

State of Connecticut
By His Excellency Ned Lamont, Governor:
An Official Statement

WHEREAS, suicide is a national public health challenge that causes immeasurable pain among individuals, families, and communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, 2nd for people ages 10-35, and on average 129 Americans die by suicide each day accounting for 47,173 suicide deaths in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the number of veteran and military suicides nationally has exceeded 6,000 each year from 2008-2017; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 suicide death rate for veterans in Connecticut was 20.3 per 100,000, double the average state rate; and

WHEREAS, public awareness of suicide warning signs and available resources are essential to continue lowering the rates of suicide; and

WHEREAS, organizations such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Veteran Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255) offer support for individuals and family members in suicidal crisis or emotional distress; and

WHEREAS, there is a broad range of resources available to help private and public employers, family and friends to identify mental health conditions common to veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder, risk of suicide, depression and grief; and

WHEREAS, the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) administer the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board that oversees the development and implementation of the Connecticut Suicide Prevention Plans; and

WHEREAS, DMHAS and DCF, in collaboration with the Connecticut Military Department-Connecticut Army and Air National Guard and the Connecticut Veterans Affairs Healthcare System have identified veterans and service members among the special populations in the Connecticut Suicide Prevention Plans requiring unique mitigation strategies; and

WHEREAS, DMHAS and the Connecticut Military Department-Connecticut Army and Air National Guard manage the Connecticut Military Support Program to address the behavioral health needs of National Guard and Reserve service members affected by deployment in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as any veterans of active duty service and their families; and

WHEREAS, DMHAS supports local provision of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) connected to the National Veterans Crisis Line and is in the process of integrating NSPL call center services within the new adult mobile crisis call center hub, the ACTION Line, at the United Way of CT/2-1-1; and

WHEREAS, the ACTION Line will guarantee that Connecticut NSPL callers will receive mobile crisis services, or be connected to 911 as needed in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, to assist Connecticut employers, family and friends better help our veterans cope with mental health issues and intervene before a crisis occurs, the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs established “Mental Health Resources for Veterans and their Employers” webpage to connect users to specific federal and state programs; and

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs provides early intervention mental health services for veteran residents, patients and families cared for at its Rocky Hill Campus and maintains continued outreach to Connecticut veterans in need of crisis intervention through in person and virtual means including through the its Crisis Assistance Mobile App connecting veterans with 24 hour confidential crisis and support other services; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has developed a federal plan – the [President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide \(PREVENTS\)](#) – to collaborate with state governments; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a national public health campaign, *REACH*, that seeks to increase awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention to reduce suicide for all Americans and has established a website, wearewithinreach.net, that provides information to help people recognize risk factors for suicide, including financial stress, chronic illness or pain, isolation, and mental illness, in themselves and in their loved ones and also links to resources that can provide assistance in avoiding the hopelessness that can lead to suicide; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ned Lamont, Governor of the state of Connecticut, do hereby proclaim September 2020 as Suicide Prevention Month, proclaim September 10, 2020, as Suicide Prevention Day, and proclaim the state of Connecticut’s commitment to work with the federal government, local governments, faith organizations, and community providers to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention support services for our veterans in Connecticut.



Ned Lamont
Governor