

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention  
Frequently Asked Questions—2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report  
September 2021**

## **What is the 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report?**

The 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report includes findings from VA's most recent analysis of Veteran suicide data from 2001 to 2019. Also included in this release are suicide data sheets for each of the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and U.S. island territories.

VA conducts ongoing suicide surveillance to inform Veteran suicide prevention efforts. Since 2016, VA has generated annual reports regarding suicide mortality in the U.S. Veteran population, with comparisons to the non-Veteran U.S. adult population. This year's report examines Veteran mortality data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia for the period 2001 to 2019. This includes information regarding Veteran suicide counts, average number of suicide deaths per day and suicide rates. Information is reported overall and for specific Veteran subpopulations.

The report presents the most comprehensive information available regarding Veteran status, the Veteran population and suicide mortality, for all years examined. For this reason, the report findings update information included in previous years' reports.

## **What is different from the 2020 report?**

Last year's report provided information for the period 2005-2018. This year covers the period from 2001-2019. This year's report focuses on the overall Veteran population and is available earlier in the calendar year (the previous report came out in November 2020).

## **This report includes 2001-2004. Why were those years not included in last year's report?**

VA now uses the National Center for Health Statistics' Bridged-Race Population Estimates to estimate the U.S. non-Veteran adult general population for comparisons in the report. This source allows for consistent reporting for earlier years. VA continues to use the most current VetPop model as the source for Veteran population estimates.

## **Why did the number of Veteran suicides in 2005-2018 rise, compared to reporting last year?**

As noted above, each year VA uses the most current available information and works to enhance suicide ascertainment. As additional Veteran deaths are identified, VA updates reporting for prior years.



## Why does the report not include Veteran suicide deaths in 2020 or 2021?

The report is based on death certificate data that are currently only available through 2019. VA's most comprehensive source of Veteran suicide mortality data is the VA Mortality Data Repository (MDR). It is based on joint VA and Department of Defense (DoD) searches of the CDC National Center for Health Statistics' National Death Index (NDI).

## How is Veteran status defined in this report?

This report defines Veteran status as individuals who had activated federal military service and were no longer serving in the U.S. military. VA also separately presents yearly suicide counts of former Service members who were never federally activated.

## Which populations are examined in the report?

The report provides information on Veterans and non-Veteran U.S. adults (ages 18 and older), with reporting specific to Veterans by age, sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity.

## Does the report include state-level data?

In addition to the 2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, VA has released data sheets on state-level findings—including the number of suicide deaths among Veterans, suicide rates by age group, suicide deaths by method of suicide and comparisons between state data and regional and national data. The 2019 state data sheets are available at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/suicide\\_prevention/data.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/suicide_prevention/data.asp).

*If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, 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 to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).*