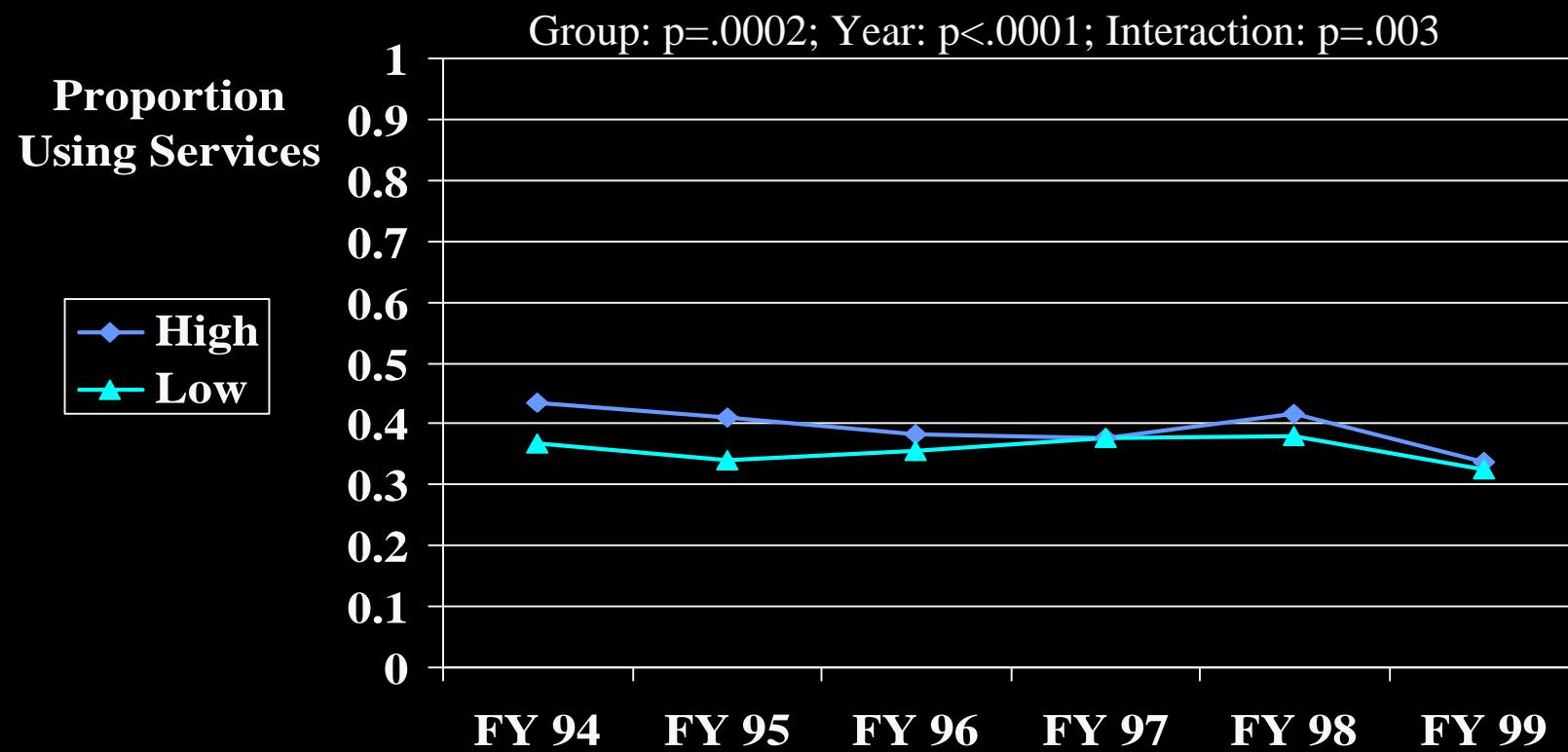
# Outpatient Mental Health Visits in 6 Months After Outreach



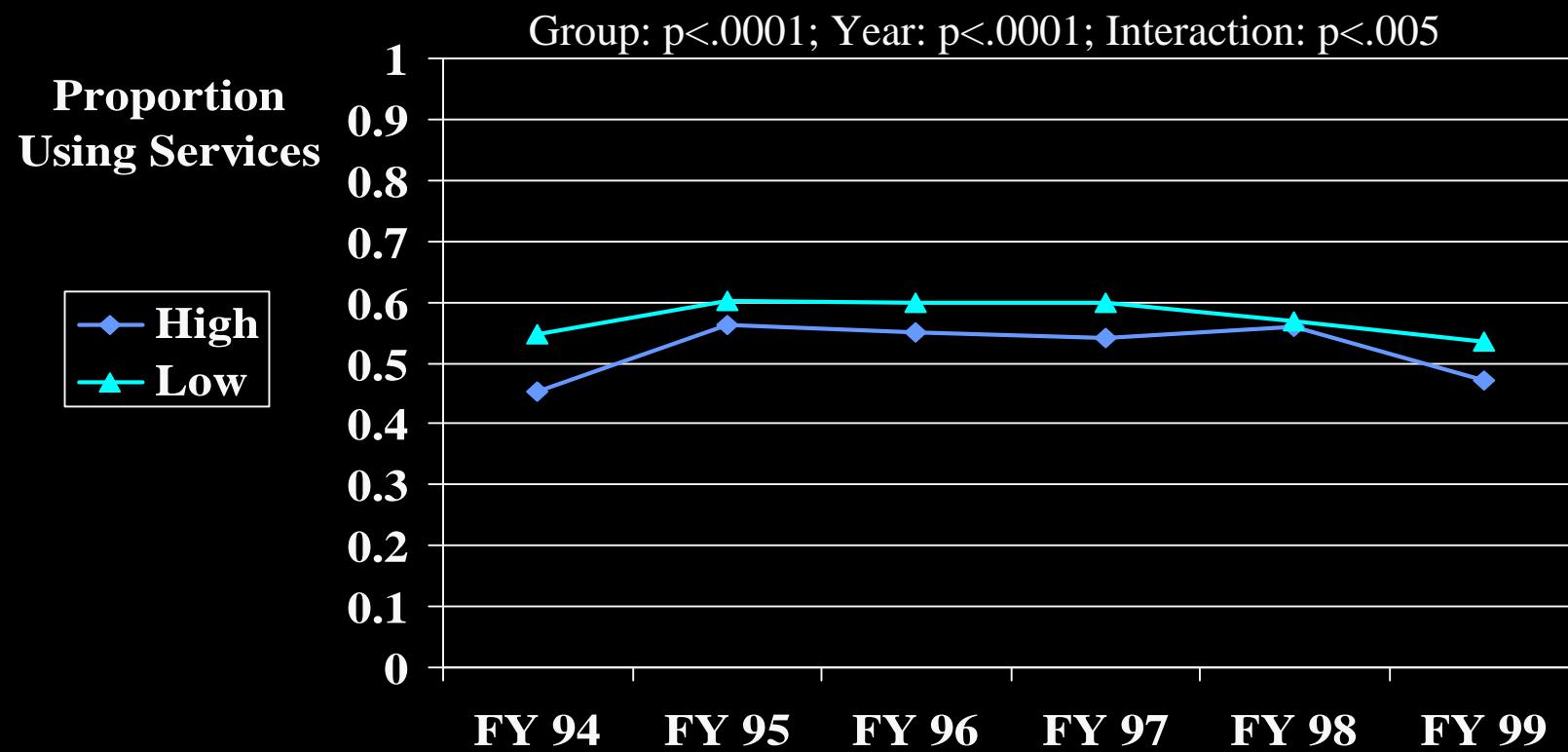
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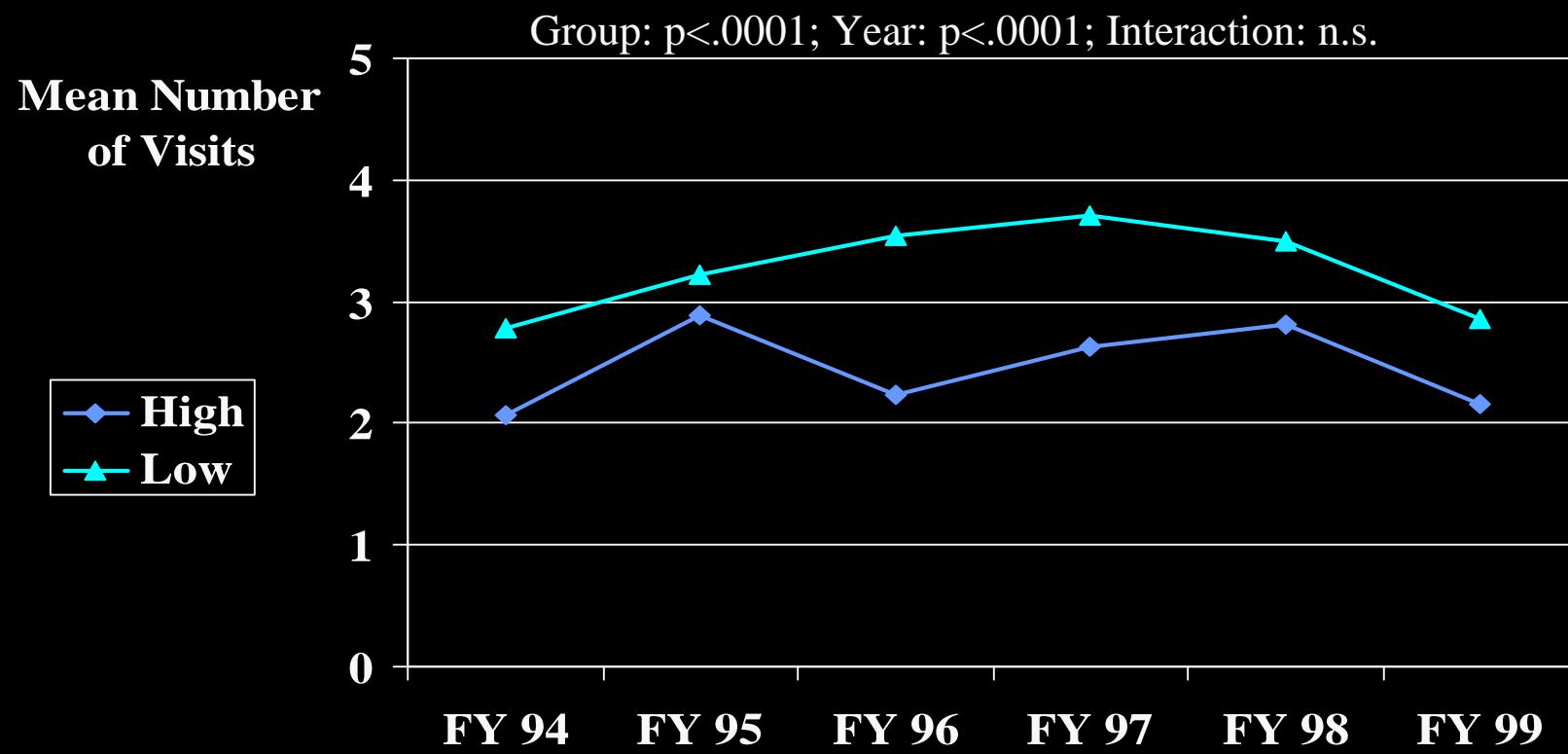
# Any VA Medical Treatment in 6 Months After Outreach



# Any HCHV Case Management in 6 Months After Outreach



# HCHV Case Management Visits in 6 Months After Outreach



# Summary

- Inpatient mental health treatment decreased over the study period (individuals and days)
- Outpatient mental health increased over the study period
- The overall proportion of veterans receiving some treatment services remained fairly constant over the study period