



# Serving Veterans, Saving Lives: The Veteran's Crisis Line

An Example from VA Puget Sound, Washington State

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**Military and Veterans Crisis Line**

**Call: 988 Press 1    Text: 838255**



**Ayuda En Español**

**Llame: 988    Presione: 2**



**LGBTQ+ Youth Community**

**Call: 988 Press 3    Text: "START" to 678-678**



**Native and Strong Lifeline**

**Call: 988 Press 4**





 Dial 988 then Press 1

 Chat

or Text 838255

[How We Help](#)  [Signs of Crisis](#) [Resources and Support](#)  [About](#) 

# 24/7, confidential crisis support

for Veterans and their loved ones

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You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.



# How It Works

1



Available 24/7:  
Dial 988 then Press 1, chat  
live, or text 838255.

2



A caring, qualified  
responder will listen and  
help.

3



Your call is free and  
confidential, and you  
decide how much  
information to share.

4



Support doesn't end with  
your conversation. Our  
responders connect you  
with resources that can  
help when you're in  
distress.



Founded the National Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline

2007



Launched online chat

2009



Introduced Veterans Crisis Line branding

2010



Launched text 838255

2011



Increased number of responders by 50%

2012



Opened second and third call centers; Increased staff

2016 & 2018



Started Caring Letters program

2020



Launched Peer Support Outreach Center

2021



Launched Dial 988 then Press 1

2022



More than **7.1 million** calls



More than **327,000** texts



More than **862,000** chats



More than **1.3 million** referrals

*to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators*

More than **287,000** dispatches of emergency services



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# What makes the VCL different

More than 600 Suicide Prevention Coordinators nationwide.

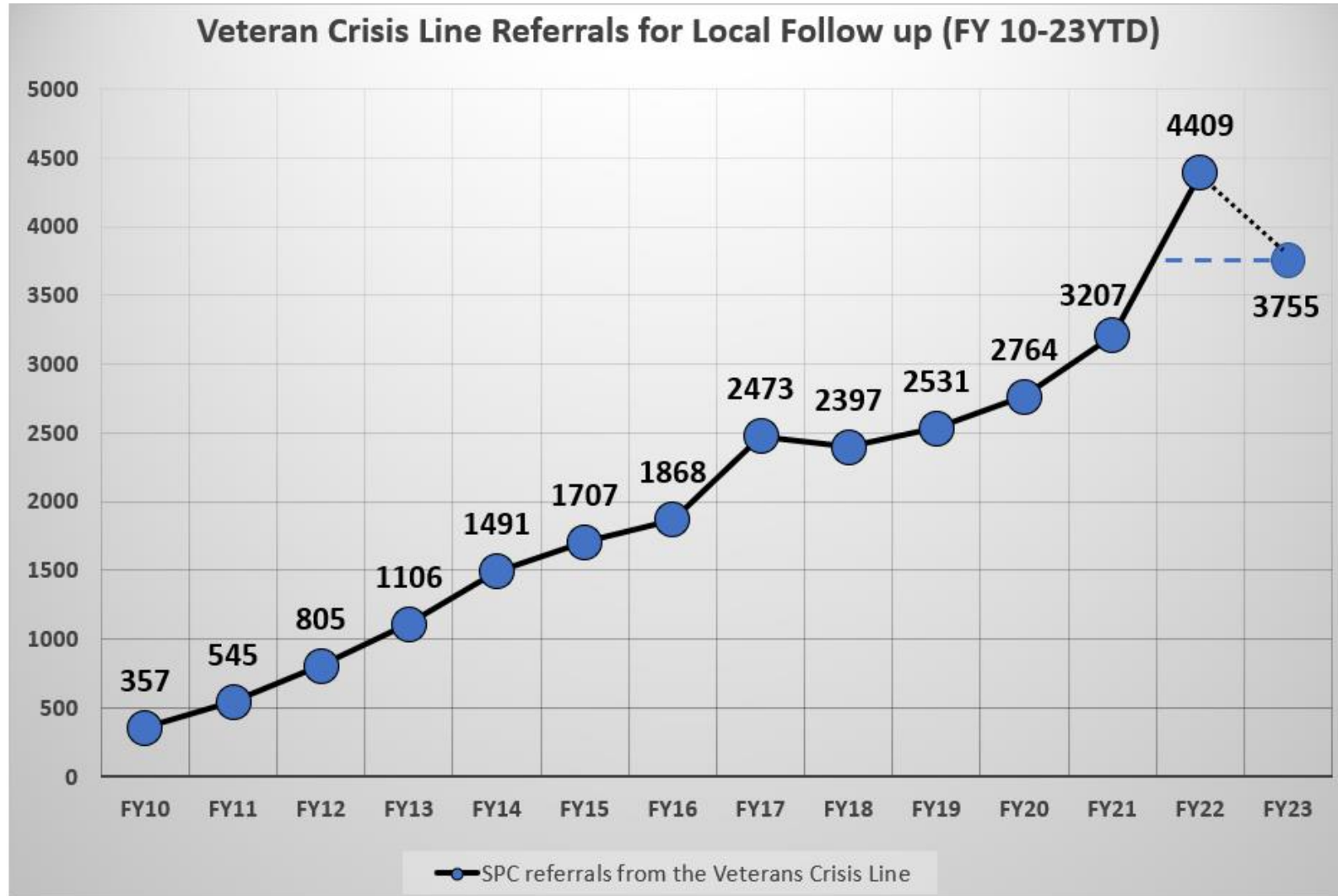




Specific Example: VA Puget Sound



# Veteran's Crisis Line Referrals for Local Follow Up



\*Current estimates are that only about 20% of VCL call volumes are forwarded to the local VA (at Veteran's request or due to an emergency situation).

# Role of the Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Ensures crisis resolution

Connect with ongoing behavioral health care

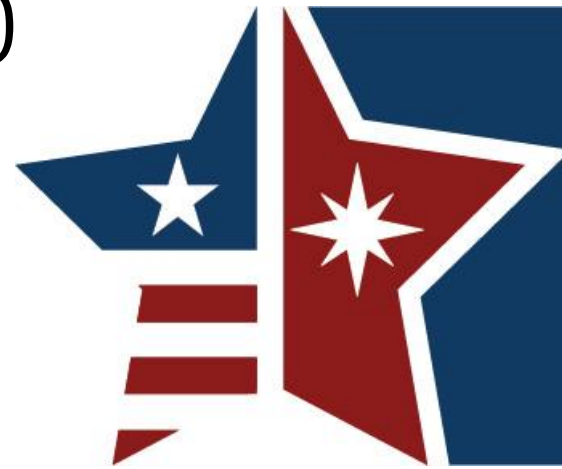
Ensure reporting of suicide related behavioral events

Determine clinical need for activation of High risk for suicide flag

Manage other programs that identify at-risk Veterans, such as REACH VET

Provide community education, outreach and training about use of VCL and VA

# Suicide Prevention 2.0



VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge  
to Prevent Suicide Among SMVF

- Recognition that:
  1. Clinical, crisis intervention is a necessary, but not sufficient strategy for reducing the frequency of Veteran suicide.
  2. Suicide prevention occurs well ahead of the moment of crisis where stressors are accumulating and coping ability begins to start breaking down.
- Public health as a missing part of the equation
  1. No wrong door approach.
  2. A network of Federal, State, and Community partners working toward a shared goal.
- Governor's Challenges and Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinators (CEPCs)

# Gov Challenge Proclamation

- Provides an organizational and accountability structure for the Governor's Challenge.
- Legitimizes the effort across state agencies and between State, Federal, and Community partners.
- Provides stability, and reassurance for those who have seen previous efforts fail.



# Washington State Gov. Challenge

- Three priority areas shared across all Governor's Challenges:
  1. Identifying Service Members, Veterans and their family Members and screening for suicide risk.
  2. Promoting connectedness and improving care transitions.
  3. Increasing Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning – Putting time and space between an individual in crisis and the means they are planning to use to end their life.



# Focused 988/ Governor's Challenge and WA State efforts

Public Works Legislation

1<sup>st</sup> Responder efforts

Gatekeeper Trainings for VSOs

Strength2Rise Campaign

Safer Homes, Suicide Aware



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



# VA S.A.V.E. Training

Supporting Our Veterans



# Thank you

**Larry D. Pruitt, Ph.D.**

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VA Puget Sound Healthcare System

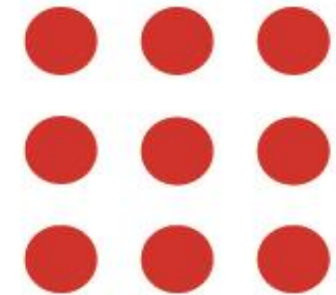
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# Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988 then**  
**PRESS 1**