

**Office of Strategic Communications & Public Affairs
Salisbury VA Health Care System
Veterans Health Administration
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Salisbury VA Announces Compliance Update for VA Office of Inspector General Report Recommendations

SALISBURY, N.C. – The Salisbury VA Health Care System announced today its updated compliance status in response to recommendations made by the VA’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection of the W.G. (Bill) Hefner Salisbury VA Medical Center report released on December 19, 2023.

According to the report, the OIG initiated an unannounced inspection of the W.G. (Bill) Hefner Salisbury VA Medical Center during the week of January 9, 2023.

The inspection resulted in the issuance of four recommendations to the chief of staff in the mental health area of review specifically addressing suicide prevention, per the report.

Suicide prevention is the top clinical priority for Salisbury VA and the Veterans Health Administration. Salisbury VA leadership is working closely with the VA’s Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network (VISN 6) and OIG members to ensure compliance with all OIG inspection results.

Our care teams work tirelessly around the clock to ensure all Veterans have access to essential suicide prevention resources through primary care, social work, and other modalities at each of our facilities and those implemented through our community care or outreach programs.

Veterans may access mental health and suicide prevention resources 24/7 at our emergency department in Salisbury, or during business hours at our urgent care clinics in Charlotte or Kernersville.

In response to the OIG recommendations, Salisbury VA implemented an exhaustive multidisciplinary education campaign that consisted of virtual and in-person learning engagements for both clinical and nonclinical staff to support the continued use of Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) risk screenings and Comprehensive Suicide Risk Evaluations for all Veterans.

Additionally, all staff are trained to immediately refer Veterans who report suicidal or other self-directed violent behaviors that occurred in the past 12 months to the Salisbury VA Suicide Prevention Team.

Historically, Veterans at both of our Charlotte VA locations were served by the Charlotte Health Care Center's suicide prevention coordinator.

To further support the OIG's recommendations, Salisbury VA recruited and hired an additional full-time suicide prevention coordinator to serve Veterans who receive care at our Charlotte Community-Based Outpatient Clinic.

Finally, the Salisbury VA team continues monthly reporting of suicide-related events to VA mental health leaders and quality management staff.

All progress regarding the Salisbury VA's compliance status is reported quarterly to OIG, and we look forward to exploring new ways to serve our Veterans in coordination with the OIG team.

At the Salisbury VA Health Care System, our mission is to fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Learn more about the Salisbury VA Health Care System at <https://www.va.gov/salisbury-health-care/>.

Media may contact the Office of Strategic Communications & Public Affairs via email at salisburyvapublicaffairs@va.gov.