



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 4, 2019

VA launches Solid Start to ensure Veterans are contacted during initial transition

Program provides Veterans supportive contact and information to enable success

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, Dec. 2, introduced [VA Solid Start](#) which will proactively contact all newly separated service members at least three times during their first year of transition from the military.

The program will engage contact with approximately 200,000 Veterans each year and is part of [Executive Order 13822](#) which was issued to improve mental health care and access to suicide prevention resources available to transitioning uniformed service members in the year following discharge, separation or retirement.

“The stress of transition from service can lead to challenges or unmet health care needs for Veterans,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Through VA Solid Start, the department will ensure consistent, caring contact and help new Veterans get a solid start on their civilian lives.”

The goal is to establish a strong relationship between VA and transitioning service members, promoting awareness of VA benefits, services and partner resources available to them.

Veterans within their first year of separation from uniformed service experience suicide rates nearly two times higher than the overall Veteran suicide rate. Contacts through VA Solid Start — via phone calls or emails — will ensure transitioning service members are aware of the free VA mental health resources the department offers Veterans for up to a year, regardless of discharge status or service history.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention 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.

###