



# Preventing MN Veteran Suicide Fact Sheet

**Veteran suicide is a tragedy that cannot be ignored. Help us work to end it.**

## In Minnesota:

- More than 100 Veterans died by suicide each year between 2014 and 2019.
- In 2020, we lost 100 Veterans to suicide.
- These Veterans were among 723 *Minnesotans* who died by suicide in 2020.
- This U.S. number of deaths by suicide dropped 5% from 2019 to 2020. In Minnesota, we saw a 7% lower rate of suicide deaths.
- Although this is a significant downward deviation, it is important to note that *both non-Veteran and Veteran* suicide rates are likely underreported, possibly by up to 20 percent.
- The majority of *Veteran* deaths by suicide were male using a firearm, which is consistent with overall MN and national data.
- An equal number of Veterans die from suicide in the outstate areas as in the seven-county metro area.
- While Minnesota Veteran death by suicide and the overall Minnesota population death by suicide decreased in 2020, the deaths from alcohol and drug overdoses surpassed suicides.

Year	State	MN Veteran	MN Veteran Suicides
2014	686	113	16.5%
2015	726	102	14%
2016	745	116	15.6%
2017	783	115	14.7%
2018	739	103	13.9%
2019	830	102	12.3%
2020	723	100	13.8%

## Minnesota’s Veteran Suicide Prevention Team Efforts:

- The Governor’s Challenge, which began in 2019, is a collaboration of public and private partners working together to prevent suicide among Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF).
- To move the Governor’s Challenge and other efforts forward, MDVA has hired two full-time staff: Veterans Suicide Prevention Coordinator (Kristi Charles) and Veterans Suicide Prevention Liaison (Krysta Stanelas).
- We are leveraging the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinators (located in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Fargo and Sioux Falls) who work with communities within their region to develop suicide prevention coalitions.
- We recognize Minnesota statute 145.56/Suicide Prevention that designates the Commissioner of Health as responsible for refining, coordinating and implementing the state’s suicide prevention plan.

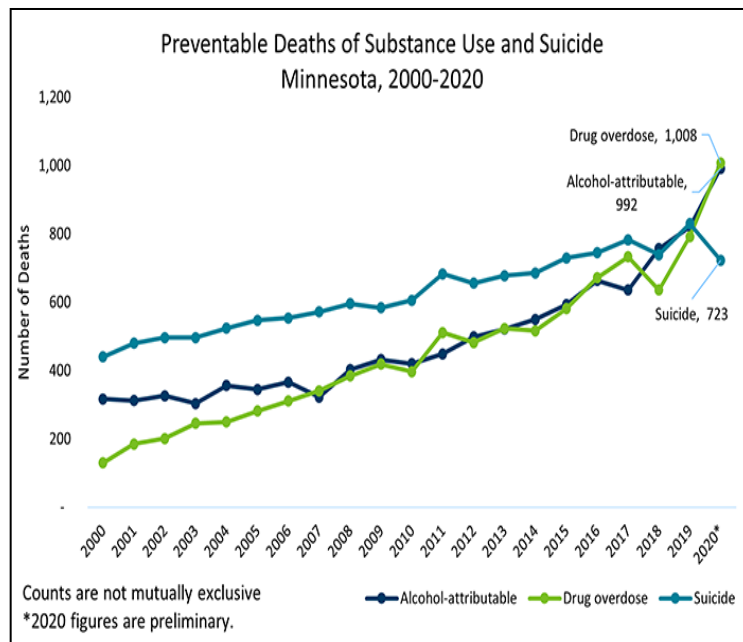
## Suicide Prevention Strategies:

- Provide Veterans with a sense of purpose
- Connect Veterans to other people



**Veteran Suicide Prevention Efforts:**

Priority Area	Actions
Identify Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) and screen for suicide risk	Developed pilot program in a non-veteran hospital to implement ATQ (Ask the Question): Have you or a family member ever served in the military?
Promote connectedness and improve care transitions	Outreach to the entire Minnesota Veteran community, especially those who are not currently connected with services and provide them with an alternative.
Lethal means safety and safety planning	Distributed thousands of gun locks with information about the Veterans Crisis Line and safety planning, to get them the services they need.



**Education and Training:**

- SAVE Education - <https://save.org/what-we-do/education/>
- Mental Health First Aid classes for MDVA and LinkVet Staff - <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
- CALM training (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means) to providers who serve SMVFs - <https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/calm-counseling-access-lethal-means>
- Free Access to PsychArmor education with tracking for the Governor’s Challenge - <https://psycharmor.org/>



PsychArmor  
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**Support:**

- 1-888-LinkVet connects Minnesota Veterans and their families to resources
- 1-800-273-8255 press 1 is the Veteran Crisis Line number
- Or text 741-741 for support

