

U.S. Rep. Kind: Cosponsors bipartisan bill to open access to mental healthcare for veterans

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The Veterans Mental Health Accessibility Act will provide veterans streamlined access to mental health services within the VA

La Crosse – Today, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind cosponsored the bipartisan Veterans Mental Health Accessibility Act, which will allow all veterans who served on active duty in combat operations eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any mental illness through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Currently, there is a five-year window for veterans to seek treatment after serving for mental illnesses before losing their priority status within the VA.

“Our veterans have earned and deserve the best quality care we can provide, including comprehensive mental healthcare,” said Rep. Ron Kind. “This important bill will help provide Wisconsin veterans streamlined access to mental health services within the VA, and help the VA better address the needs of our veterans – regardless of when they served our country.”

The risk for suicide among veterans is 22% higher than civilians. According to a 2017 report from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, over 100 Wisconsin veterans died by suicide in 2015. September is National Suicide Prevention Month.

If you are a veteran that needs help, or if you know a veteran in crisis, visit VeteransCrisisLine.net, call the Veterans Crisis Line (Suicide Prevention Hotline):

1-800-273-8255 (Press 1), or text 838255. This support is free, confidential, and available 24/7 for all veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve, and their family members and friends.

This bill is endorsed by AMVETS, American Veterans for Equal Rights, the Retired Enlisted Association, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.