

# PREVENTS

The President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide



VA

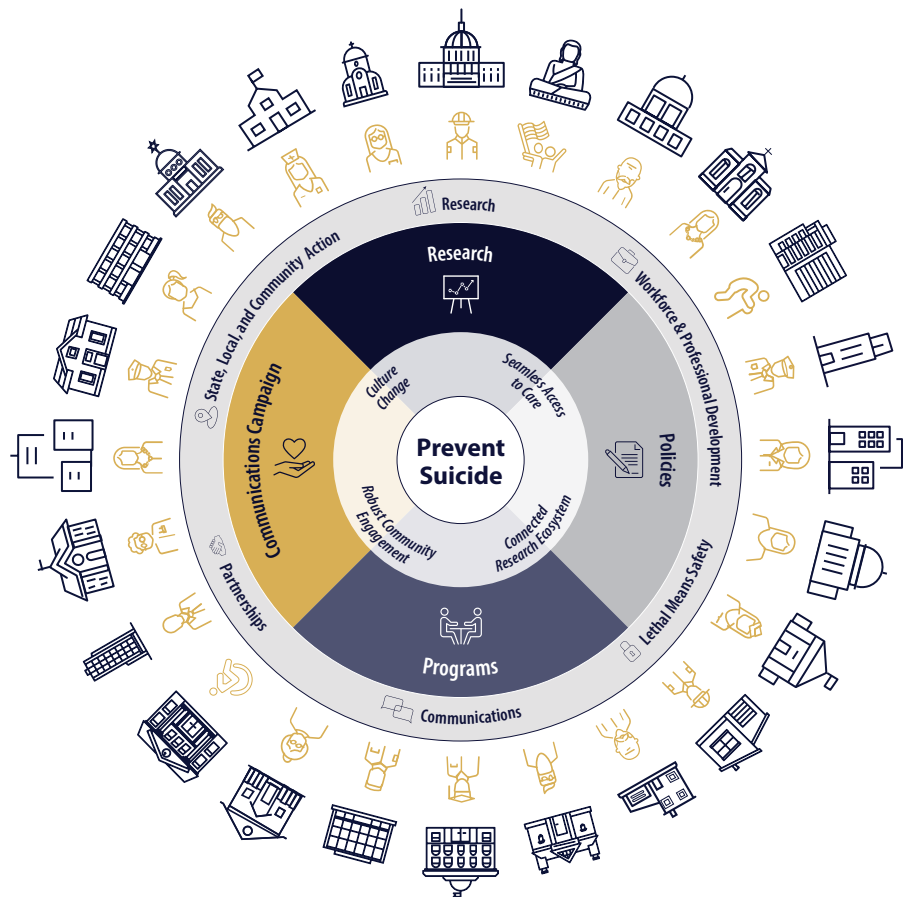


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Our nation is in the throes of a crisis of Veteran suicide. Every day, about 20 Veterans, Guardsmen and reservists take their lives, around 6,000 per year. More Veterans die by suicide each year than have been killed in action in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts combined and their suicide rate is 1.5 times the general population after adjusting for age and sex.

“ Answering this call to action requires an aspirational, innovative, all-hands on-deck approach to public health — not government as usual.

— President Donald J. Trump



## PREVENTS Executive Order

On March 5, 2019, President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Order 13861: President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS), with a call to action to amplify and accelerate the progress in addressing the Veteran suicide epidemic in our nation. While there have been other efforts to address suicide prevention, this is a cabinet-level, interagency effort charged with developing the first federally coordinated national public health strategy to address Veteran suicide.

# This is a national call to action. *Join us.*

Answering this call to action requires an aspirational, innovative, all-hands-on-deck approach to public health — not government as usual. The federal government alone cannot achieve effective or lasting reductions in the Veteran suicide rate. No single organization or entity can prevent suicide.

Our work begins with the belief that suicide is preventable and prevention requires more than intervention at the point of crisis.

## **Empowering Veterans to Lead the Way**

It is our honor and responsibility to care for those who have defended our country. While the debt we owe to those who serve — and their families — can never fully be paid, we must equip these men and women to lead healthy, meaningful, and productive lives after they hang up their uniforms. In addition, we must ensure that the wounds service members and Veterans carry — both physical and psychological — are treated compassionately and effectively.

As we turn our attention to suicide — one of the most challenging societal issues of our time, it is appropriate that we draw expertise, strength, and inspiration from our nation's service members, Veterans, their families, and the agencies and organizations that support them.

## **Why Is the PREVENTS Roadmap Aspirational?**

The President's Roadmap calls for us to end suicide. The goal is bold and audacious, but it is not impossible. When NASA told President John F. Kennedy that the space program could reach the moon, he empowered them with the resources they needed to do it and challenged the country to support the effort.

With the launch of the **PREVENTS Roadmap**, we are telling the nation that we can prevent suicide by:

- Teaching people to talk about suicide.
- Emphasizing the importance of collaboration.
- Elevating champions and empowering leaders.
- Allocating resources.

## **National Call to Action**

As a nation, we must ensure that Veterans are cared for and supported — not just at a point of crisis, but throughout their lives. By providing our nation's Veterans with the tools they need to live and thrive, we also empower them to lead the way in facing and responding to the mental health challenges that affect them and those we love — addressing suicide prevention for the broader community.

The PREVENTS Roadmap has been created with one mission in mind: to end a national tragedy of Veteran suicide. Yes, the mission is complex and audacious, but it is achievable. We are seeking to reach every corner of our nation, leaving no one behind. We believe that everyone is within reach.

The PREVENTS initiative will elevate the national conversation around mental health and suicide, build on existing best practices, and expand on the impressive research and programs underway in our communities. We will ensure that our nation's Veterans — and all Americans — know that there is help and hope for those who need it. Together, we will end this tragedy of suicide.