

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sep. 3, 2019

## VA recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month

### *#BeThere campaign urges communities nationwide to support Veterans*

In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) encourages Veterans, community leaders, co-workers, families and friends to #BeThere — to help prevent suicide — by being present, supportive and strong for those who may be going through a difficult time.

As part of this approach, VA is working closely with The White House and other partners to implement the [President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide](#) or PREVENTS.

“This September, and all year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to be there for Veterans in need.” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “One act of thoughtfulness can make a big difference and may even save a life. That’s why, VA is proud to work on initiatives like PREVENTS, to prevent suicide and find innovative ways to deliver support and care to all 20 million U.S. Veterans whenever and wherever they need it.”

The PREVENTS roadmap, initiated by an executive order signed by President Trump in March 2019, will serve as an important tool for promoting research, community engagement — and collaboration in the public and private sector — and ultimately, for ending Veteran suicide.

Suicide is a complex, national public health issue that affects communities nationwide, with more than 45,000 Americans, including more than 6,000 Veterans, dying by suicide every year.

Suicide is preventable, and special training is not needed to prevent suicide. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion to Veterans in need and offering support. Listed are actions anyone can take to **Be There**:

- Reach out to Veterans to show them you care. Send a check-in text, cook them dinner or simply ask, “How are you?”
- Learn the warning signs of suicide, found on the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).
- Watch the free [S.A.V.E. training video](#) to equip yourself to respond with care and compassion if someone you know indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.
- Check out [VA's Social Media Safety Toolkit](#) to learn how to recognize and respond to social media posts that may indicate emotional distress, feelings of crisis or thoughts of suicide.
- Contact VA's [Coaching Into Care](#) program when worried about a Veteran or loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support.

Learn more about the **#BeThere** campaign and access resources to help support Veterans at [BeThereForVeterans.com](#).

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

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

###