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News Release

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On eve of joint conference in August, DOD and VA issue call for strategies to prevent suicide

March 29 is deadline for abstracts to address critical issue affecting military and Veteran communities

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that they have again joined forces to host a biannual conference that will address suicide within the military and Veteran communities.

Ahead of the 2019 VA/DoD Suicide Prevention Conference, scheduled Aug. 26-29, the departments are seeking abstracts for presentations, which must be submitted by

11:59 p.m. (EST) March 29 at https://whova.com/web/vspc_201908/.

“Suicide is a national public health concern,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It’s critical that everyone work collectively to develop impactful solutions to suicide risk that meet the needs of America’s service members and Veterans. This conference is a chance for subject matter experts from across the country to come together and share comprehensive strategies to prevent suicide nationwide.”

The conference is guided by the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) and the [Department of Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#), which apply the holistic public health approach to reducing suicide rates among service members and Veterans. This year’s conference theme — **Many Roles. One Mission.** — emphasizes the impact that individuals and communities can have in preventing suicide. VA and the DoD invite researchers, clinicians and community, nonprofit and business leaders from multiple sectors to submit abstracts for inclusion in the conference program.

The conference location will be announced at a future date.

To learn more about the efforts of VA’s Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, visit https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention.

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

Reporters covering this issue are strongly encouraged to visit www.reportingonsuicide.org for important guidance on how to safely communicate about suicide.

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