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VA, White House PREVENTS task force holds Innovation Summit

Explores collaborative approaches to preventing Veteran suicide

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the [White House Domestic Policy Council](#) hosted an innovation summit Sept. 23 as part of The [President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End the National Tragedy of Suicide \(PREVENTS\) task force](#).

The summit brought together more than 100 leading researchers, clinicians, innovators and decision makers to discuss research on public health solutions to end Veteran suicide. The interagency group is charged with implementing a roadmap for Veteran suicide prevention at the national and community levels by March 2020.

"Collaboration and research are integral parts of VA's public health approach to suicide prevention," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The work of the PREVENTS task force, like this summit, move us closer to solving the problems that lead to suicide and ultimately finding an end to Veteran suicide."

Held during [Suicide Prevention Month](#), the summit provided a unique opportunity for public and private sector collaboration — to research and explore innovative ways to reach Veterans in crisis — and provide them with support in their communities. A request for information that went out in August generated a wealth of ideas and elicited new insights for developing a national research strategy to end Veteran suicide. Those results will be compiled into action items as part of President Donald Trump's March 5, [Executive Order](#) establishing the PREVENTS task force in June.

[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. The summit strengthened public-private partnerships that will identify gaps in the current suicide research environment and implement ideas to fill them.

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.

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