

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Preventing Veteran Suicide

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# Facts About Veteran Suicide

# Suicide Deaths, Risk Factors, and Rates

In calendar year 2023 (the most recently available data), 6,398 Veterans died by suicide (see **Table 1**). In 2023, suicide deaths represented 1.46% of all Veteran deaths (1.24% of deaths among Veterans in VHA care<sup>1</sup> and 1.65% of deaths among other Veterans).

**Table 1. Suicide Deaths, VHA Receipt, Rates, 2018-23**

|                                                                   | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>U.S. Adults</b>                                                | 46,510 | 45,861 | 44,298 | 46,412 | 47,891 | 47,711 |
| Non-Veteran Adults                                                | 39,772 | 39,351 | 37,951 | 39,983 | 41,449 | 41,313 |
| Veterans                                                          | 6,738  | 6,510  | 6,347  | 6,429  | 6,442  | 6,398  |
| VHA-Affiliated Veterans                                           | 2,385  | 2,481  | 2,451  | 2,453  | 2,574  | 2,498  |
| <b>Veteran Suicide: Receipt of VHA Care in Year or Prior Year</b> |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Yes                                                               | 35.4%  | 38.1%  | 38.6%  | 38.2%  | 40.0%  | 39.0%  |
| No                                                                | 64.6%  | 61.9%  | 61.4%  | 61.8%  | 60.0%  | 61.0%  |

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025\\_Annual\\_Report\\_Part\\_1\\_508.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025_Annual_Report_Part_1_508.pdf)

# Unique Drivers of Veteran Suicide Risk (2021-23)

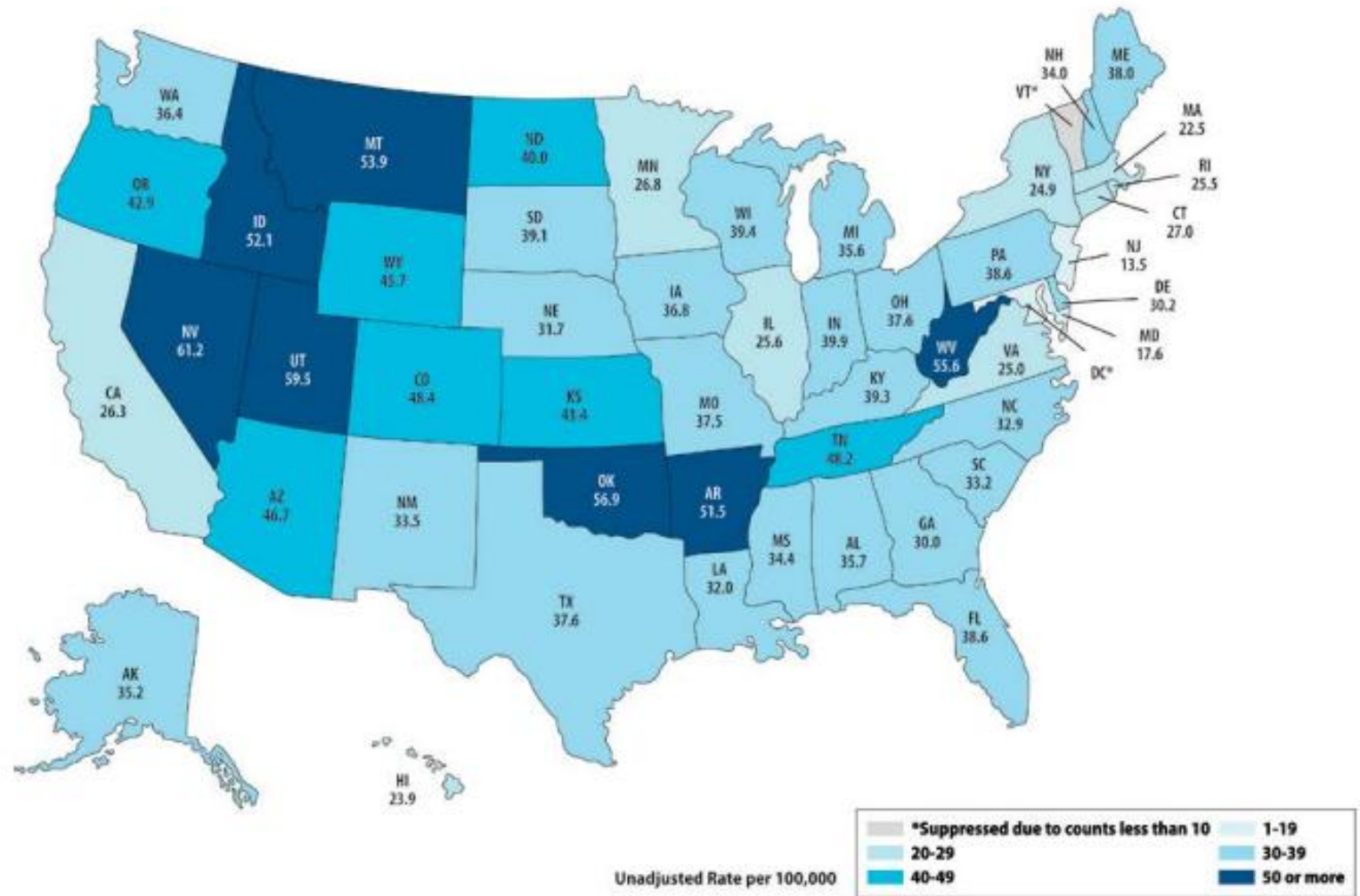
- 52.3% had documented pain issues
- 51.5% had sleep problems
- 43.1% had increased health problems
- 34.8% had declines in physical ability
- 31.9% had relationship problems
- 30.2% reported feeling hopeless
- 24.9% had impulsive or poor self-control
- 24.4% had unsecured firearms in home
- 23.6% had financial loss

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025\\_Annual\\_Report\\_Part\\_1\\_508.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2025/2025_Annual_Report_Part_1_508.pdf)

# Suicide Rates by State

Rates of Veteran suicide mortality vary across the United States. Figure 4, below, shows the Veteran suicide rates for U.S. states in 2023.<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 4: Suicide Rate per 100,000, Veterans, by State, 2023**



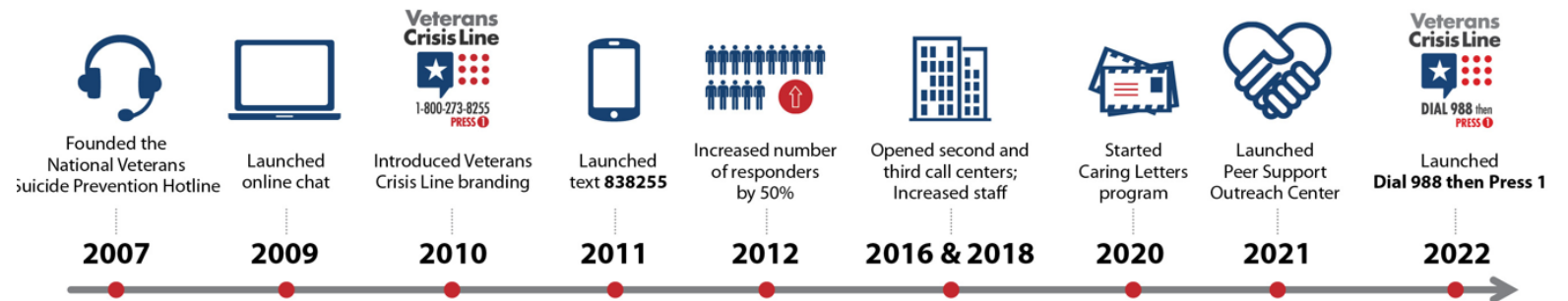
# Prevention Efforts

# Key VA Programs and Resources

- Veterans Crisis Line
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators
  - Outreach, Training, Clinical Case Management, Implementation of Programming
- VA Mental Health Services
- Community Partnerships
  - Governor's and Mayor's Challenges
  - Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program
  - Certified Community Behavior Health Clinics (CCBHC)
- Additional Resources:
  - COMPACT Act

# VCL Timeline Graphic

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource available to any Veteran, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA. Care does not end when the conversation is over. The Veterans Crisis Line can connect Veterans to their local suicide prevention coordinators, who will follow up and coordinate care.



More than  
**10.1 million**  
calls



More than  
**603,000**  
texts



More than  
**1.17 million**  
chats



More than  
**2.0 million**  
referrals

to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

More than  
**461,000**  
dispatches of  
emergency services

07/2026

# Opportunities for Collaboration

# Emergency Response

- Current policies of law enforcement agencies are prohibiting the traditional welfare check, while funding has decreased for other forms of transportation.
  - Leaving those in the community vulnerable and without emergent help
- A local 988 call can deploy mental health professionals that the Veterans Crisis Line cannot.

# Emergency Response Cont.

- Understanding programming
  - There is a misconception that the VA provides emergency transportation for Veterans in the community (i.e. at home) and that the VA can transport a Veteran against their will for emergent mental health services.
  - OKC VA does offer VMET (Veterans Mental Evaluation Team) to assist local agencies with welfare checks, but transportation is limited due to jurisdiction and, at this time, limited to only Oklahoma City area.

# State-wide Connectivity

- Oklahoma has a robust set of Veteran resources both government and non-profit.
  - There is no central way to connect and refer Veterans to the variety of resources causing duplication in services and Veterans falling through the gap.
- VA relies on local mental health agencies to provide services to Veterans in the community through the Care in the Community Network.
  - There is currently no system to ensure that these providers have training in military culture or evidence-based services.

# Suicide Prevention Training

- A variety of suicide prevention focused trainings exist in Oklahoma.
  - There exists no centralized method for community members and/or community agencies and businesses to find these trainings and match to what meets their needs state-wide.
  - There exists no collaboration of services among the training providers to ensure that all counties have access to training that is appropriate to the unique needs of those counties and their agencies/businesses.

# Local Contacts

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