

### **For Immediate Release**

CONTACT: Jacob Dillon, Public Affairs Officer  
EMAIL: [Jacob.Dillon@va.gov](mailto:Jacob.Dillon@va.gov)  
PHONE: 302-633-5389 | CELL: 302-299-3738  
DATE: June 16, 2021

## **Flag Instillation to Honor Veterans Who Died from Suicide**

**NORTHFIELD, N.J.** — A flag instillation to honor Veterans who have died from suicide will put up at the Northfield Baptist Church near the Veterans Affairs Atlantic County Community Based Outpatient Clinic. Members of the community are invited to help honor Veterans by placing American flags between from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. June 17.

This commemoration is spearheaded by John Demarco and the Knights of Columbus who organize these events around the state.

“The Knights of Columbus from the Villa Marie Council and the Fr McGivney Assembly are proud and honored to host the Flags for Forgotten Soldiers Display,” said John Demarco. “As a Vietnam Veteran and Veterans Chairman for the above groups, we cannot continue to ignore the pain and anguish of Veterans for whom the war does not end. Our display creates a display of Flags for the ‘silently fallen’.”

Demarco said the purpose of creating these displays are:

- The hope that a Veteran might make a different choice.
- That families who lost a "silently fallen" Veteran will know that their loved one is not forgotten.
- That someone might be inspired to reach out to a Veteran in need.

More than 600 flags will fly for 30 days at the site to memorialize the approximately 20 Veterans whose lives end daily across the nation because of suicide.

“This instillation serves as a powerful visual reminder of the invisible wounds the men and women who swore to protect our homes and liberties carry with them,” said Vince Kane, Director of Wilmington VA Medical Center (Wilmington VA provides health care services to New Jersey Veterans in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties). “We owe it to Veterans and their families to recognize the mental health challenges Veterans face and make sure they are connected to resources that could save their lives. As we emerge from the pandemic, now more than ever suicide prevention and addressing mental health care, access to primary care, treating chronic pain, addressing housing instability, food insecurity must be a focus for VA and our partners so we can end the national tragedy of suicide among Veterans.”

An event is being planned toward the end of the instillation to highlight what Veterans Affairs, community partners and local, state and federal government agencies are doing to put an end to death by suicide among Veterans, Veteran family members and military personnel.

According to the [VA's Veteran Suicide Data and Reporting Mental Health](#), in 2018 (most recent available data), the New Jersey Veteran suicide rate was nearly seven points higher than the New Jersey non-Veteran suicide rate (17.4 vs. 10.9 per 100,000).

### **Veteran Crisis Line**

If you are a Veteran or know a Veteran in crisis, the Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that Veterans, their families, and their friends can access every day at any time. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to 838255. Trained responders — some of them Veterans themselves — are ready to listen, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



Flags of the Forgotten photo from the instillation in 2019.

###