

**VA**U.S. Department  
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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**We invite any media interested in interviewing our VA staff to learn more about care and services to contact our Public Affairs Officer at 989-497-2500, extension 13010 or e-mail [tara.scheuer@va.gov](mailto:tara.scheuer@va.gov)**

## **This Suicide Prevention Month, Aleda E. Lutz VAMC is attending Community Events and Offering Resources to Support Veterans**

Suicide is preventable and there is hope. This September, throughout Suicide Prevention Month, Aleda E. Lutz VAMC is attending community events and offering resources to help Veterans who are struggling.

In addition to the local resources offered, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Ad Council have created an ongoing national campaign: “*Don’t Wait. Reach Out.*” First released in 2021, the [public service advertisements](#) direct audiences to [VA.gov/REACH](http://VA.gov/REACH), a comprehensive website designed to help Veterans navigate the wide range of resources available.

“September is a time to raise awareness about suicide prevention, acknowledge suicide loss survivors, spread messages of hope, and connect individuals to support at treatment,” said Wendy Schultz, Facility Program Manager for the Suicide Prevention Team. “For decades, we at the Aleda E. Lutz VAMC have worked alongside community leaders, colleagues and Veterans’ families and friends to help Veterans in need by showing support for those who may be going through difficult times. Please Don’t wait! Reach out! If you or a Veteran you know needs support, call 988 and press 1 - or visit: <http://www.va.gov/reach>.”

A special event is being planned in conjunction with Saginaw Valley State University, however, will be planned in October due to scheduling difficulties. Suicide Prevention isn’t only the month of September, although we recognize it as a special awareness month, it is a daily awareness. More to come on the October 2022 event.

“We are grateful to the many organizations across the country that are doing the important on-the-ground work to reach and support Veterans in their local communities,” said Dr. Matt Miller, Executive Director, VA Suicide Prevention. “Our message to Veterans, and those who support them, is *Don’t Wait, Reach Out*. Asking for help isn’t always easy, but Veterans are trained to do hard things.”

The suicide rate among Veterans in 2019 was 52% higher than non-Veteran adults in the U.S., according to the [2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#). Suicide is complex, and stressful life events like divorce or job loss can be risk factors. Aleda E. Lutz VAMC offers resources to support Veterans across a wide range of life challenges, before these problems become overwhelming.

Our efforts support VA's 10-year strategy to end Veteran suicide through a comprehensive, public health approach. According to VA's 2021 National Suicide Prevention Annual Report:

- Although the Veteran suicide rate significantly and meaningfully decreased in 2019, the suicide rate among Veterans in 2019 was 52.3% higher than for non-Veteran U.S. adults. This is a decrease from its previous high of greater than 60%, but much more work remains.
- Firearms were involved in 69.2% of Veteran suicides in 2019, compared to 47.9% of non-Veteran adult suicides.

Everyone can be part of the solution by checking in with the Veterans in their life and encouraging them to reach out if they need help. Visit [VA.gov/REACH](http://VA.gov/REACH) to download and share social media content to spread the word.

In addition to attending community events and offering resources throughout Suicide Prevention Month, we offer assistance for Veterans all year round. Learn more by visiting [www.va.gov/saginaw-health-care/](http://www.va.gov/saginaw-health-care/).

*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. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, text 838255 or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).*

*Reporters covering this issue can download [VA's Safe Messaging Best Practices](#) fact sheet or visit [www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](http://www.ReportingOnSuicide.org) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.*

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center. It provides care to over 38,263 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans can also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at [www.va.gov/saginaw-health-care/](http://www.va.gov/saginaw-health-care/).

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