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VA data: Suicide rate for Alabama veterans up, especially for young veterans

BY ELIZABETH PATTON ON OCTOBER 8, 2018

SLIDER STATE

Last month, the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** (VA) officials released national and state-level findings **from its most recent analysis** of Veteran suicide data, which showed an average of two and half Alabama veterans died by suicide each week from 2015-2016. The research also revealed Alabama veterans are dying by suicide at a higher rate than the national average.

The VA's figures, which are the most recent year available, reveal 34.2 Alabama veterans per 100,000 died by suicide in 2016, whereas the national veteran suicide rate was only 30.1 per 100,000. Among their findings, 18-24 years old Alabamians committed suicide more often than any other age bracket at 52.8 per 100,000. Meanwhile only 45 per 100,000 non-veterans in the same age bracket committed suicided.

Alabama Veteran Suicide Deaths, 2016

Sex	Veteran Suicides
Total	128
Male	120-130
Female	<10

To protect confidentiality, suicide death counts are presented in ranges when the number of deaths in any one category was lower than 10.

[Via the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs]

In the 2016, veterans account for roughly 17 percent of all Alabama suicides. Among those suicides, an overwhelming 81.3 percent of veterans used firearms, whereas the national average for firearm use in suicide was only 51.4 percent.

The analysis is part of VA's ongoing examination of non-Veteran and Veteran death records that is being used to evaluate and improve VA's Suicide Prevention Program.

"Suicide prevention remains VA's highest clinical priority. One life lost to suicide is one too many," said VA Secretary **Robert Wilkie**.

The report also found:

- There were more than 6,000 Veteran suicides each year from 2008 to 2016.
- In 2016, the suicide rate was 1.5 times greater for Veterans than for non-Veteran adults, after adjusting for age and gender.
- The suicide rate for Veterans ages 18-34 increased substantially, from 40.4 suicide deaths per 100,000 population in 2015 to 45 suicide deaths per 100,000 population in 2016.
- After adjusting for age, in 2016, the suicide rate for women Veterans was 1.8 times greater than the suicide rate for non-Veteran women.

If you are a veteran or are concerned about one, call the national **Veterans Crisis Line** 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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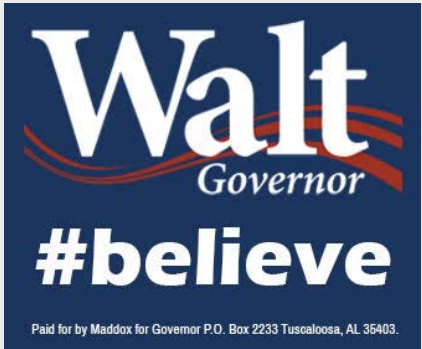
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