

**VA**



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
Veterans Health Administration  
Milwaukee VA Medical Center

**Milwaukee VA Medical Center**  
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## **Press Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Suicide Prevention Month: Milwaukee VA encourages Veterans to ‘reach out’ for mental health assistance**

**Milwaukee** — In conjunction with Suicide Prevention Month, the Milwaukee VA Medical Center is raising awareness of its mental health resources available for Veterans.

“Veterans are driven and resilient, but everyone needs help sometimes,” said Dr. Bert Berger, manager of the Mental Health Division at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. “Whether Veterans are looking for peer-to-peer support, clinical care, counseling or something else, VA is here to help. VA and community resources can help Veterans through life’s challenges.”

The Milwaukee VA Suicide Prevention Team consists of three licensed clinical social workers and one licensed psychologist. They all have special training in mental health and suicide prevention, along with a wealth of experience and expertise. Team members encourage Veterans, their friends and family, to be mindful of how world and personal events may affect Veterans’ mental health. Over the last month, the team has seen an increase in referrals and consults, especially from Veterans who served in Afghanistan.

“It is important to identify behaviors that may indicate a person is contemplating suicide and directly ask your loved one if they are thinking of harming or killing themselves,” said Berger. “Our Suicide Prevention Team can provide Veterans with the information they need to help recognize the signs and where they can get help.”

Whether you’re a Veteran or a Veteran supporter, there are many ways to [reach out](#):

- Call or text a friend or fellow Veteran to talk about what they’re going through.
- Contact the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#). Veterans don’t have to be enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA to use the Veterans Crisis Line.
- Call the Milwaukee VA Immediate Mental Health Access Clinic, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at 414-384-2000, ext. 45760.
- Serve as a sponsor to a Veteran through the [Expiration of Term of Service sponsorship program](#). ETS helps Veterans transition to civilian life.

- Visit [BeThereWis.com](http://BeThereWis.com), the website for Southeastern Wisconsin Task Force on Veteran Suicide Prevention.
- Tap into VA tools to get help when going through life's challenges:
  - [Make the Connection](#), where more than 600 Veterans and family members share their stories of strength and recovery.
  - [MyVA411](#), where Veterans, their families and caregivers can call 1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) to easily access information on VA benefits and services.
- If you are a supporter, reach out, offer support and encourage the Veterans you know to ask for help when they need it.

For more information and resources about the Milwaukee VA Suicide Prevention program, visit [https://www.milwaukee.va.gov/services/suicide\\_prevention.asp](https://www.milwaukee.va.gov/services/suicide_prevention.asp).

VA also has resources to help Veterans transitioning from the military or going through a difficult time in life. [VA Solid Start](#) connects Veterans with qualified representatives who call three times during a Veteran's first year of separation to walk through benefits available. The Self-Check Assessment is a confidential, anonymous risk assessment Veterans can use to help them understand if and how stress and depression are affecting them.

Veterans and loved ones can also find additional, external resources on the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Behavioral Health Treatment Services](#) tool.

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*Media covering this issue can download VA's [Safe Messaging Best Practices fact sheet](#) or visit [www.ReportingOnSuicide.org](http://www.ReportingOnSuicide.org) for important guidance on how to communicate about suicide.*

*If you wish to interview Dr. Berger, please contact Public Affairs Officer Ann Knabe at 414-382-5364 (office), 414-345-0842 (cell) or email [Ann.Knabe@va.gov](mailto:Ann.Knabe@va.gov).*