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VA receives high marks for communicating with the public

WASHINGTON —The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) received an “A” grade in November from a nonpartisan organization that evaluates the ability of federal agencies and businesses to communicate clearly with the public.

In its [2019 Federal Report Card](#), the Center for Plain Language recognized the excellent “writing quality” of VA’s online resources and singled out [VA’s suicide prevention resource site](#) as an [“exemplary urgent help page.”](#)

“This recognition validates our laser focus to provide Veterans quality customer service,” VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said. “Generating timely and clear communication about VA’s suicide prevention programs, as well as information on other vital benefits for Veterans, is among our highest priorities.”

Judges at the Center for Plain Language praised VA’s suicide prevention resource site for following “plain language presentation principles and delivering important information up front and a clear message,” adding that “visitors will know within seconds what to do if they need to prevent a suicide.” The suicide prevention page exemplifies Secretary Wilkie’s commitment to prioritizing critical information for Veterans by making it clear and accessible.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is the only other federal agency in 2019 to receive an “A” for writing quality.

The Center for Plain Language also awarded VA a “B” for organizational compliance. The grade was based, in part, on a review of [VA’s Plain Language](#) web page, which allows users to understand VA’s efforts to achieve its plain writing goals. The [Plain Writing Act of 2010](#), which requires agencies to communicate clearly so the public can understand and use information, calls for every agency to have a plain language page.

A nonprofit group founded in 2010, the Center for Plain Language evaluates the communication qualities of federal agencies based on two categories: organizational compliance and writing quality. Since 2012, the center has issued a yearly report card that indicates how well agencies are following the Plain Writing Act. The Center for Plain language supported passage of the Plain Writing Act, which mainly evaluates agencies that provide a benefit or service to the public, such as VA, SSA and the Internal Revenue Service.

To learn more about VA’s suicide prevention services and other essential Veteran health and wellness information, benefits and resources, visit the [Veterans Health Administration](#).

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