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VA partners with The Independence Fund to help prevent Veteran suicide

Operation Resiliency will connect Veterans, caregivers with education and support systems

WASHINGTON — Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [announced its partnership](#) with [The Independence Fund](#) to provide wellness and mental health education to Veterans, caregivers and families.

VA and The Independence Fund will collaborate on suicide prevention initiatives to connect Veterans with care and support before they reach a crisis point.

“Every Veteran suicide is a tragedy, and our goal is to prevent suicide among all Veterans nationwide — even those who do not seek care within our health system,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The Independence Fund is an important ally to reach Veterans on this top clinical priority for VA, as well caregivers and their families.”

The two organizations will work together on Operation Resiliency to encourage Veterans to take part in suicide prevention initiatives. This includes a 2019 retreat that will bring together at-risk Veterans who served in the same unit during deployments.

Founded in 2007, The Independence Fund empowers the nation's severely wounded, injured or ill Veterans to overcome physical, mental and emotional wounds incurred in the line of duty. It has a goal of improving the lives of both Veterans and their families through the organization's mobility, caregiver, adaptive sports, and advocacy programs, while also bridging the gap of unmet needs of Veterans' caregivers. The Fund works to give Veterans the best mobility device options available, as well as promote their mental and physical health.

Suicide is a national public health issue that affects communities everywhere. VA is engaging communities nationwide to deliver care and support to Veterans where they live, work and thrive. Partnerships such as this with The Independence Fund are an important part of VA's [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#).

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veteran & Military Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

Reporters covering Veteran mental health issues can visit ReportingOnSuicide.org for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.

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