



A Program of the Community Service Council

Nov. 6, 2017

From the November Issue of the WPEO
Newsletter

In Michigan, Veterans Commit Suicide at High Rate

The suicide rate for Michigan veterans is more than twice as high as the state's overall rate, according to [data released by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs last month](#).

The analysis shows more than 200 veterans killed themselves in Michigan in 2014 – the most recent year covered by the study.

Michigan's rate of 35.5 suicides per 100,000 veterans is slightly less than the national rate of 38.4. The rate for all Michigan residents is 16.9.

Dr. Nazzareno Liegghio, the chief of mental health at the Saginaw VA medical center, says it can be difficult for veterans to travel to get mental health treatment.

"In Michigan I think the biggest challenge is just our huge space and area," Liegghio says, "and the location of veterans between the upper part of lower Michigan and Upper Peninsula."

The suicide rate is especially high among young Michigan veterans. **Only Oklahoma had a higher rate than Michigan for veterans aged 18-34.**

Liegghio says young veterans are at risk when they transition out of the military.

"Usually they enlist around 18, 19, so they get out, they're 23, 24," Liegghio says. "They come home. They have a little time to adjust. And then all of a sudden they find themselves, 'okay, now what do I do?'"

Nationwide more than two-thirds of veterans who commit suicide are aged 50 or older.

The analysis shows 20 veterans commit suicide each day in the United States.



https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/Suicide-Prevention-Data.asp

Oklahoma, Southern Regional, and National Veteran Suicide Deaths, by Age Group, 2014

Age Group	Oklahoma Veteran Suicides	Southern Region Veteran Suicides	National Veteran Suicides	Oklahoma Veteran Suicide Rate	Southern Region Veteran Suicide Rate	National Veteran Suicide Rate
Total	149	3,019	7,388	53.8	37.9	38.4
18-34	33	533	1,171	122.3	71.3	70.4
35-54	45	866	2,193	66.5	41.5	47.7
55-74	52	1,065	2,594	41.5	30.6	30.4
75+	19	555	1,430	33.5*	33.7	32.0

Michigan, Midwestern Regional, and National Veteran Suicide Deaths, by Age Group, 2014

Age Group	Michigan Veteran Suicides	Midwestern Region Veteran Suicides	National Veteran Suicides	Michigan Veteran Suicide Rate	Midwestern Region Veteran Suicide Rate	National Veteran Suicide Rate
Total	213	1,516	7,388	35.5	36.4	38.4
18-34	46	250	1,171	122.2	79.2	70.4
35-54	73	493	2,193	54.5	52.3	47.7
55-74	67	517	2,594	23.6	27.4	30.4
75+	27	256	1,430	18.6	25.2	32.0