



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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We invite any media interested in interviewing our VA staff to learn more about care and services to contact our Public Affairs Officer at 989-497-2500, extension 13020 or e-mail carrie.seward@va.gov

Suicide Prevention Coordinator Committed to Helping Veterans in Crisis

— U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs) have a challenging but rewarding job: they help to identify Veterans in crisis and get them the support they need to transition to healthy, productive lives.

Veterans often are referred to Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center Suicide Prevention Coordinator by responders staffing VA's Veterans Crisis Line, a national hotline, online chat and text-messaging service which offers free, confidential support to those going through a difficult time. It is their role to connect with those Veterans to help them access appropriate care and monitor their progress as they begin the road to recovery.

"My job is to make sure the health needs of Veterans who are at risk of suicide are evaluated and they are directed to the right VA services and resources," said Sharleen Gray Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Aleda E. Lutz VA. "VA provides a wealth of services for Veterans who may be having difficulty dealing with everyday life."

On any given day, the Suicide Prevention Team may receive referrals from sources other than the Veterans Crisis Line, including from friends or family members who are worried about Veterans they know, or from other health care providers at the VA Medical Center or VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

"SPCs are well-versed in helping Veterans face any number of challenges, because each Veteran's situation is unique, crisis feels different for everyone, and their situations differ," said the Suicide Prevention Coordinator. "Some Veterans are coping with aging, stress or lingering effects stemming from their military service which were never addressed. Some may have difficulty with relationships or the transition back to civilian life."

SPCs are trained to look for signs of crisis, and part of their job is to educate others on how to recognize symptoms too. Signs a Veteran might need help include showing feelings of hopelessness and anxiety, and behavior which includes increasing alcohol or drug abuse, sleeplessness, mood swings, anger, engaging in risky activities, and withdrawing from family and friends.

Veterans, friends, and family members can contact the Veterans Crisis Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The service is free. Please call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net, or text to 838255 to get confidential support and access to care.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center, with an additional 8-bed acute medicine and telemetry wing. It provides care to over 34,700 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at www.saginaw.va.gov.

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