

VA REACH VET Initiative Helps Save Veterans Lives:

Program Signals When More Help Is Needed for At-risk Veterans

WASHINGTON — Suicide prevention is one of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) highest priorities. As part of VA's commitment to put resources, services and all technology available to reduce Veteran suicide, VA has launched an innovative program called Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health – Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET).

Recent research suggests that 20 Veterans die by suicide each day, putting Veterans at even greater risk than the general public. Using a new predictive model, REACH VET analyzes existing data from Veterans' health records to identify those at a statistically elevated risk for suicide, hospitalization, illness or other adverse outcomes. This allows VA to provide pre-emptive care and support for Veterans, in some cases before a Veteran even has suicidal thoughts.

“One Veteran suicide is one too many,” said [Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin](#). “This cutting-edge program is saving lives by identifying at-risk Veterans and connecting them with the specialized care and support they need.”

Once a Veteran is identified, his or her VA mental health or primary care provider reaches out to check on the Veteran's well-being, review their condition(s) and treatment plans to determine if enhanced care is needed. The program began as a pilot in October and is now fully implemented across VA.

“REACH VET is a game changer in our effort to reduce Veteran suicide,” said Dr. Caitlin Thompson, National Director of VA's Office for Suicide Prevention. “Early intervention can lead to better recovery outcomes, lessen the likelihood of challenges becoming crises and reduce the stress that Veterans and their loved ones face.”

VA's suicide prevention resources include the [Veterans Crisis Line](#), which provides confidential support from specially trained and experienced responders to Veterans, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care. Veterans and their families and friends may call 800-273-8255 and press 1; chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#) or text to 838255.

For more information about VA's suicide prevention efforts, visit these resources:

Veterans Crisis Line website: VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere

- Suicide prevention outreach toolkit: VeteransCrisisLine.net/SpreadTheWord
- “Be There” public service announcement: <http://bit.ly/BeTherePSA>
- Suicide prevention fact sheet: <http://bit.ly/2axW88D>
- ***Make the Connection*** website: <http://MakeTheConnection.net>
- VA Mental Health website: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>