

# VAB Agenda – March 12, 2026

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- I. Call to Order, Pledge, Invocation, Roll Call (action)**
- II. Approval of February 12, 2026 minutes (action)**
- III. Committee Reports (info)**
- IV. Veteran Suicide Prevention (info)**
- V. Work Session Preparation (info)**
- VI. January 2026 Contractor and Fund Reports & Year-End Fund Report (info)**
- VII. Veterans Assistance Center Updates (info)**
- VIII. Old Business (info)**
- IX. New Business (info)**
- X. Open Forum (info)**
- XI. Adjourn**



# Agenda Item I. Call to Order/Pledge/Invocation/Roll Call

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# Agenda Item II. Approval of February 12<sup>th</sup> minutes

## Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes An advisory board to the Clark County Council February 12, 2026

Chair: **Bob Nichols** Vice Chair: **Buck Marr** Secretary: **Bruce Maas**

### Meeting called to order.

### Roll Call: [Bold script indicates presence at meeting; italics indicates excused]

POST	PRIMARY	ALTERNATE
40 et 8	<i>Bob Brennan</i>	Mark Lacey
American Legion #14	<b>Gene Couture</b>	
American Legion #44	Jim Bowen	<b>Darren Wertz</b>
American Legion #168	<b>Bob Nichols</b>	
American Legion #176	<b>Michael Gibson</b>	Jonathan Frederick
American Veterans #6	<b>John Lovejoy</b>	<i>Vanise Pratt</i>
DAV Chapter #4	<b>Bruce Maas</b>	<b>Roy Day</b>
Korean War Assoc. #321	<b>Patrick Locke</b>	<b>Earl Edwards</b>
Marine Corps League #826	<b>Steve Slegers</b>	
VFV #4278	Thomas Brandt	<b>Deborah Proctor</b>
VFV #7824	<b>Greg Gilbertson</b>	Stewart Bauer
Vietnam Vets #512	<i>Greg Whitson</i>	<b>Nick Herber</b>
Members at Large	<i>Bryan McGillis</i>	
	<b>Tonya Wark</b>	
	<b>Michael Langsdorf</b>	
	<b>Lloyd Bowman</b>	
	<b>Buck Marr</b>	

**Clark County Representative:** Abby Molloy, Nooreen Ebrahim

**Guests:** Judy Russel and Sonja Wood (Clark County Veterans Assistance Center); Glen Yung (Clark County Council); Emily Zwetzig (Clark County Budget Office) Larry Smith (CMAC)

### Approval of January 8, 2026 meeting minutes

The minutes were approved following a motion by Steve Slegers that was seconded by Lloyd Bowman.

### Committee Reports

**Appeals:** None.

**Policies and Procedures:** A committee meeting will be held before the March VAB meeting. Greg Gilbertson visited the CCVAC to better understand the work they do.

**Nominations:** None.

**Budget Workgroup:** The group would like to know how direct and indirect cost rates are determined and how money gets allocated to these costs, as well as more information about the different types of audits the county conducts on the VAF. Staff will direct these questions to the Auditor's Office.

### Discussion with Councilor Glen Yung

Councilor Yung thanked the board for their military and advisory board service. He reviewed the levy that funds the Veteran Assistance Fund (VAF) and the council's role in determining the levy amount. The council can either approve a 1% increase, or a 0% increase to the VAF each year. An increase above 1% would need to be approved by voters. The board raised concerns about the decrease in the levy rate since the fund's inception. Councilor Yung will provide the guidance that states that the levy can be decreased from 1% cent per \$1,000.

Councilor Yung proposed, on behalf of himself and not the county council, that if the VAF could be separated from the

## Clark County Veterans Advisory Board Meeting Minutes An advisory board to the Clark County Council February 12, 2026

General Fund, it may alleviate board member concerns. He also shared HB 2442 with the board, which includes legislation that would make the VAF a separate fund. The board requested clarification as to why the funds were combined when the RCW seems to imply the VAF be a separate fund.

### Annual Board Member Training

Staff provided an overview of the rules and regulations that must be followed to be effective board member.

### December 2025 Contractor & Fund Reports

- CCVAC: 46 Veterans served in December, with services totaling \$37,645.28. 33 male veterans, 8 female veterans, 1 widow, 0 other veterans. 14 denials, 0 subject to appeal. 566 visits to the center for essentials and food, 612 sack breakfasts and lunches and 81 food boxes provided. 7,588 total pounds of food. 614.5 volunteer hours, totaling \$24,752 in value.
- Free Clinic: 1 Veteran served in December. Services totaled \$121 in value; billed \$718.55.
- WDVA: 650 claims in the fourth quarter, with a 92% 'batting average' and \$480,240 in VA payments.
- VAF Fund December: Revenue: \$5,044.78; expenditures: \$141,337.16; fund balance: \$329,653.35, a \$136,292.38 decrease in the fund from the month prior.

### Clark County Veterans Assistance Center Updates, Judy Russel

- The board was introduced to the new outreach coordinator for the CCVAC, Tammy.
- Charts outlining 2025 visits and expenditures from the CCVAC non-profit and the contracted VAF funds were shared with the board.
- The bingo fundraiser was successful and are anticipating expanding the event next year.

### Old Business

Bruce Maas shared that county staff will continue researching the Hero bus passes provided through C-Tran. The numbers from the Point-in-Time count should be published soon.

### New Business

A letter of intent was received from Larry Smith to become a Member at Large on the VAB. Larry Smith was appointed as a Member at Large following a motion by Steve Slegers and seconded by Lloyd Bowman.

Abby Molloy shared that all VAF contracts are currently being monitored to ensure contract requirements are being met. Additionally, the work session that will be attended by Clark County Council, VAB, and CCVAC has been scheduled for April 29 at 9 a.m. at the Public Service Center Hearing Room on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor.

### Open Forum and Public Comment

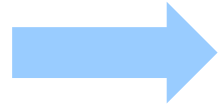
Larry Smith shared that the 104<sup>th</sup> Division will be deactivated this summer. He is working on having the division commemorated in partnership with the City of Vancouver and The Historic Trust.

**Motion to adjourn by Patrick Locke and seconded by Tonya Wark. Approved unanimously.  
Next meeting: March 12, 2026.**

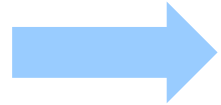


## Agenda Item III. Committee Reports

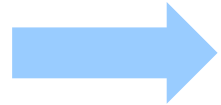
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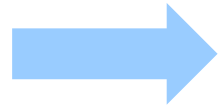
**Appeals – Gene Couture**



**Policies and Procedures – Greg Gilbertson**



**Nominations – Bruce Maas**



**Budget Workgroup – Patrick Locke**



**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Overview of Veteran Suicide and the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide

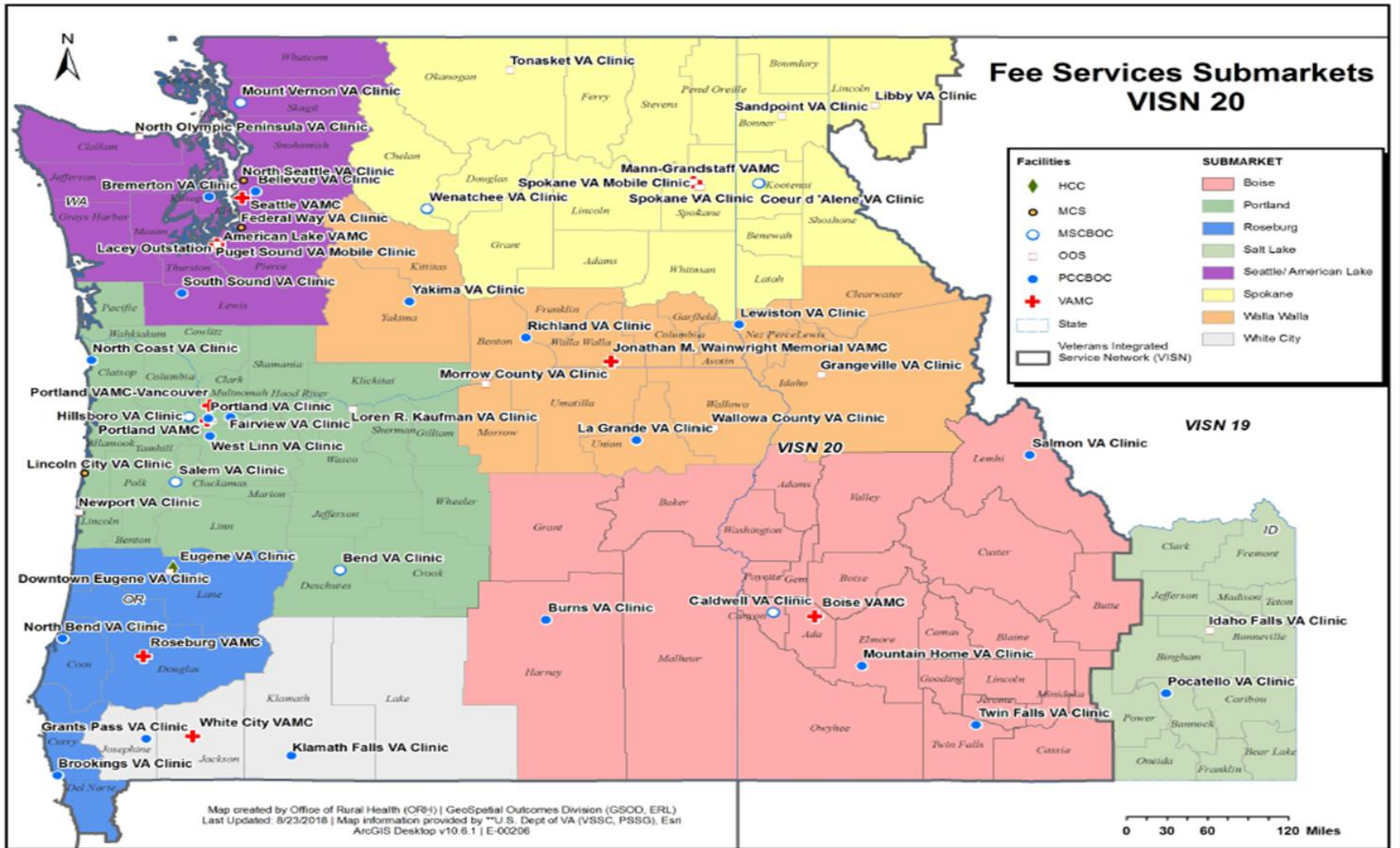
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**VA Portland Health Care System**

Ashley Taylor, MS

*Portland VA Suicide Prevention Team*



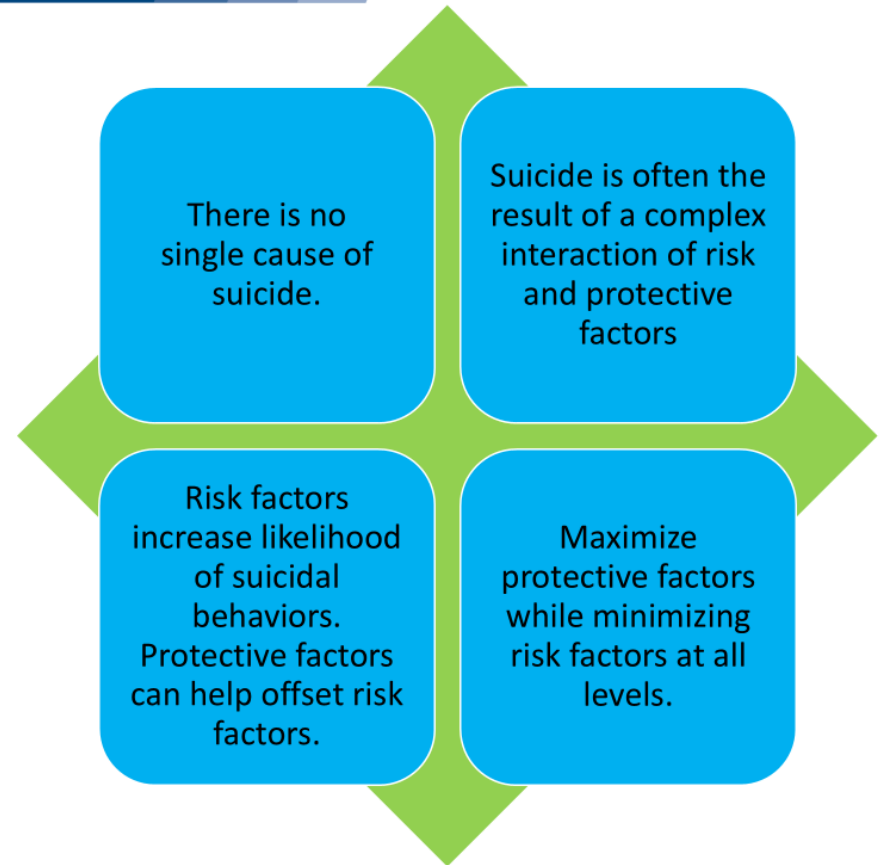


# Facts About Suicide

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# Suicide is a Complex Issue with No Single Cause



# Risk and Protective Factors

## Risk

- Prior suicide attempt
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to lethal means
- Recent loss
- Legal or financial challenges
- Relationship issues
- Unemployment
- Homelessness

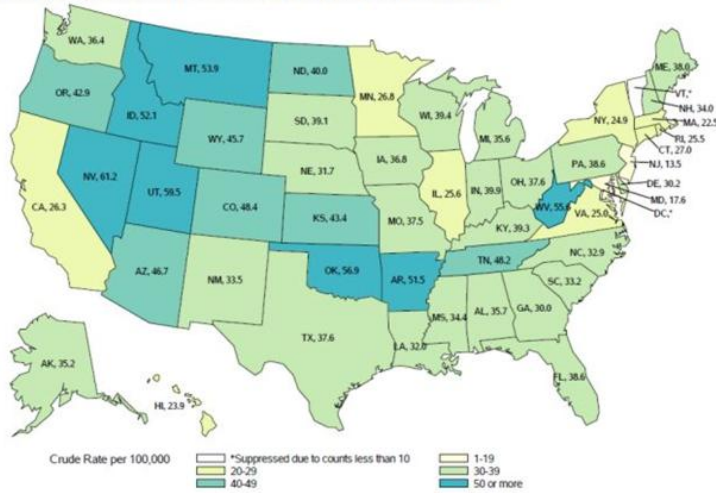
## Protective

- Access to mental health care
- Sense of connectedness
- Problem-solving skills
- Sense of spirituality
- Mission or purpose
- Physical health
- Employment
- Social and emotional well-being

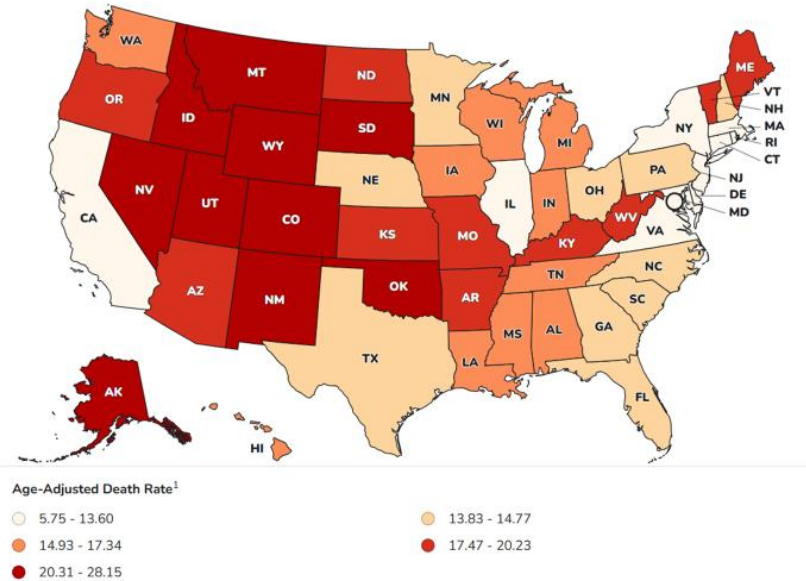


**Goal:** Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors

Figure 4: Suicide Rate per 100,000, Veterans, by State, 2023



Below, Table 3 presents suicide rates by state, from highest to lowest.



# 2025 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report

- The report shows there were 6,398 suicides among Veterans in 2023, down from 6,442 in 2022. The average number of Veteran suicides per day fell slightly, to 17.5 in 2023 from 17.6 in 2022.
- 61% of Veterans who died by suicide in 2023 were not receiving VA health care in the last year of their life.
- The suicide rate per 100,000 Veterans rose for both male and female Veterans in 2023. For women, the rate rose from 13.7 to 13.9, and for men, it rose from 37.3 to 37.8.
- Suicide rates are elevated for Veterans aged 18 to 34 years, and those with certain risk characteristics, including homelessness, health problems and pain. Among Veterans who died by suicide from 2021 to 2023 and whose deaths were reported by VA suicide prevention teams, the most frequently identified risk factor was pain.

# Oregon

## VETERAN SUICIDE DATA SHEET, 2023

Oregon, Western Region, and National Veteran Suicide Deaths and Rates by Age Group, 2023<sup>a</sup>

Age Group	Oregon Veteran Suicides	Western Region Veteran Suicides	National Veteran Suicides	Oregon Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000	Western Region Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000	National Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000
18-34	11	220	834	57.9*	55.4	47.9
35-54	23	369	1,750	38.3	35.0	37.3
55-74	40	515	2,176	37.4	34.4	31.2
75+	39	418	1,597	48.8	38.5	33.5
All	114	1,531	6,398	42.9	37.9	35.2

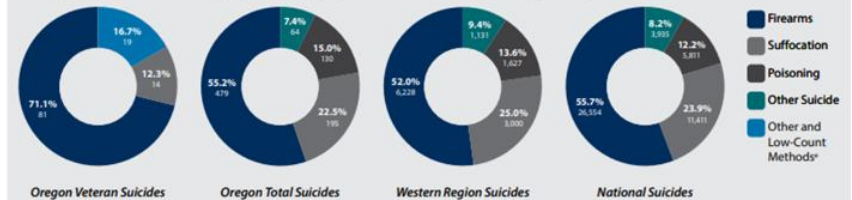
Oregon Veteran and Total Oregon, Western Region, and National Suicide Deaths and Rates by Age Group, 2023<sup>a</sup>

Age Group	Oregon Veteran Suicides	Oregon Total Suicides	Western Region Total Suicides	National Total Suicides	Oregon Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000	Oregon Suicide Rate per 100,000	Western Region Suicide Rate per 100,000	National Suicide Rate per 100,000
18-34	11	243	3,403	13,272	57.9*	25.7	18.3	17.4
35-54	23	265	4,019	16,186	38.3	23.7	19.6	19.1
55-74	40	244	3,229	13,278	37.4	24.5	18.8	17.3
75+	39	116	1,335	4,975	48.8	34.3	24.1	20.3
All	114	868	11,986	47,711	42.9	25.5	19.4	18.2

After accounting for age differences,<sup>b</sup> the Veteran suicide rate in Oregon:

- was not significantly different from the national Veteran suicide rate
- was significantly higher than the national general population suicide rate

Oregon Veteran and Total Oregon, Western Region, and National Suicide Deaths by Method,<sup>d</sup> 2023



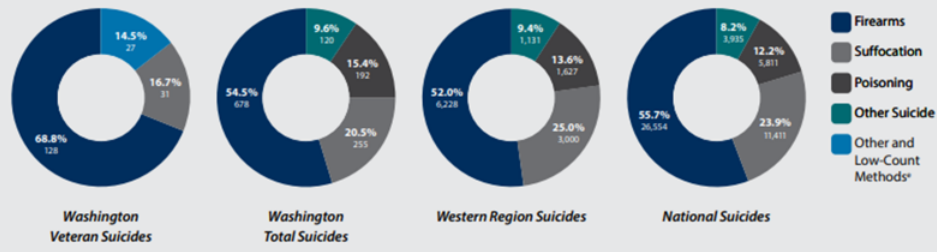
# Washington

## VETERAN SUICIDE DATA SHEET, 2023

Washington Veteran and Total Washington, Western Region, and National Suicide Deaths and Rates by Age Group, 2023<sup>c</sup>

Age Group	Washington Veteran Suicides	Washington Total Suicides	Western Region Total Suicides	National Total Suicides	Washington Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000	Washington Suicide Rate per 100,000	Western Region Suicide Rate per 100,000	National Suicide Rate per 100,000
18-34	22	381	3,403	13,272	46.8	20.7	18.3	17.4
35-54	48	422	4,019	16,186	35.0	20.4	19.6	19.1
55-74	69	308	3,229	13,278	34.8	17.9	18.8	17.3
75+	46	134	1,335	4,975	35.7	24.9	24.1	20.3
All	186	1,245	11,986	47,711	36.4	20.2	19.4	18.2

Washington Veteran and Total Washington, Western Region, and National Suicide Deaths by Method,<sup>d</sup>2023



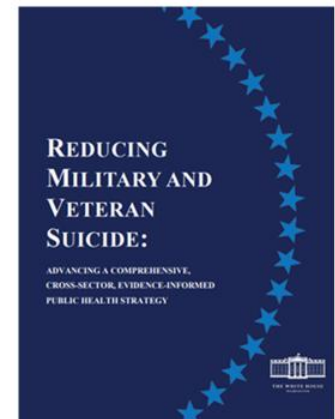
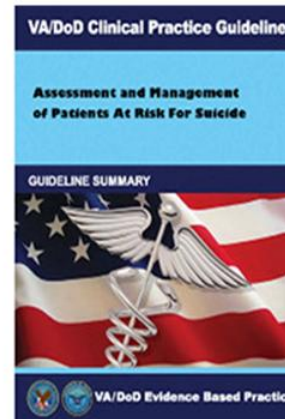
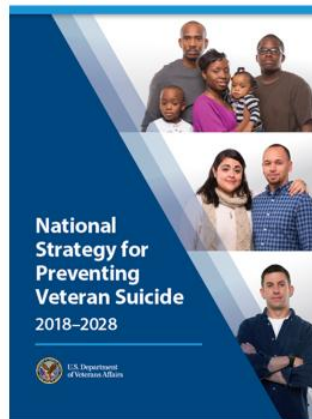
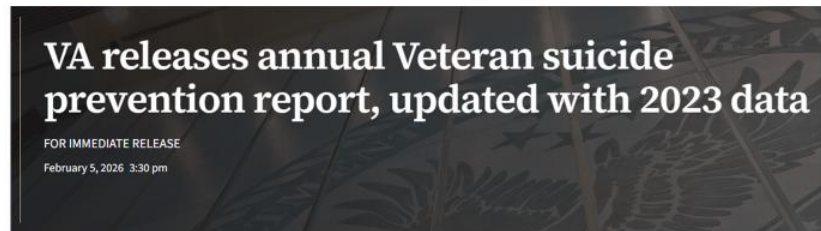
# What is VA doing about this?

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# VA's Top Clinical Priority Suicide Prevention

Data from the [\*National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report\*](#) informs VA's strategic efforts, which are guided by the [\*National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide \(2018\)\*](#), [\*VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline \(2024\)\*](#), and [\*White House Strategy on Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide \(2021\)\*](#).



# Public Health Strategy

VA's public health strategy combines partnerships with communities to implement tailored, local prevention plans while also focusing on evidence-based clinical strategies for intervention. Our approach focuses on both what we can do now, in the short term, and over the long term, to implement VA's [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#).



## KEY TENETS

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Suicide is preventable.

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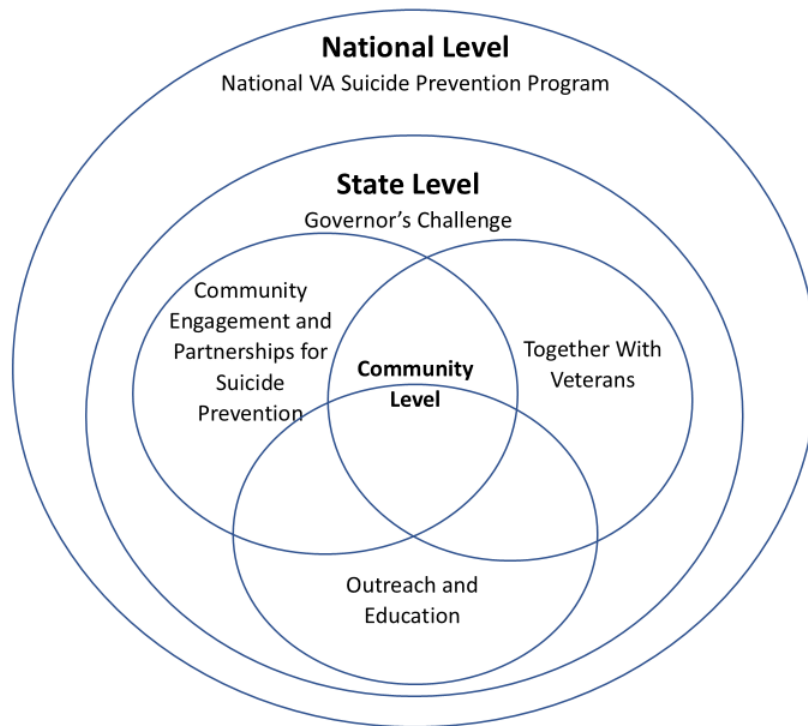
Suicide prevention requires a public health approach, combining clinical and community-based approaches.

3

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.



# Community-Based Interventions



**Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) serves as unifying model, from national to community levels, for all community-based efforts to end Veteran suicide.**

- **The Governor's Challenge** is a collaboration with VA and SAMHSA where state policy makers partner with local leaders to implement a comprehensive suicide prevention plan.
- **Together with Veterans** is focused on Veteran-to-Veteran coalition building and Veteran leadership development for suicide prevention.
- **Community Engagement and Partnerships for Suicide Prevention (VISN Expansion)** is focused on facilitating community coalition building for suicide prevention

*Outreach and Education provides SAVE, VHA facility partnerships, events, etc. through local Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) and does not change their critical role.*

# What we ALL can do to help. Protective Factors for Veterans

14



## Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365

Be prepared.  
Save the number.  
Dial 988 then Press 1



- Veterans
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends
- Coworkers

[VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text **838255**.

# Secure Storage Starts Here

## Get a FREE cable gun lock from VA

Every Veteran is eligible to receive a free cable-style gun lock from their local VA facility. These locks are an easy, effective way to keep firearms secure and they're available at no cost, with no paperwork required.

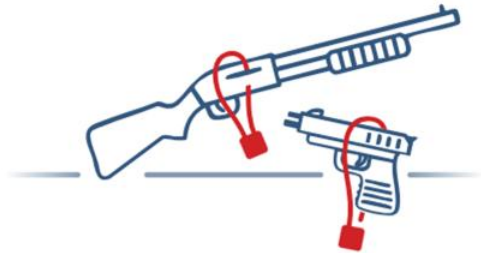
Firearm safety starts with access to the right tools. VA medical centers and clinics across the country have cable gun locks ready for distribution. Whether you're a Veteran or supporting one, this is a simple step that can protect and save lives.

[FIND YOUR CLOSEST VA](#)



## Cable Gun Locks

Veterans know how fast a crisis can escalate and how important it is to create space to think clearly when emotions run high. A cable gun lock is a simple but powerful way to put time and space between a moment of despair and a permanent decision.



### **Buys time in a crisis**

A cable gun lock creates time and space to pause, reflect, and stay safe.

### **Fits most firearms**

This lock works with a wide range of handguns, shotguns, and rifles.

### **Adds a layer of protection**

Use it anywhere your firearm is stored. For yourself and those you love.

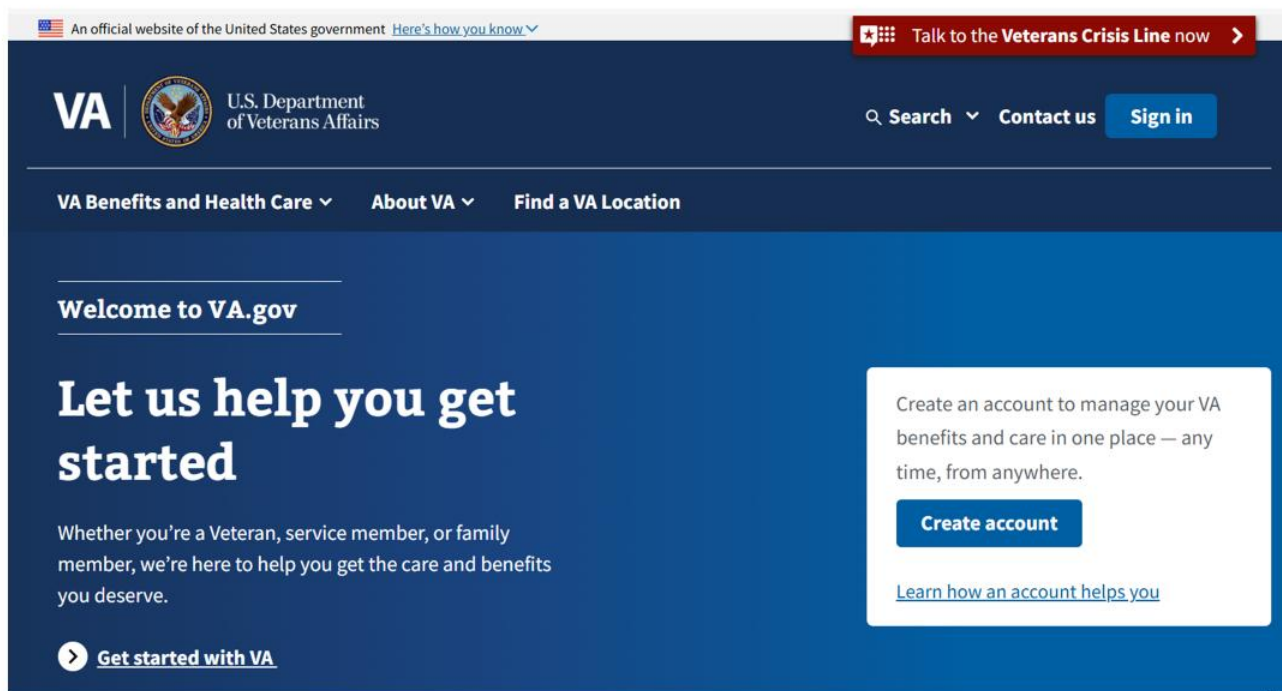


# Health Connect 24hour Nurses Line

- When you call the main number for Portland VA 503-220-8262, listen to the prompts and press the number that says 'speak to a nurse'.
- Or call directly: 1-800-325-7940



# How to Get Started with VA Services



The screenshot shows the VA.gov homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the VA logo, the text "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs", a search bar, and links for "Contact us" and "Sign in". A red banner at the top right says "Talk to the Veterans Crisis Line now". Below the navigation bar, there are three main menu items: "VA Benefits and Health Care", "About VA", and "Find a VA Location". The main content area features a large blue background with the text "Welcome to VA.gov" and "Let us help you get started". Below this, there is a paragraph: "Whether you're a Veteran, service member, or family member, we're here to help you get the care and benefits you deserve." A "Get started with VA" button is located at the bottom left of the main content area. On the right side, there is a white box with the text "Create an account to manage your VA benefits and care in one place — any time, from anywhere." and a "Create account" button. Below this box is a link: "Learn how an account helps you".



# BEYOND THE MILITARY UNIFORM

Connect with resources and opportunities to build community with fellow veterans in Oregon. Together, we can navigate the challenges of life after service.

If you or someone you know is in immediate need of help

**DIAL 988 THEN PRESS 1**



# FINVET – Veterans Financial Resource Center

Free Financial Counseling, Budgeting Resources

Free Legal Help with Trusts

Veterans Discounts

Fraud Awareness

Focus on Enhancing Overall Health and Well Being by Managing Finances

Resources for employment, basic needs, education, home loans etc.,

FINVET - <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/finvet/top-resources.asp>



# Mental Health Mobile Apps. Mobile Apps - PTSD: National Center for PTSD ([va.gov](http://va.gov))

## Self-Help

These apps provide support and guidance in living with PTSD.



PTSD Coach



PTSD Family Coach



Beyond MST



Mindfulness Coach

## Treatment Companions

These apps offer additional help for PTSD treatments.



CPT Coach



PE Coach



CBT-i Coach



ACT Coach

## Related

These apps help with related issues affecting people with PTSD.



Safety Plan



COVID Coach



Couples Coach



Insomnia Coach

# Postvention Resources



COMMUNITY

PROVIDERS

WORKPLACE



Films



Infographics



Podcasts

Uniting for Suicide Postvention (USPV): <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention/>

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



# Suicide Prevention Team

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- Martha Carlson, Ph.D. PM(Portland)
  - Matt Schmidt, LCSW (Vancouver)
  - Becky Kuhn, LCSW (Vancouver)
  - Jeremiah Dutt, LCSW (West Linn)
  - Cynthia Tanner, LCSW (Compact Act Coordinator)
  - Ashley Taylor (Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinator)
- Joe Bertagnolli, LCSW (Portland)
  - Gayle Keller, LCSW (Fairview)
  - Michael Ogunsusi, LCSW (Hillsboro)
  - Vacant (Bend & Salem)

**Team Line 503-402-2857/52857**  
**email: [vhapor-mhdspc@va.gov](mailto:vhapor-mhdspc@va.gov)**



# VA Tools and Resources for Veterans and Supporters

**Veterans Crisis Line**: A free, anonymous, confidential resource available to Veterans in crisis, as well as concerned family members and friends. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text **838255**.

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**Reach Out**: Get support designed specifically for you. Family members or friends can find resources that are designed for the Veterans in your life.

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**Safety Planning**: Information on safety planning and a template for developing a safety plan. A safety plan is a written list of coping strategies and sources of support that at-risk Veterans can use before or during a suicidal crisis.

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**VA Mental Health**: VA's repository of mental health resources, information, and data materials.



# VA Tools and Resources for Veterans and Supporters

**VA S.A.V.E. Training**: Training designed to teach anyone who interacts with Veterans how to recognize warning signs of crisis and what to do to help a Veteran who may be at risk.

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**VA Suicide Prevention**: Explore suicide prevention resources to build networks of support among community-based organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, health care providers, and other members of your community that strengthen protective factors for Veterans.

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**VA Resource Locator**: This tool can help Veterans find local mental health and suicide prevention resources, including their local suicide prevention coordinator.

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# Work Session Preparation



## Work Session Information

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- Wednesday, April 29 starting at 9:00 am
- To allow for open discussions and questions, plan on limiting presentation by VAB to Council to no more than 20 minutes
- Presentation materials and handouts due to council by April 22
  - Abby will help submit – please have all materials to Abby by Friday, April 17
  - Materials will be posted online
- Recommendations:
  - Have very clear goals and talking points
  - Have designated speaker
  - Prepare data to back up request for additional funding



# Discussion Questions

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- **What are the CCVAB's main goals for this work session?**
  - What are the priority requests for the Council?
- **What does the board need to prepare for this work session?**
  - What materials or data is needed to support the request(s)?
  - What does the board need from the CCVAC?
  - What does the board need from county staff?
- **How does the board plan to present to the Council?**
  - Who will be speaking?
  - Will the board have a PowerPoint?



# Agenda Item VI. January 2026 Contractor Reports

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- **CCVAC**

- 570 visits to the center for essentials and food. 743 sack breakfasts and lunches and 83 food boxes provided. 5,019 total pounds of food provided (page 1)
- 497.5 volunteer hours, totaling \$20,039 in value (page 1)
- 58 Veterans served in January, services totaling \$77,772.62 (page 2-3)
- 47 male Veterans, 10 female Veterans, 1 widow, and 0 others served (page 5)
- 16 denials, 0 subject to appeal (page 6)

- **Free Clinic**

- 1 veteran served in January. Services totaled \$516 in value. Billed \$741.59. (page 8-9)

- **Fund**

- January revenue: \$153,453.10, expenditures: \$5,196.10 (page 10)
- Fund balance: \$477,910.35 (\$148,257 increase from last month) (page 10)



# Agenda Item VI. 2025 Year-End Fund Report

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- 2025 revenue = \$962,577.27
- 2025 expenditures = \$1,156,432.08
- Net decrease = \$193,854.81
- Fund balance = \$329,653.35



# Agenda Item VII. CCVAC updates

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**Honorably  
serving those  
who served  
honorably**



## Agenda Items VII. – XI.

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- **Old Business**
- **New Business**
  - Clark College Report
- **Open Forum**
- **Adjourn**

***Next meeting: April 9, 2026***

