FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VA launches program to send caring letters to 90,000 Veterans

Evidence-based research shows simple act can help prevent Veteran suicide

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today its Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) formally launched the Caring Letters Program, an evidence-based suicide prevention intervention that involves sending periodic messages with simple expressions of care and concern to Veterans who use VA health care and contact the VCL.

The program aligns with the 2019 VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guidelines, which suggests brief, nondemanding follow-up communication keeps Veterans engaged and could facilitate opportunities for connecting them with treatment options.

"In the first 11 weeks of the program VCL has mailed Caring Letters to almost 30,000 Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This is one of the largest caring letters programs ever implemented. We're planning to send letters to over 90,000 Veterans over a 12-month period of time."

Research has found caring letters can reduce the rate of suicide and suicide behaviors for individuals receiving them. Caring letters are thought to reduce suicide by promoting a feeling of caring connection and reminding Veterans that help is available if they need it.

Learn more about VA's suicide prevention resources and programs.

*If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call **1-?800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text 838255 or chat online at?VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.*

Reporters covering this issue can download?VA's Safe Messaging Best Practices?fact sheet or visit?Reporting On Suicide?for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.?

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