Collaborating with the U.S. Veterans Health Administration—New Opportunities

Indianapolis VA Medical Center
Suicide Prevention Program & Fiscal Service

2019
Overview

- What We Know
- VA Suicide Prevention – crisis intervention and programming
- VA Suicide Prevention – public health approach to community outreach
- Becoming a Community Partner
- Questions?
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL
HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE AND
FOR HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN
A. LINCOLN
Who are Veterans?

• Federal definition:
  – Any person who served honorably on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States
Organizational Structure of VA

- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
  - Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
  - Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
  - National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
WHAT WE KNOW
Figure 22. Suicide rates (age-adjusted) by county of residence, Indiana, 2011-2015

Source: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Map Author: ISDH ERC PHG, Feb 2017

* Denotes an unstable and unreliable suicide rate based on less than 20 deaths.
Figure 27. Veteran* suicides by county of residence, Indiana, 2011-2015

Veteran Suicide Deaths

- Suppressed
- 5 - 9
- 10 - 19
- 20 - 29
- 30 +

*Veteran as reported on the death certificate
**The number of suicide deaths was less than 5 and is suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Source: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Map Author: ISDH ERC PHG, Feb 2017

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1
Veterans accounted for 18% of U.S. Adult Suicides in 2016 = ~20 per day

- ~14 Non-VHA users per day (70%)
- ~6 VHA users per day (30%)
### Indiana, Midwestern Region, and National Veteran Suicide Deaths by Age Group, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Indiana Veteran Suicides</th>
<th>Midwestern Region Veteran Suicides</th>
<th>National Veteran Suicides</th>
<th>Indiana Veteran Suicide Rate</th>
<th>Midwestern Region Veteran Suicide Rate</th>
<th>National Veteran Suicide Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>6,079</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>18–34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>26.8*</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–54</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>11.5*</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–74</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>2,259</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td>17.0*</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Indiana Veteran and Total Indiana, Midwestern Region, and National Suicide Deaths by Age Group, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Indiana Veteran Suicides</th>
<th>Indiana Total Suicides</th>
<th>Midwestern Region Total Suicides</th>
<th>National Total Suicides</th>
<th>Indiana Veteran Suicide Rate</th>
<th>Indiana Suicide Rate</th>
<th>Midwestern Region Suicide Rate</th>
<th>National Suicide Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>9,422</td>
<td>43,427</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18–34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>11,997</td>
<td>26.8*</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>35–54</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>3,445</td>
<td>15,467</td>
<td>11.5*</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>55–74</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>2,473</td>
<td>12,162</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>3,801</td>
<td>17.0*</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rates calculated from suicide counts lower than 20 are considered unreliable.
Veteran Suicide Data Sheet, 2016

Indy VA SPC summary notes:

• **Indiana** Veterans age 18-34 have *higher* rates of suicide (26.8) than 18-34 Non-Veterans in the Midwest Region (17.9) and Non-Veterans Nationally (16.1).

• **Indiana** Veterans age 18-34 have *higher* rate of suicide (26.8) than 18-34 Non-Veterans in Indiana (18.8).

• In 2016 the suicide rate was 1.5 times greater for Veterans than for non-Veteran adults, after adjusting for age and gender.

• In 2016, the suicide rate for women Veterans was 1.8 times greater than the suicide rate for non-Veteran women.

• In 2016, 71% of male Veteran suicides (nationally) resulted from firearm injury, compared to 41% of female Veteran suicides.

• In **Indiana**, 75.7% of Veteran suicides were by firearm injury.
Help us identify the 20 and locate the 14
VA SUICIDE PREVENTION – CRISIS INTERVENTION AND PROGRAMMING
VA Medical Center Initiatives

Beginning in 2007, VA Mental Health Expansion:

- OEF/OIF Seamless Transition Services
- Polytrauma/Rehabilitation
- Specialized PTSD Programming
- Expanding Homeless services
- Integration of Mental Health and Primary Care
  - Primary Care Clinical Psychologists
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators & Case Managers
VA Suicide Prevention – Universal Strategies

• Veterans Crisis Line
• Community outreach and education
  – Advertising
  – Public service announcements
  – Community events
    • arranged by Suicide Prevention Coordinators
• S.A.V.E. suicide awareness training
  – VA Staff (clinical and non-clinical)
  – Community organizations
• Screening for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder conditions
• Promoting lethal means safety (i.e., free gunlocks)
• Collecting and reporting attempt & completion data
National Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline

2007

Online chat

2009

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255

2010

Text to 838255

2011

Increased number of responders

2012

Mobile site

2013

Opened second call center; Increased staff

2016

Opened third call center; Increased staff

2018

More than 3.9 million calls

Nearly 467,000 chats

Nearly 123,000 texts

More than 651,000 referrals to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

More than 119,000 dispatches of emergency services

Confidential help for Veterans and their families

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1
Immediate 24/7/365 crisis response

Indy VA response, within 24 business day hours

Local SPC follow-up outreach

Indy VA same-day access, if clinically indicated

Link to Mental Health services
VA Suicide Prevention – Basic Strategy

• Suicide prevention requires ready access to high quality mental health services

  – Supplemented by Programs designed
    • To help individuals or families engage in care
    • To address suicide prevention in high risk patients
24/7 Crisis Intervention

Access to high-quality mental health services

Clinical programs that specifically target those at high risk

Public Health approach to community engagement
Indy VA Suicide Prevention Team

- **Travis Field, LCSW** – Lead Suicide Prevention Coordinator/ Supervisor, Psychiatry Outreach/Consultation Section
- **Ashley Maynard, LCSW** – Suicide Prevention Coordinator
- **Craig Lewis, LCSW** – Suicide Prevention Case Manager/ REACH VET Coordinator
- **Christa Sutton, LCSW** – Suicide Prevention Case Manager/Community Outreach Specialist
- **Brad Claypool** – Half-time SP MSA (admin support)
- **Trisha Smith-Peck, LCSW** – VA Homeless Services, Coordinated Enerty Specialist,
  25% dedicated to Suicide Prevention Program

- **Clinical approach** – facility’s “high risk” list, responding to Veterans Crisis Line referrals, case consultation
- **Public Health approach** – involved in at least five (5) community outreach events per month
- **Training/Education** – in-services throughout the VA system and in the community

Confidential help for Veterans and their families  1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1
VA Suicide Prevention Program

• Provide Enhanced Care in response to identified “high risk” suicidal behavior:
  – Maintain a “high risk” list (High Risk Suicide Flag)
  – Assign Suicide Prevention Case Manager for 90 days
    • Personal contacts—phone calls, letters, in-person as needed
    • Consultation with providers and clinical treatment teams
    • Suicide Risk Assessment and Safety Planning
    • Tracking appointments, follow up with missed appointments
    • Individualized strategies for treatment and lethal means safety
    • Coordinating referrals & services within the facility, other VA facilities, Vet Centers, or community agencies
VA Suicide Prevention Program (cont.)

– Multi-disciplinary communication: between Mental Health, Primary Care, Pharmacy, & Case Manager
– Restrict medication orders to 14 day supply
  • at Indy VAMC
– Mail Program—7 letters over 15 months
– Overall goal of Veteran engagement in most appropriate Outpatient mental health services

– Postvention
VA SUICIDE PREVENTION – PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Responding to this public health problem

- Veterans are at a higher risk for suicide.
- We need to do more to reduce risk.
- Suicides are preventable in most cases.

- Only ~36% of Veterans utilize VA healthcare
- 14 out of 20 Veteran suicides are not VHA enrolled and those Veterans may be seeking care in their communities
- VA cannot do this alone
Suicide Prevention Community Outreach: Public Health approach

• Expectation of at least 5 outreach events per month
• Beginning in 2019, dedicated Community Outreach Specialist

• Phase 1: Strategic goal
  — Connect with Non-VA Healthcare systems and Community Mental Health Centers across Indiana
  — Offer/provide free SAVE training to staff (targeting ED and Mental Health staff)
  — Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to enhance collaborative care of Veterans in crisis and needing mental health
S.A.V.E.

S.A.V.E. will help you act with care & compassion if you encounter a Veteran who is in suicidal crisis.

The acronym “S.A.V.E.” helps one remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention:

- **S**igns of suicidal thinking should be recognized
- **A**sk the most important question of all
- **V**alidate the Veteran’s experience
- **E**ncourage treatment and **E**xpedite getting help
Handout:

Indiana Veteran and Military Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Access: Quick Reference
www.veteranscrisisline.net
Resource Locator

Locate Information and Resources

No matter what you are experiencing, there is support for getting your life on a better track. To find the Veteran resources most helpful for you, fill in your ZIP code or state below and check the boxes of the programs or topics you are interested in. You can also select the National Resource Directory or the SAMHSA Behavioral Health tab to find additional services.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Resources
National Resource Directory Resources
SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

1 Select a Resource

- **Suicide Prevention Coordinators**
  Specially trained Suicide Prevention Coordinators or teams are available at all VA Medical Centers across the country.

- **Crisis Centers**
  Search for community-based crisis centers in your area.

- **VA Medical Centers**
  VA Medical Centers offer a range of acute care and community-based outpatient services, including mental health care, diagnostics, homeless and alcohol/drug abuse programs, nursing home and respite care.

- **Outpatient Clinics**
  Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) are local VA locations that provide primary care, counseling, laboratory analysis, prescriptions and radiology services.

- **Veterans Benefits Administration Offices**
  Veterans Benefits Administration Offices provide services to Veterans seeking benefits related to compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, home loans, death benefits, employment, and disability.

- **Vet Centers**
  Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all Veterans who have served in any combat zone, as well as their family members.

- **All**
  See all VA and community-based services in your area.

2 Choose Location

Search by Zip Code

Search by state

Choose Location

Search by Zip Code

Search

Search by state

Results for **Suicide Prevention Coordinators** in state ND

Monsebroten, Tammy
Fargo, ND 58102
P: 701-233-3700x93556
F: 701-233-2842
tammy.monsebroten@va.gov;
ranie.bickett@va.gov

Results for **Crisis Centers** in state ND

FirstLink HotLine
Fargo, ND 58103
P: 701-233-6462
F: 701-233-2476
visit website

Results for **VA Medical Centers** in state ND

Fargo VA Health Care System
2101 Elm Street N.
Fargo, ND 58102
P: 701-232-3241 or 701-232-3241
visit website

1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1
For questions, or for a supply of Suicide Prevention Crisis Materials to distribute in your community

Contact:

Travis Field, MA, MSW, LCSW
Lead Suicide Prevention Coordinator
• Office: 317-988-3213

Ashley Maynard, MSW, LCSW
Suicide Prevention Coordinator
• Office: 317-988-4327

Craig Lewis, MSW, LCSW
Suicide Prevention Case Manager/REACH VET Coordinator
• Office: 317-988-3365

Christa Sutton, MSW, LCSW
Suicide Prevention Case Manager/Community Outreach Specialist
• Office: 317-988-9388
• Cell: 317-997-2476

Brad Claypool
Suicide Prevention MSA
Available 12-4PM
• Office: 317-988-3451
BECOMING A COMMUNITY PARTNER
Becoming a community Partner

• Partnering with the VA through it’s network
  – PC3 – Patient Centered Community Care
  – CCN – Community Care Network
  – **VCA – Veterans Care Agreement**

• How can your organization help immediately?
  – We are having difficulty placing patients for the below areas:
    • Neuro-psych evaluations; insomnia appointments; providers with evening & weekend hours
    • Rural Indiana is severely underserved
What does a partnership with VA mean

- How to receive referral from VHA
  - How to provide services within the authorization
  - What if additional services are deemed necessary?

- Common referrals in Mental health?
  - Psychotherapy
  - Medication management
  - Opiate counseling programs (methadone)
  - Sleep disorders
What does payment look like?

• Claims and Payment through VCAs
  – Claims accepted by Electronic Data Interchange EDI or by Mail
  – Medicare reimbursement rates. Non-Medicare services is by a VA Fee Schedule
  – Cannot bill Veteran or Veterans Insurance for authorized care.

• Status Check
  – Change Healthcare
  – Vendor Inquiry System (VIS)

• FAQ’s
  – What type of information will the VAMC send to assist with scheduling?
  – Who do you contact regarding VCA’s?
  – What is the process for requesting additional services?
  – Who do you contact to check status on your claims?
    • Billing Inquiries: Local or Call Center
  – Where do I submit my claims?
    • Indianapolis VAMC
    • 1481 West 10th Street, ATTN: 04FFB
    • Indianapolis, IN 46202
Expanding community referrals

- What other resources are needed in the community for Indy VHA
  - Pain Management - Physiatrist
  - Oculoplastic
  - Retina
Contact information and resources

- Veterans Health Indiana
  - 1481 West 10th St. Indianapolis, IN 46202

- Customer Service team – 317-988-2327
- Provider Relations team – 317-517-8471
- Community Care Referral team – 317-988-1740

- www.missionact.va.gov
QUESTIONS?