



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sep. 19, 2022

VA releases report showing decrease in Veteran Suicides, names suicide prevention grantees and finalists

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs released the [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), which shows that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

As a part of VA's comprehensive efforts to end Veteran suicide, VA also announced the grantees for the [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#), a first-of-its-kind program that provides VA funding for local suicide prevention programs, and the finalists for [Mission Daybreak](#), a suicide prevention grand challenge.

These efforts are key aspects of VA's 10-year [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) and the Biden-Harris administration's plan for [Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide](#).

"There is nothing more important to VA than preventing Veteran suicide — it's our top clinical priority," said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. "This year's report shows real progress, but there is still so much work to be done. One Veteran suicide is one too many, and VA will continue to work with our federal, state, local and private partners to tackle this problem and save Veterans' lives."

"Suicide is one of the most serious public health issues facing our Veterans today, and VA cannot do this work alone," said **VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** "With the Staff Sergeant Fox Grants and Mission Daybreak, VA seeks to engage not only organizations traditionally focused on suicide prevention, but also to bring in new groups and individuals who may have fresh ideas on how we address this issue."

Key findings from the [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#) include:

- In 2019 and 2020, Veteran suicides decreased in consecutive years by 307 and 343 deaths — the biggest decrease in the suicide count and rate since 2001.
- From 2018 to 2020, the age- and sex-adjusted suicide rate among Veterans fell by 9.7%
- Among women Veterans, the age-adjusted suicide rate fell by 14.1%, compared to 8.4% among non-Veteran women. The age-adjusted suicide rate for women Veterans in 2020 was the lowest since 2013, and the age-adjusted suicide rate for Veteran men was the lowest since 2016.
- From 2019 to 2020, Veteran suicide rates fell across all racial groups.
- Comparisons of trends in Veteran suicide and COVID-19 mortality over the course of 2020 and across Veteran demographic and clinical subgroups did not indicate an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Veteran suicide mortality.

VA also recognizes that eliminating Veteran suicide requires a sustained commitment and all-of-the-above approach that engages expertise from all sectors of society. To that end, VA announced the grantees for the [Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program](#) and the finalists for [Mission Daybreak](#).

- **Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program:** Today, VA announced that it will grant more than \$52 million to 80 community-based organizations in 43 states, the District of Columbia, and the American Samoa. This funding will help these organizations provide or coordinate the provision of suicide prevention services for Veterans and their families. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Mission Daybreak:** Today, VA announced the finalists for [Mission Daybreak](#) — a grand challenge aimed at developing suicide prevention solutions. Mission Daybreak awarded \$250,000 to 30 finalists and \$100,000 to 10 Promise Award recipients. The goal of Mission Daybreak is to transform how our nation addresses suicide by engaging Veterans, community-based organizations, health tech companies, startups and universities that are not traditionally engaged in suicide prevention but could bring cutting edge solutions to the effort. More information can be found [here](#).

This year, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end Veteran suicide, including [establishing 988 \(then press 1\) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7](#); proposing a new rule that would [reduce or eliminate copayments](#) for Veterans at risk of suicide; conducting an ongoing public outreach effort on [firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety](#); and leveraging a [national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign](#). "Don't Wait. Reach Out."

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*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, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, text 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.