

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report?

The 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report presents the most recent analyses of Veteran suicide, including mortality data from 2001 through 2020. The report includes the most comprehensive information available regarding Veteran suicide, for all years examined. Information is presented overall and for Veteran subpopulations.

The report includes Veteran mortality data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Accompanying the report are suicide data sheets for each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. island territories.

The report presents information regarding Veteran suicide counts, the average number of suicide deaths per day, and suicide rates. Information is reported for the entire Veteran population and for Veteran subpopulations. The report and all accompanying resources are available at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/suicide_prevention/data.asp.

How does the 2022 report differ from the 2021 report?

The 2022 report is the first to examine national Veteran suicide mortality data during 2020, the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 report includes information regarding method-specific suicide rates (e.g., firearm suicide mortality) and suicide among Veteran subpopulations related to Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration contacts (e.g., by diagnosis, rurality, VHA priority eligibility groups). The report provides information regarding categories of prior VA contact by Veterans who died from suicide in 2005 and 2020 and details on leading causes of death among Veterans in 2019 and 2020.

Why does the report not include national Veteran suicide data for 2021 and 2022?

The report is based on national death certificate data currently available through 2020. Data is from the VA/Department of Defense (DoD) Mortality Data Repository, which is based on joint annual VA and DoD searches of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Death Index (NDI).

How is Veteran status defined?

This report defines Veteran status as individuals who had activated federal military service for other than training and who were no longer serving in the U.S. military. Veteran status is assessed per VA and DoD sources.

What 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. The report also presents information on Veteran suicide in the first year following separation from active military service (overall and by branch of service).

Why did the number of Veteran suicides in 2001-2019 rise, compared to reporting last year?

As seen in most reporting years, additional deaths were identified across the reporting period and are included in this report. This year's updates were smaller than what was observed for the 2021 Annual Report. Generally, data adjustments are the result of ongoing updates to the data sources used in preparing the search list sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's NDI for matching.

What are some of the key findings in the report?

Veteran Suicide: A National Concern

- 44,298 U.S. adults died in 2020 from suicide. This included 6,146 Veteran suicides.
- The unadjusted suicide rate for Veterans was 31.7 per 100,000 in 2020.
- Among Veterans between ages 18–44, suicide was the second-leading cause of death.
- The average number of Veteran suicides per day rose from 16.4 in 2001 to 16.8 in 2020. It was highest in 2018 (18.6 per day).
- In each year from 2001 through 2020, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates of Veterans exceeded those of non-Veteran U.S. adults.
 - The differential in adjusted rates was smallest in 2002, when the Veteran rate was 12.1% higher than for non-Veterans, and largest in 2017, when the Veteran rate was 66.2% higher. In 2020, the rate for Veterans was 57.3% higher than that of non-Veteran adults.

Decreased Suicide Rates in 2019 and 2020

- After years of increases, the number and rate of suicide deaths fell in 2019 and 2020 for Veterans, for non-Veteran U.S. adults, and for U.S. adults overall.
- From 2001 through 2020, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates for Veterans peaked in 2018 and then fell in 2019 and 2020. From 2018 to 2020, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates for Veterans fell by 9.7%.
- Among non-Veteran U.S. adults, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates also peaked in 2018 and fell in 2019 and 2020. From 2018 to 2020, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates for non-Veteran adults fell by 5.5%.



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. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text **838255**.