



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2009

VA's Suicide Prevention Message Carried on 21,000 Buses

WASHINGTON – The telephone number for the suicide prevention “lifeline” of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA is now being carried on more than 21,000 city buses in 124 communities across the United States and will run until Sept. 1, 2009.

The advertisements carry a message of hope for those who have served their country and are undergoing an emotional crisis.

“We continue to look for new, innovative ways to reach our Veterans,” Assistant Secretary Tammy Duckworth said. “VA wants to make sure to exhaust all avenues to reach those in need of our services.”

VA is partnering with Blu Line Media, an outdoor advertising company which specializes in helping businesses and government tell their stories through educational outreach campaigns, cause-related social marketing and integrated communications.

Since its inception in July 2007, the VA Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1 800-273-TALK, has rescued more than 3,000 Veterans and provided counseling for more than 120,000 Veterans and their loved ones at home and overseas. The lifeline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by trained mental health professionals prepared to deal with immediate crises.

Marketing the lifeline through mass transit campaigns was piloted in the Washington D.C. area during the summer of 2008 with great success.

VA has also promoted awareness of the toll-free number through national public service announcements featuring actor Gary Sinise and television journalist Deborah Norville. The bus advertisement and public service announcements are available for download via YouTube and at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention.

#