

VA



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News Release

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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

Aleda E. Lutz VA Recognizes September as Suicide Prevention Month *#BeThere Campaign Urges Our Community to Support Veterans*

Saginaw, MI — In observance of Suicide Prevention Month, the Aleda E. Lutz VA 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 which 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 is finding innovative ways to deliver support and care to all 20 million U.S. Veterans whenever and wherever they need it.

“Employees at the Aleda E. Lutz VA and our nine Community Based Outpatient Clinics are working hard to end Veteran suicide. However, we know that just less than a third of Veterans come to VA for health care,” said Dr. Nazzareno Liegghio, Associate Chief, of Staff for Mental Health. “Community education and involvement provides a huge opportunity to reach and support all Veterans when experiencing difficult times. This is why the community needs to “**Be There**” and become involved and support Veterans during difficult times. This September, and all year, we encourage everyone to take a moment to “**Be There**” for Veterans in need. One act of thoughtfulness towards a Veteran can make a big difference and may even save their 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.

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 36,700 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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