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VA releases 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released today the [2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), which found no significant increases in the Veteran suicide rate from 2017-2018, average suicide deaths per day or total count of Veteran suicides — however, there were positive trends related to VA health care and suicide prevention efforts overall.

The report includes analyses of Veteran suicide from 2005-2018 and findings from ongoing monitoring of VA health system suicide-related indicators during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The suicide data presented in this new report is an integral part of VA’s [Public Health Model for Suicide Prevention](#), which combines evidence-based clinical interventions and proactive community-based prevention strategies to address suicide in our nation,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The data shows the rate of suicide among Veterans who recently used VA health services has decreased, an encouraging sign as the department continues its work and shares what we learn with those who care for and about Veterans.”

VA’s Public Health Model for Suicide Prevention looks at evidence-based clinical interventions, such as cognitive behavior and problem-solving therapies that are paired with community-based prevention efforts to help Veterans who may be at risk for suicide. These efforts include the Veteran-to-Veteran [Together With Veterans](#) and state-driven suicide prevention [Governor’s and Mayor’s Challenge](#) programs.

Key report findings include:

- The average number of Veteran suicides per day was 17.6 in 2018.
- The rate of suicide among Veterans who received recent VA care decreased by 2.4%
- No VA analyses to date indicate COVID-19 pandemic-era increases in VA health system-reported Veteran suicides, attempts or volume of emergency department visits related to suicide attempts.

Suicide data and monitoring presented in this report are critical elements of VA’s ongoing implementation of the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#). See the [full report and accompanying state data sheets](#).

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 www.ReportingOnSuicide.org for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

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