

VA Portland Health Care System Recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month *#BeThere Campaign Urges Our Community to Support Veterans*

PORTLAND, Oregon – In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, VA Portland Health Care System is bringing awareness to its **#BeThere** campaign by encouraging community leaders, colleagues, and Veterans’ families and friends to help prevent suicide by showing support for those who may be going through a difficult time.

Suicide is a complex national public health issue that affects communities nationwide, with more than 45,000 Americans, including more than 6,000 Veterans, dying by suicide every year. But suicide is preventable. VA is using a community-driven approach to prevent suicide and finding innovative ways to deliver support and care to all 20 million U.S. Veterans whenever and wherever they need it.

“VA Portland Health Care System is working hard to end Veteran suicide, but we know that only about a third of Veterans come to VA for health care,” said Darwin Goodspeed, Director, VA Portland Health Care System. “That’s why we need everyone in the community to get involved. This September, and all year, I encourage everyone to take a moment to be there for Veterans in need. One act of thoughtfulness can make a big difference and may even save a life.”

You don’t need special training to prevent suicide. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion and care to Veterans in need, and offering your support. Here are some actions anyone can take to **Be There**:

- Reach out to the Veterans in your life to show them you care. Send a check-in text, cook them dinner, or simply ask, “How are you?”
- Educate yourself on the warning signs of suicide, found on the [Veterans Crisis Line website](#).
- Watch the free [S.A.V.E. training video](#) to equip yourself to respond with care and compassion if someone you know indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.
- Check out [VA’s Social Media Safety Toolkit](#) to learn how to recognize and respond to social media posts that may indicate emotional distress, feelings of crisis or thoughts of suicide.
- Contact VA’s [Coaching Into Care](#) program if you are worried about a Veteran loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 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.

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