

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
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April 16, 2019**VA ensures Veterans have same-day access to emergency mental health care**

WASHINGTON — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to provide the best mental health care access possible, VA is reminding Veterans that it offers all Veterans same-day access to emergency mental health care at any VA health care facility across the country.

"Providing same-day 24/7 access to mental health crisis intervention and support for Veterans, service members and their families is our top clinical priority," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "It's important that all Veterans, their family and friends know that help is easily available."

VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention is the national leader in making high-quality mental health care and suicide prevention resources available to Veterans through a full spectrum of outpatient, inpatient and telemental health services.

Additionally, VA has developed the [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#), which reflects the department's vision for a coordinated effort to prevent suicide among all service members and Veterans. This strategy maintains VA's focus on high-risk individuals in health care settings, while also adopting a broad public health approach to suicide prevention.

VA has supported numerous Veterans and has the capacity to assist more. In fiscal year (FY) 2018, 1.7 million Veterans received Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health services. These patients received more than 84,000 psychiatric hospital stays, about 41,700 residential stays and more than 21 million outpatient encounters.

Nationally, in the first quarter of FY 2019, 90% of new patients completed an appointment in a mental health clinic within 30 days of scheduling an appointment, and 96.8% of established patients completed a mental health appointment within 30 days of the day they requested. For FY 2018, 48% of initial, in-person Primary Care — Mental Health Integration (PC-MHI) encounters were on the same day as the patient's PC encounter. During the first quarter of FY 2019, 51% of initial, in-person PC-MHI encounters were on the same day as the patient's PC encounter.

Veterans in crisis — or those concerned about one — should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net.

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