



# Accessing Community Behavioral Health Services

**Presentation for SSVF Health Care Navigators**

January 29, 2021

[Link to Audio](#)

# Agenda

- 1. Overview and Background**
- 2. Behavioral Health Benefits**
- 3. Engaging Veterans and Their Families in Behavioral Health Services**
- 4. Identifying Community Providers**
- 5. Connecting to Community Resources**
- 6. Presentation from HCN with Experience Connecting SSVF Participants to Community Behavioral Health Care**
- 7. Discussion**

# Overview and Background

# Objectives

- Highlight behavioral health benefits in public systems
- Identify resources to help veterans and family members understand mental illness and addiction and navigate the behavioral health services
- Share pathways to find providers and resources to address behavioral health crises
- Highlight strategies for building and maintaining connections with community behavioral health systems
- Hear about HCN experience connecting veterans and families with behavioral health services

# Context

- Second of two presentations for SSVF Health Care Navigators focused on health care coverage and behavioral health services
  - ▶ January 15, 2021: Health Care Coverage Options for SSVF Participants and Families

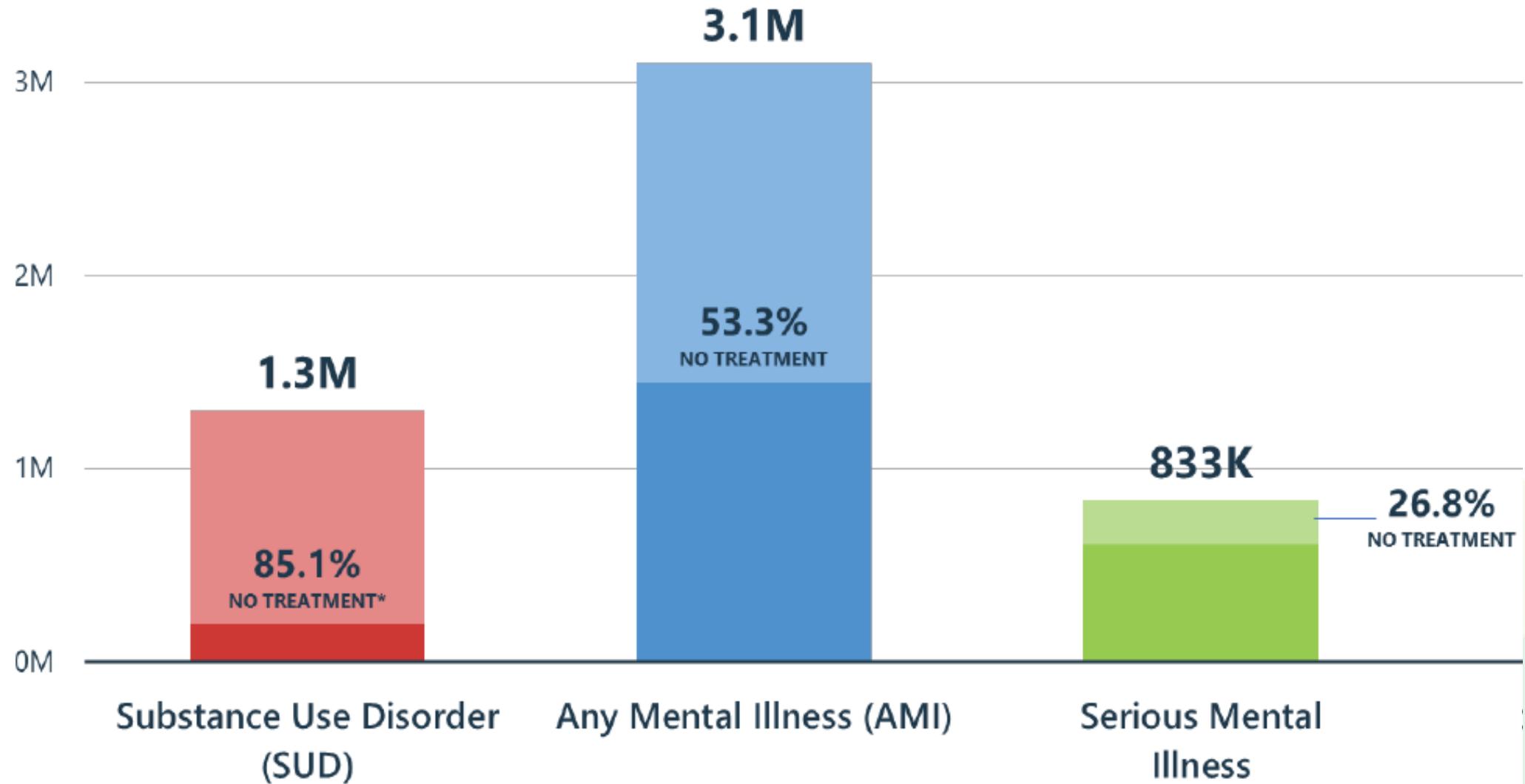
<https://youtu.be/viFMOnbk208>

- ▶ January 29, 2021: Accessing Community Behavioral Health Services

# Mental Illness and Addiction Among Veterans and Family Members

- Mental illness and addiction are common in the general population
  - ▶ 20.6% of adults have a mental illness, 7.7% of adults have a Substance Use Disorder (SUD), and 3.8% have both (NSDUH 2019)
- Estimates of mental disorders among service members and veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan vary from 18.5 percent to 42.5 percent (RAND 2017)
- 15.3% of veterans have a mental illness, 6.2% of veterans have a SUD, and 2.3% have both (NSDUH 2019)
- Deployment and other pressures related to service may also negatively impact the mental health of family members. (RAND 2017)
- 17.6 veterans died by suicide per day in in 2018, a rate of 27.3 per 100,000. (VA 2020)

# Treatment Gaps for Veterans



Sources <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/release/2019-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-releases>

# Mental Illness and Substance Abuse among People Experiencing Homelessness

- According to 2019 Point in Time Survey Data 20.4 % of individuals experiencing homelessness have severe mental illness and 15.6% experience chronic substance abuse.
- Other studies vary, but have shown much higher rates of serious mental illness (20% to 50%) and SUD (35% to 74%).
- A 2012 VA Inspector General study found that more than 50% of veterans experiencing homelessness met criteria for mental illness.
- A 2014 study of veterans experiencing homelessness who participated in the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supported Housing program found that 60% met criteria for a SUD.

# Behavioral Health Benefits

# Behavioral Health Care

## *Overview of Coverage Across Systems*

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Medicare
  - ▶ Medicare is the federal health insurance program for:
    - People who are 65 or older
    - Certain younger people with disabilities
    - People with End-Stage Renal Disease
- Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
  - ▶ Medicaid provides health coverage to a variety of populations, including eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities. Medicaid is administered by states, according to federal requirements. The program is funded jointly by states and the federal government.
  - ▶ CHIP provides health coverage to eligible children, through both Medicaid and separate CHIP programs.
- State, county, and grant-funded programs

# Behavioral Health Care

## *What does the Department of Veterans Affairs cover?*

The VA provides specialty inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics, this includes:

- Inpatient Care
- Residential Care
- Outpatient Mental Health Care
- Homeless Programs
- Programs for Incarcerated Veterans
- Specialized PTSD Services
- Military Sexual Trauma
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Recovery Services
- Substance Use Disorders
- Suicide Programs
- Geriatrics
- Violence Prevention
- Evidence Based Psychotherapy Programs
- Mental Health Disaster Response/Post Deployment Activities

# Behavioral Health Care

## *What does Medicare cover?*

- Part A: hospital insurance
  - ▶ Inpatient mental health care (general & psychiatric hospital)
- Part B: medical insurance (outpatient) – examples
  - ▶ Individual and group psychotherapy
  - ▶ Family counseling
  - ▶ Partial hospitalization
  - ▶ Opioid treatment program services
- Part C: Medicare Advantage
  - ▶ Required to cover behavioral health care – but the care is provided in-network
  - ▶ Some plans are Special Needs Plans that are tailored to specific conditions, including mental illness
- Part D: pharmacy insurance
  - ▶ Prescription drugs

# Behavioral Health Care

## *What does Medicaid cover?*

- It depends on your state and eligibility category
- Alternative Benefit Package for Medicaid expansion
  - ▶ Essential Health Benefits include mental health and SUD
- State Plan benefits range from minimal to comprehensive
  - ▶ Rehabilitation (outpatient counseling/therapy, intensive outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization, withdrawal management, Assertive Community Treatment, peer support, medication management, etc.)
  - ▶ Case management
  - ▶ FQHCs, clinics, and outpatient hospitals
  - ▶ Other licensed practitioners (independent clinicians)
  - ▶ Inpatient (subject to limitations)
- Some states may provide more intensive supports called home and community based services (may be called waiver services in some states), which can include case management, personal care, caregiver and client training, health promotion and disease prevention, and respite care

# Behavioral Health Care

## *State, county, and grant-funded programs*

- Mental health and SUD treatment services may be available outside of Medicare and Medicaid
- States and counties finance behavioral health services using general revenue, grants, and other funding, this is particularly true for SUD treatment and for State Mental Hospitals

# Engaging Veterans and Their Families in Behavioral Health Services

# Identifying the Need for Behavioral Health Services

## **Diagnosable mental disorders — health conditions involving:**

- Significant changes in thinking, emotion, and/or behavior
- Distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities

## **Signs of Mental Illness:**

- Sleep or appetite changes
- Mood changes
- Withdrawal
- Drop in functioning
- Problems thinking
- Increased sensitivity
- Apathy
- Feeling disconnected
- Illogical thinking
- Nervousness
- Unusual behavior

# Warning Signs for Suicide

## The following can all be warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing and risky alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends

## The following signs require immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior involving substance use, weapons, etc.



# Considerations for Helping People with Mental or Substance Use Disorders

- Stigma
  - ▶ May be different across cultures
  - ▶ Working with veterans, service members, and their families
- Homelessness and Housing Instability
- Help Getting the Right Kind of Care
- Support Finding the Right Providers and Resources Over Time
- Other Access Barriers (Schedule, Transportation)
- Financial Barriers to Accessing Care

# Questions to Ask When Seeking Addiction Treatment

- Do you diagnose and treat physical and mental health conditions, besides addiction?
- Do you include medications for addiction in your treatment program, and what role do they play?
- What do you do to ensure someone remains in recovery in the long term?
- How do you handle relapse or continued drug use?
- What's your success rate?
- What kind of treatments do you focus on?
- Do you screen for what level of treatment is necessary?
- Do you have licensed medical professionals on staff?
- Are you linked to a broader health care system?
- What insurance do you accept, and how hard do you work to make sure the treatment is covered?
- Are you accredited?
- How do you involve and support family members?

For a Similar list of questions focused on mental health, see: <https://www.mhanational.org/questions-ask-provider#provider>

# Resources to Use with Veterans and Family Members

- **Veterans and Mental Health - VA Information and Resources** - <https://mentalhealth.va.gov>
  - ▶ Connections to resources (Finding VA Facilities, etc.)
  - ▶ Information for transitioning service members, veterans, and family members
  - ▶ Information about Mental and Substance Use Disorders
- **Make the Connection** - <https://www.maketheconnection.net/>
  - ▶ Stories from other veterans and family members
  - ▶ Links to resources to get help
- **DrugFacts: Substance Use and Military Life** - [https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/drugfacts\\_subabusemilitary.pdf](https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/drugfacts_subabusemilitary.pdf)
  - ▶ NIDA Review of substance use related information related to service members, veterans, and their families.
- **Serious Mental Illness Advisor** - <https://smiadviser.org/>
  - ▶ SAMHSA funded resource with information for consumers, family members, and clinicians about serious mental illness

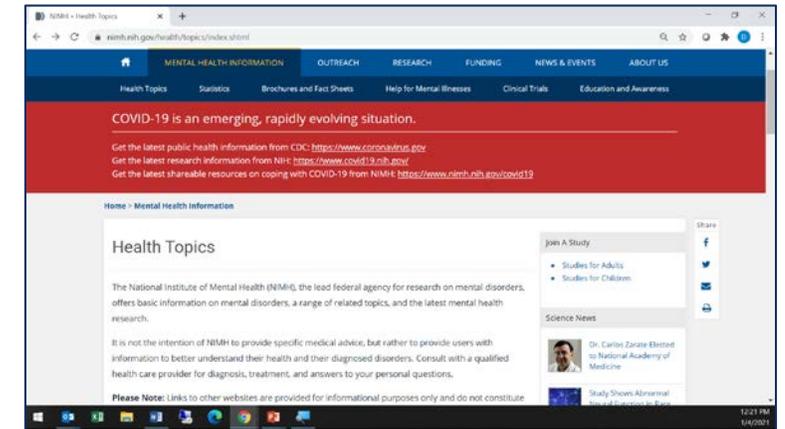
# Resources to Help People Understand Mental Disorders and Substance Use Disorders

## National Institute of Mental Health – Health Topics

- ▶ Mental Disorders and Related Topics
- ▶ Treatments and Therapies (includes details on Medication and Psychotherapy)

Available at:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml>



## National Institute on Drug Abuse: The Basics

- ▶ Basic Information about Addiction
- ▶ Links to Information about Different Substances

Available at:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml>



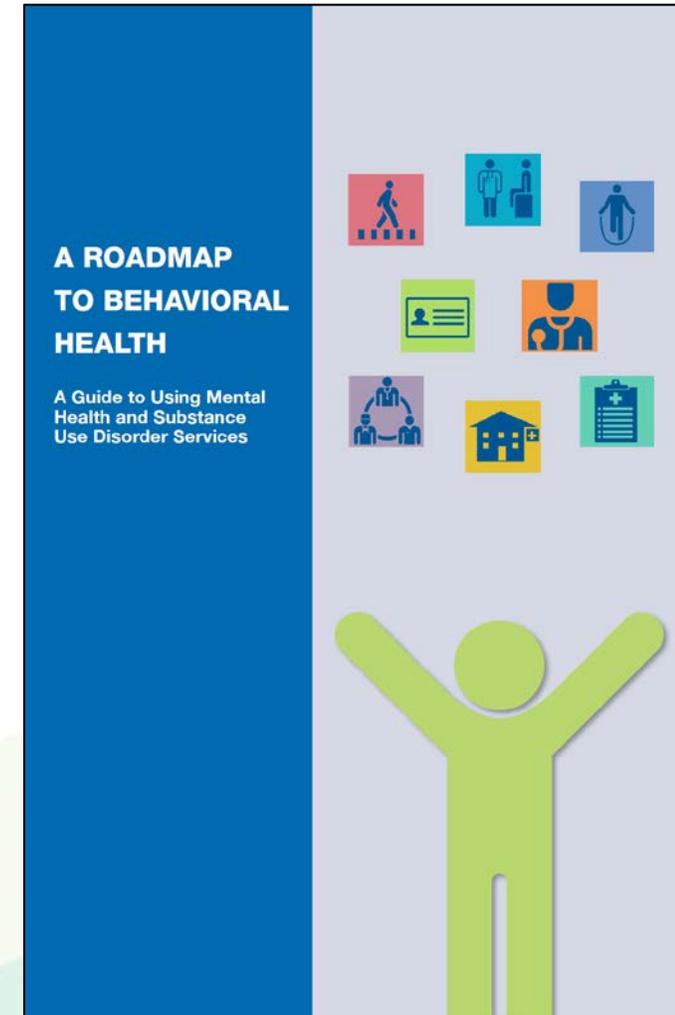
# Resources to Use with Veterans and Family Members

## A Roadmap to Behavioral Health

Available at: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/Roadmap-to-Behavioral-Health-508-Updated-2018.pdf>

Topics Covered Include:

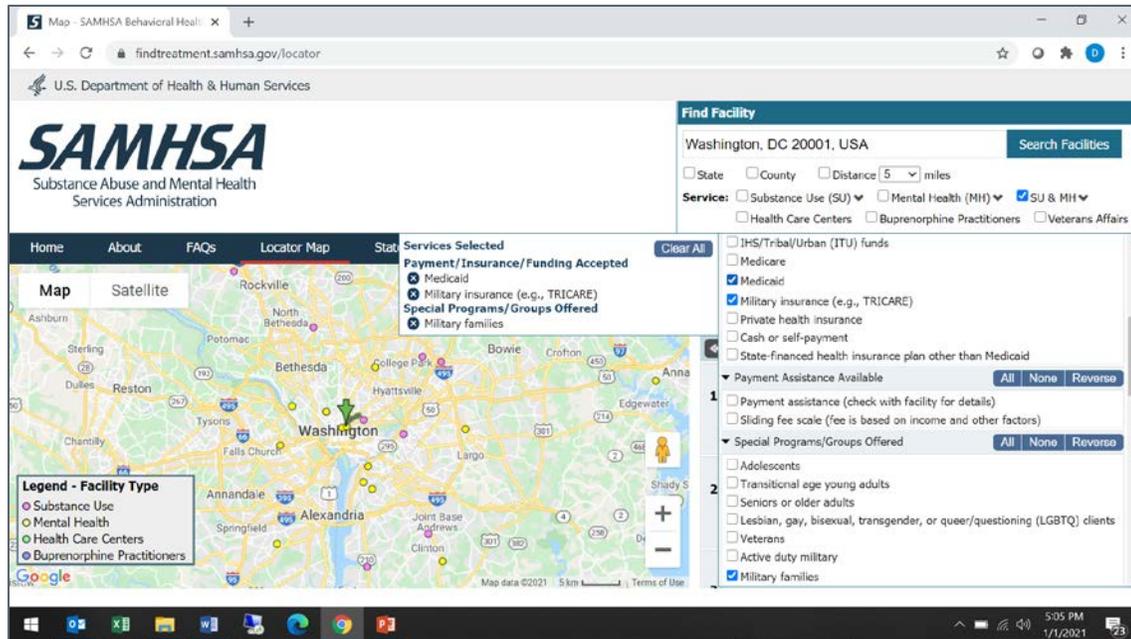
- Understanding Your Behavioral Health
- Learn About Health Insurance
- Where to Go for Help and Treatment
- Find a Behavioral Health Provider
- Making and Preparing for Appointments
- Deciding if a Provider is Right for You
- Next Steps to State Healthy on the Road to Recovery
- Glossary
- Resources



# Identifying Community Providers

# Finding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Providers

SAMHSA Treatment Locator –  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator](https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator)



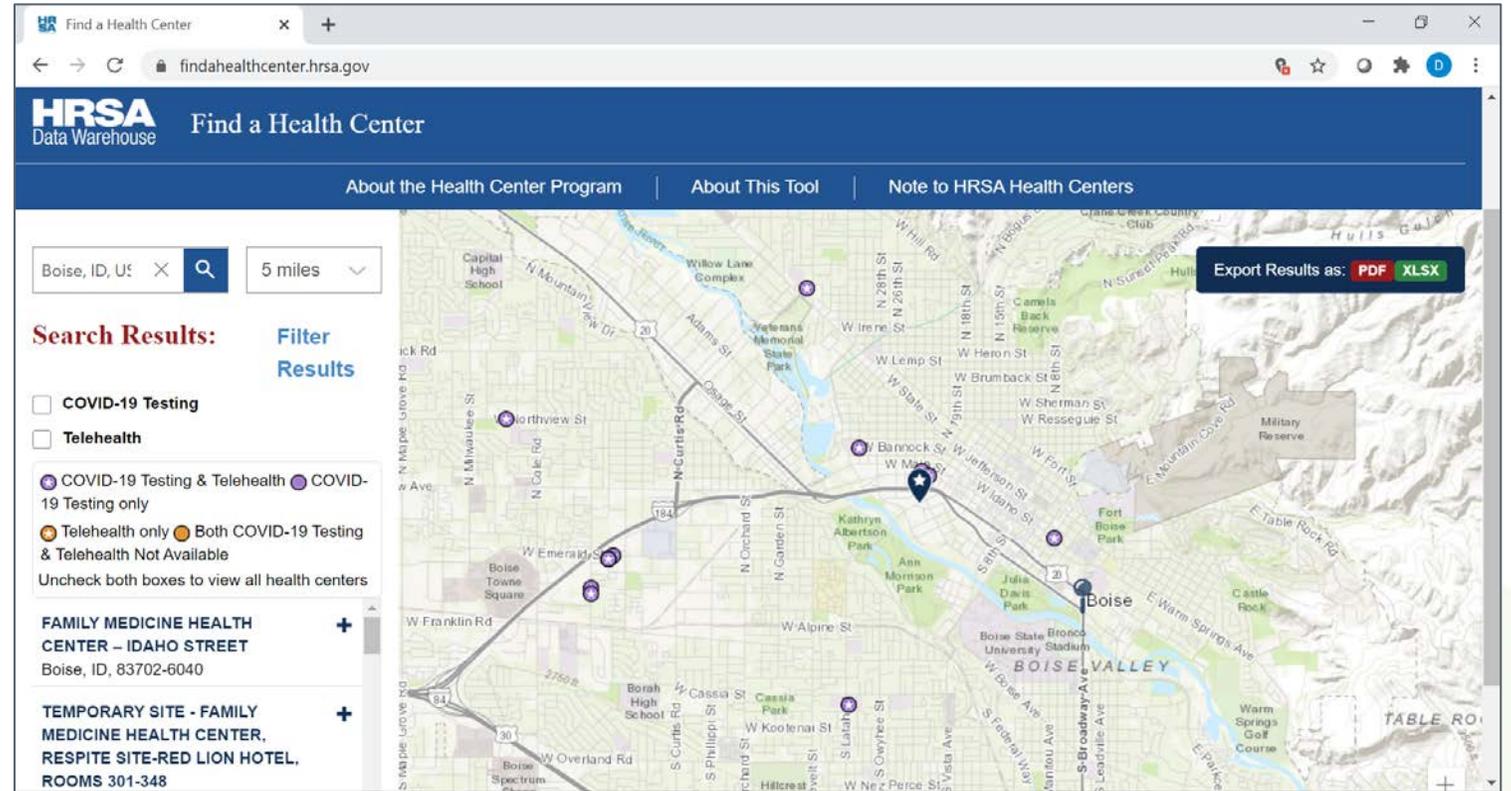
Search Filters:

- Mental Health or SUD Treatment
- Offers Telemedicine
- Service Settings (e.g., Outpatient, Residential, Inpatient, etc.)
- Facility Operation (Public, Private) – *Can select VA facilities*
- Payment/Insurance/Funding Accepted – *Can select military insurance (e.g. Tricare)*
- Payment Assistance Available
- Special Programs/Groups Offered – *Can select, Active Duty Military, Veterans, or Military Families.*
- Age Groups Accepted
- Exclusive Services – *Serves Veterans Only is a category*
- Language Services (including for deaf and hard of hearing)

# Health Centers

## Find a Health Center tool

- Must accept all, regardless of ability to pay
- Must offer services on a sliding scale – with nominal fees up to 100% of FPL and discounts up to 200% of FPL
- Many provide behavioral health services
- Some are focused specifically on serving people experiencing homelessness – Health Care for the Homeless Programs



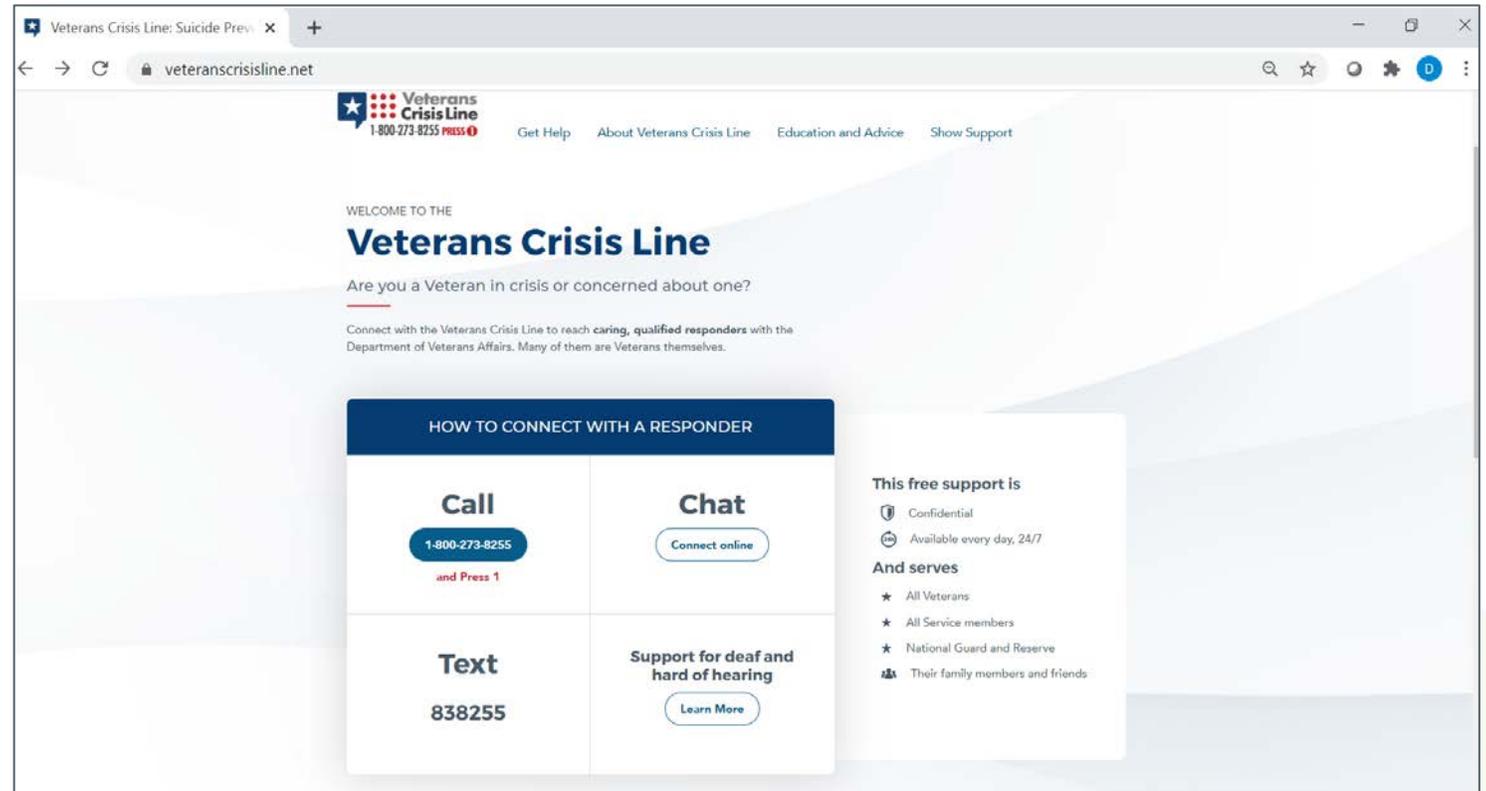
The screenshot shows the HRSA Find a Health Center tool interface. The search criteria are set to Boise, ID, USA, with a 5-mile radius. The search results are filtered for COVID-19 Testing and Telehealth. The results list two health centers:

- FAMILY MEDICINE HEALTH CENTER – IDAHO STREET**  
Boise, ID, 83702-6040
- TEMPORARY SITE - FAMILY MEDICINE HEALTH CENTER, RESPITE SITE-RED LION HOTEL, ROOMS 301-348**

<https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

# Hotlines and Warmlines

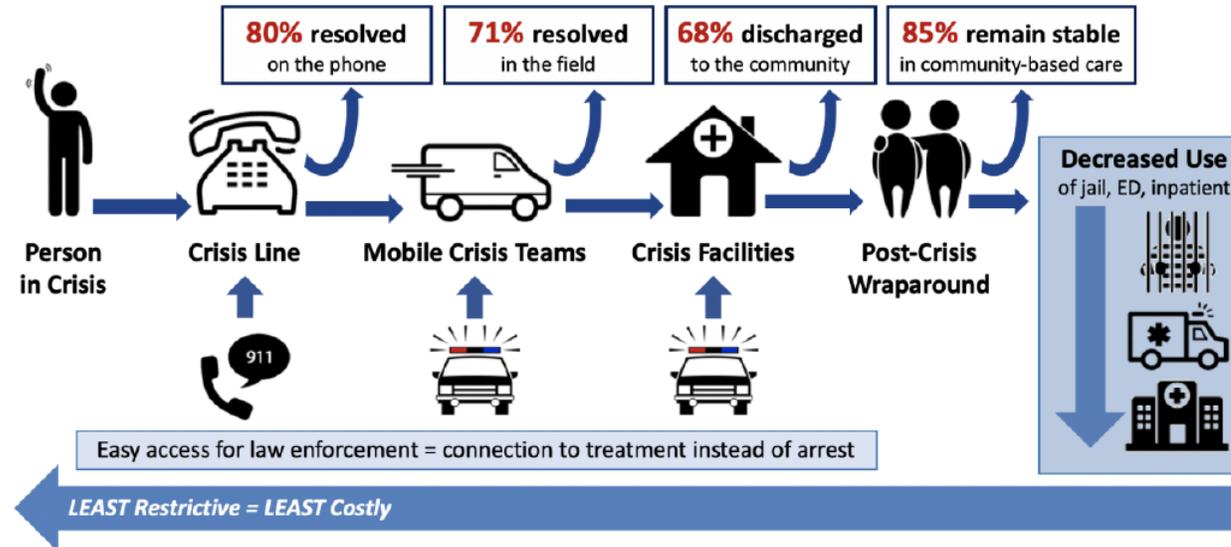
- Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Veterans press 1 – Veterans Crisis Line  
<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>
- 988 System being implemented
- Warmlines –  
<https://screening.mhanational.org/content/need-talk-someone-warmlines>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Veterans Crisis Line website. The browser address bar displays "veteranscrisisline.net". The page features a navigation menu with links for "Get Help", "About Veterans Crisis Line", "Education and Advice", and "Show Support". The main heading reads "WELCOME TO THE Veterans Crisis Line". Below this, a question asks "Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?". A sub-heading states: "Connect with the Veterans Crisis Line to reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves." A central section titled "HOW TO CONNECT WITH A RESPONDER" offers four options: "Call" (1-800-273-8255 and Press 1), "Chat" (Connect online), "Text" (838255), and "Support for deaf and hard of hearing" (Learn More). To the right, a box titled "This free support is" lists "Confidential" and "Available every day, 24/7". Below that, "And serves" lists "All Veterans", "All Service members", "National Guard and Reserve", and "Their family members and friends".

# Crisis Services

- 24/7 Crisis Call Hubs
- Mobile Outreach/Crisis Teams
- Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Facilities



Outcomes in Southern Arizona, 2019

# Health Plan Referral Platforms and Network Directories

- Finding a provider through a health plan/ Primary Care Provider (PCP)
  - ▶ Working through a PCP (may be required)
    - Can help address stigma
    - Assistance navigating primary care/advocating for services
  - ▶ Call health plan contact number or check website for provider directory
    - Benefits are limited to in-network providers for many plans
  - ▶ Take time to find the right fit

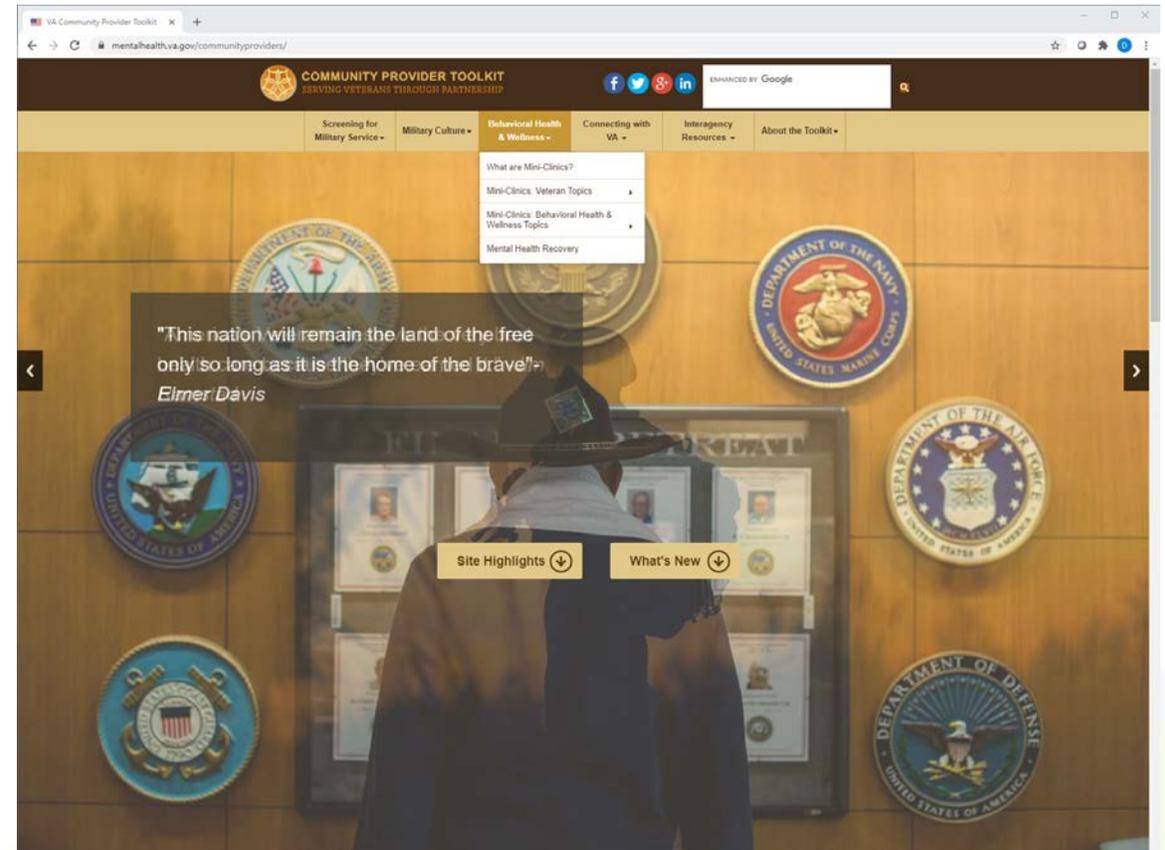
# Connecting to Community Resources

# Building Relationship with Providers

- Seek out providers in your community
  - ▶ Seek out connections across systems (e.g. Crisis Systems, Health Centers)
  - ▶ Seek out providers who are reflective of the community served, e.g., language and culture
- Look for providers with aligned missions
- Identify providers with competency working with veterans and people experiencing homelessness and housing instability
- Build relationships across systems over time
- Institutionalize knowledge
  - ▶ Document provider community and share information with peers/coworkers

# Educating Providers

- Work with providers to understand needs of veterans and family members experiencing homelessness and housing instability
- Help providers understand military and veteran culture and experience
- Partner with peers or people with lived experience, and family members
- VA Community Provider Toolkit - <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/> (CEUs available)





# Health Care Navigator Spotlight

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*Thresholds SSVF Assistance Program Manager*

# Discussion