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VA Rallies Community Support for Veterans During Suicide Prevention Month
Nationwide Efforts Show how “The Power of 1” can help Veterans, Servicemembers in Crisis

WASHINGTON – One small act could save the life of a Veteran or Servicemember in crisis – that’s the inspiration behind “The Power of 1” campaign. The campaign will launch this September during Suicide Prevention Month and is a joint project coordinated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

“The campaign emphasizes the effect that just one person, one conversation, or one act can have on the life of a Veteran or Servicemember by offering hope and opening the door to support,” said Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, Interim Under Secretary for Health. “It also is designed to spread the word about VA and DoD mental health resources and suicide prevention efforts.”

A new public service announcement, “*The Power of 1*,” will reinforce this message by focusing on the small, everyday actions that can play a pivotal role in improving a Veteran’s life. It will be broadcast on television and radio stations Nationwide during September. In addition, a Suicide Prevention Month Web page, VeteransCrisisLine.net/ThePowerof1, offers interactive tools to learn more about the Veterans Crisis Line and how small acts make a difference.

“Sometimes, when we suspect a Veteran or Servicemember in our lives may be going through a crisis, we are unsure how to help — but we all have the power to take the first step to reach out, to find time in our day to talk with the Veterans close to us and see how they’re doing,” said Dr. Caitlin Thompson, Deputy Director of VA’s Suicide Prevention Program. “It takes only a moment, and just one small act can start them down the path to getting the support they need.”

VA will also collaborate with community organizations throughout the month, with specially trained suicide prevention coordinators in 151 VA Medical Centers across the Nation spreading the word at local events, sponsoring health fairs, and working with DoD to help Veterans and Servicemembers get the support they deserve. In addition, VA will coordinate with local and regional groups — including community partners, Veterans Service Organizations, health care providers and prominent Veteran supporters — to spread the word about VA’s mental health resources. Together, this network will encourage Veterans and the people in their lives to educate themselves about suicide risk, identify warning signs and learn the steps to take in a time of crisis.

Those steps include contacting the Veterans Crisis Line or using its online chat and text-messaging services for free, confidential support from specially trained and experienced responders. Veterans, Servicemembers and anyone concerned about them can call the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 and Press 1), chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or send a text to 838255 — even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. All Veterans Crisis Line resources are optimized for mobile devices.

“Taking that first step to connect with someone in crisis can feel daunting, but the Veterans Crisis Line offers support for those concerned about a loved one,” Thompson said. “One call, one chat, or one text can open the door to hope.”

To learn more about the Veterans Crisis Line or to find a local VA suicide prevention coordinator, visit VeteransCrisisLine.net. For more information about VA mental health resources, visit mentalhealth.va.gov.

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