

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Advancing Suicide Prevention Efforts Across VA

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Anchors of Hope



Anchor 1: 399 fewer Veterans died from suicide in 2019 than in 2018.

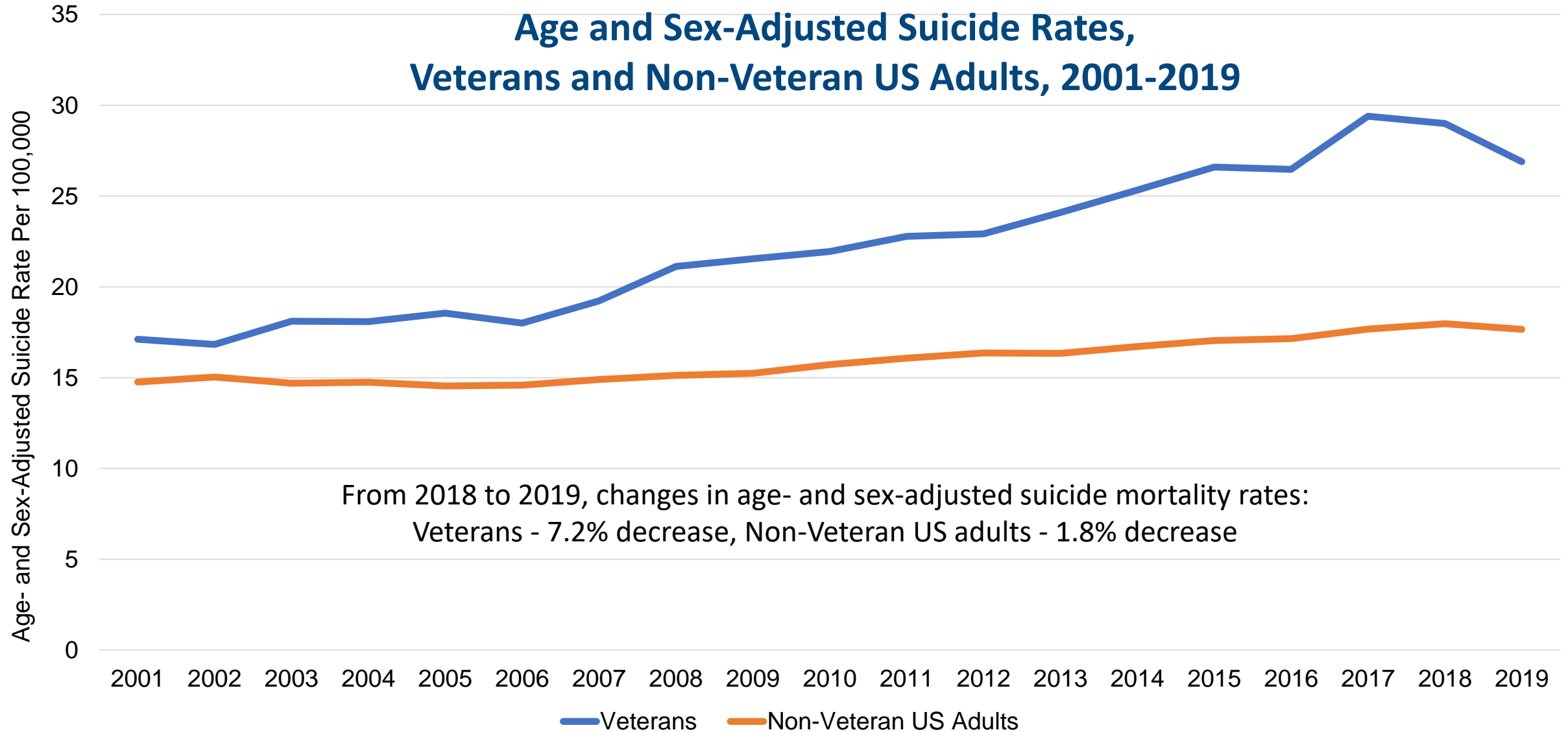
Anchor 2: From 2005 to 2018, identified Veteran suicides increased on average by 48 deaths per year. A reversal totaling 399 lives within one year is unprecedented, dating back to 2001.

Anchor 3: Decrease in the adjusted suicide rate for Veterans from 2018 to 2019 (7%) was larger than any observed for Veterans 2001 through 2018. Veteran rate of decrease (7.2%) exceeded by four times the non-Veteran population decrease (1.8%)

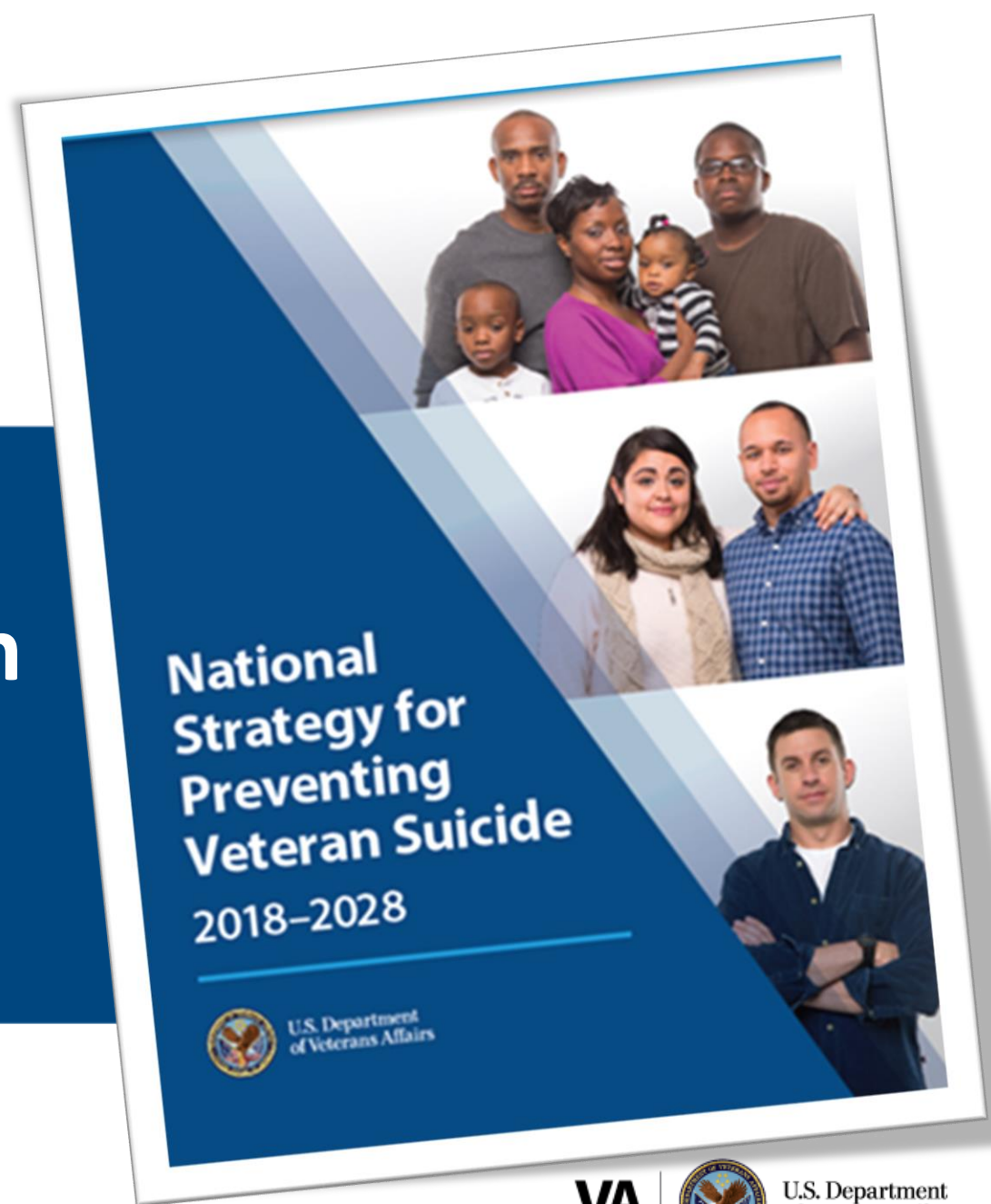
Anchor 4: There was a nearly 13% one-year (unadjusted) rate decrease for female Veterans, which represents the largest rate decrease for Women Veterans in 17 years.

Anchor 5: COVID-19-related data continues to emerge and clarify, but data thus far does not indicate an increase in Veteran suicide-related behaviors.

Age and Sex-Adjusted Suicide Rates, Veterans and Non-Veteran US Adults, 2001-2019



VA's Public Health Approach



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

1

Suicide is preventable.

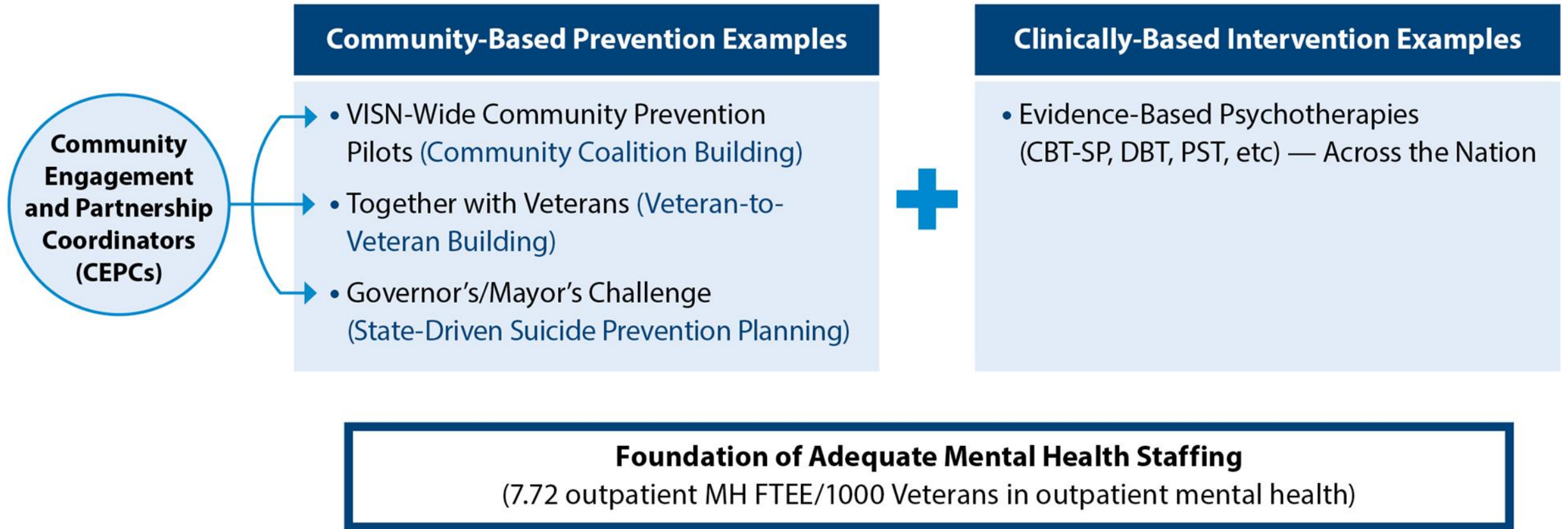
2

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

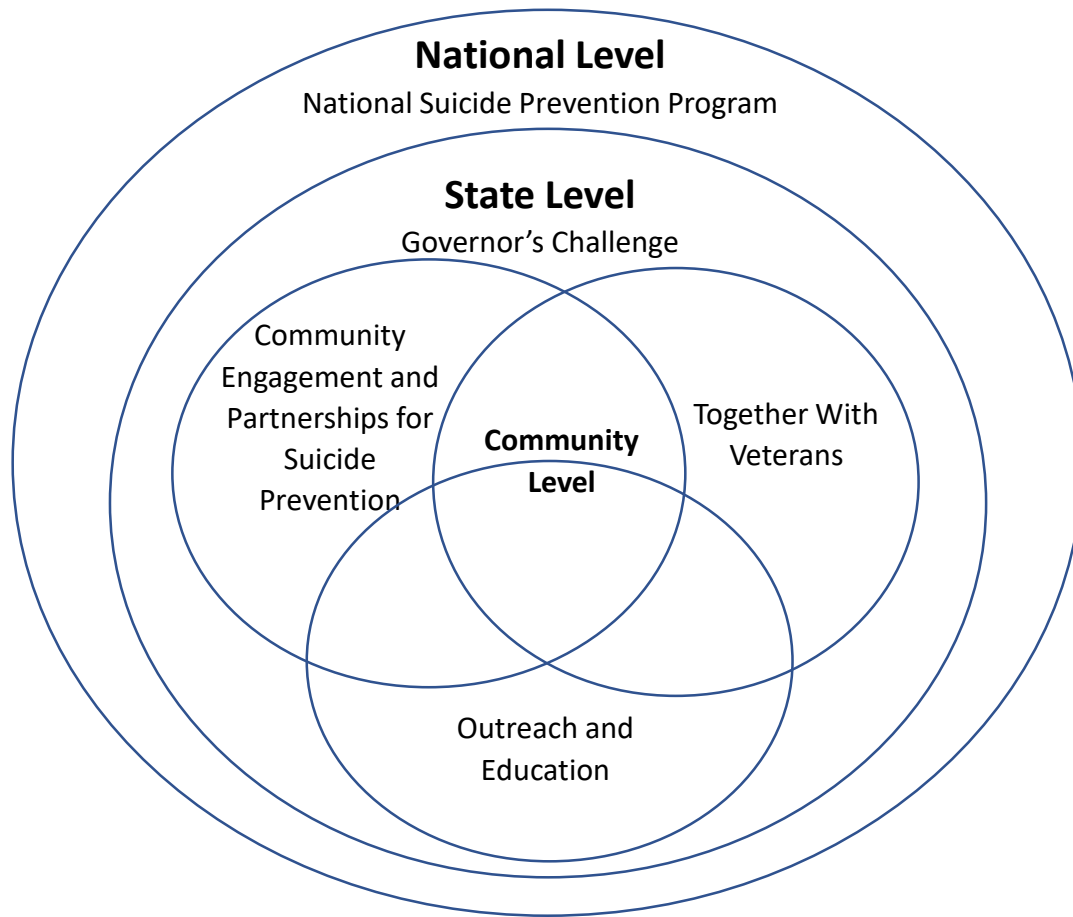
3

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.

Suicide Prevention 2.0



Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention Model



Unifying model, from national to community levels, for all community-based efforts to end Veteran suicide.

The Governor's Challenge

Together with Veterans

Community Engagement and Partnership for Suicide Prevention

Governor's Challenge States

2019

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Kansas
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- Texas
- Virginia

2020

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin

2021 new additions!

- Arkansas
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- Utah
- Wyoming

Partnership between VA and HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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Emerging Lines of Effort with Each of You



Identify Service Members, Veterans, and their Families and Screen for Suicide Risk

- Identifying Veterans — "Ask the Question" — enables culturally competent care and access to resources; allows community members, families, and community service providers to connect individuals to appropriate care
- Suicide risk screening in healthcare settings allows providers to recognize and prevent self-harm



Promote Connectedness and Improve Care Transitions

- Connectedness to others (including family members, co-workers, community organizations, and social institutions) is an important protective factor
- Providing caring contacts upon discharge from one setting to another can reduce suicide attempts and increase compliance with treatment recommendations



Increase Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning

- Limiting access to lethal means during periods of crisis can make it more likely that the person will delay or survive a suicide
- Completing a personal safety plan is a clinical intervention that can help individuals manage and decrease suicidal feelings and help them stay safe when these feelings reoccur

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Questions?
