

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Veterans Crisis Line Overview

Presentation for: Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

Presented by: Kyle Inhofe, Deputy Executive Director

Date of briefing: July 1, 2024

Veterans Crisis Line (VCL)

- VCL is available 24/7 to connect Veterans and service members in crisis as well as their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders through **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text [838255](https://text.838255.com).
- On July 16, 2022, **Dial 988 then Press 1** was implemented to help Veterans connect more quickly with caring, qualified responders through the VCL.



VCL Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision

- The VCL will always provide supportive, timely, high-quality crisis intervention and connect service members or Veterans to the services of their choice to ensure that they never struggle alone.

Mission

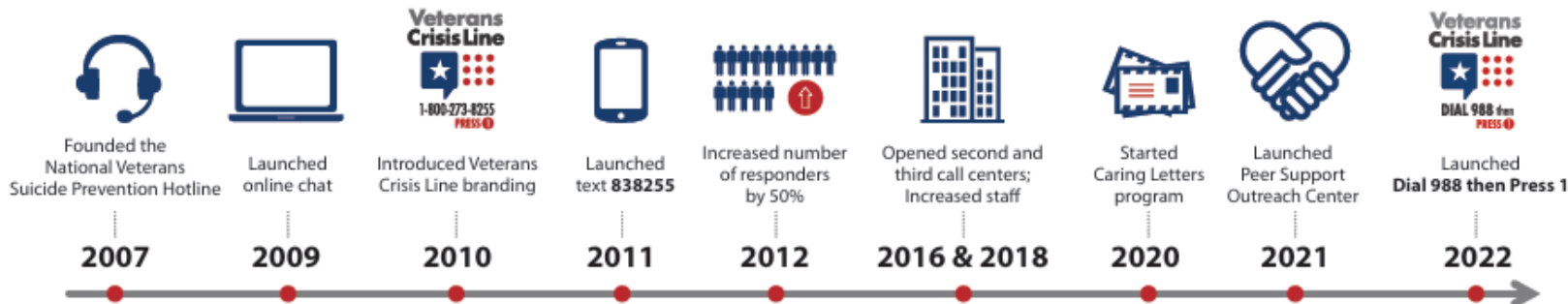
- To provide 24/7, world-class suicide prevention and crisis intervention services to Veterans, service members, and their family members.

Values

- Respect
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Safety
- Hope
- Excellence

About VCL

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource available to any Veteran, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA. Care does not end when the conversation is over. The Veterans Crisis Line can connect Veterans to their local suicide prevention coordinators, who will follow up and coordinate care.



More than
7.7 million
calls



More than
377,000
texts



More than
941,000
chats



More than
1.5 million
referrals

to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

More than
325,000
dispatches of
emergency services

04/2024



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What is 988 then Press 1?

- The Veterans Crisis Line's easy-to-remember number—**Dial 988 then Press 1**—helps Veterans, service members, National Guard, and Reserve members, and those who support them reach crisis support quickly and efficiently.
- Signed into law in 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.
- All telephone service providers in the U.S. activated the number on July 16, 2022.



VCL Workload

Friday, July 15, 2022
Start Date

Sunday, June 16, 2024
End Date

Service	Offered	% Change (*)	% Change Last Year (**)
Phone	1,626,112	16.18%	12.19%
Chat	213,974	16.22%	10.24%
Text	135,399	62.82%	25.06%

* **% Change** = The percentage of change since 9-8-8 baseline. Baseline averages day of week values for the months of April, May and June leading up to 9-8-8. Public Service Announcement for 9-8-8 impacted July and the month is excluded.

** **% Change Last Year** = The percentage of change comparing day of week averages for the same month one year prior. The Afghanistan events that occurred in Aug 2021 will impact Month comparisons for August and September.



VCL Workload and Key Performance Indicators



Sunday, October 01,
2023

Start Date

Sunday, June 16,
2024

End Date

KPIs

	Phone	Chat	Text	Total
Answered	624,916	84,507	52,425	761,848
Response Time (s)	9.20	28.09	26.54	12.49
% change from 988 baseline	22.20%	27.07%	72.73%	

- **Response Times (s)** - Measures the time in queue and ringing until picked up by a responder for phones. Measures the time until the responder submits their first response (chat/text received, read, interpreted, reply drafted, reply submitted.)
- **% of Change from previous year** is based on comparing the prior year week to the current year week with the same date range, but not the same days of the week for Offered Phone, Chat, and Text.
- **% Change from 988 Baseline** is based on comparing the weekly offered to 9-8-8 baseline day of week averages for the months of April, May, and June in 2022 leading up to 9-8-8. Public Service Announcement for 9-8-8 impacted July and the month is excluded.



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Beyond the Call

Caring Letters

- Evidence-based intervention for suicide prevention found to reduce the rate of suicide death, attempts, and ideation
- Focused on expanding critical crisis intervention work to help Veterans continue to feel supported and engaged
- Reaches approximately 90,000 identifiable VHA-using Veterans annually with eight letters over the course of a year after their call to VCL
- Since June 2020, VCL has mailed over 2.3 million letters to over 310,000 Veterans, with almost 170,000 Veterans completing the full 12-month intervention



Beyond the Call

Peer Support Outreach Call Center (PSOC)

- Mission: To provide support, hope and recovery-oriented services to Veterans who are identified at an increased risk for suicide
- Care provided via telephone services with several calls to identified Veterans over a course of months
- Staffed by VHA Peer Specialists who are Veterans that are in recovery, under supervision of licensed independent providers
- Veterans who receive a VCL emergency dispatch or facility transport plan are referred by VCL to PSOC for outreach by a Peer Support Specialist



Beyond the Call

Lethal Means Safety (LMS) Pilot

- In June 2022, VCL implemented a 14-month LMS Pilot
- Reached historically difficult to reach Veterans (homebound, live in rural areas, or those who have other barriers to accessing care)
- A qualitative evaluation was conducted by Dr. Sara Landes:
 - Responders felt the Pilot was easy to incorporate into their work
 - Veterans used, or planned to use, the interventions sent to them
 - Veterans felt cared for and their trust in the VCL/VA was boosted



Did You Know?

VCL services matter

- Veterans who contact the VCL are at increased risk of death by suicide, with a rate notably higher than that of the general Veteran population (Hannemann, 2020).
- Callers were over **5 times** more likely to have **less distress** at the end of the call than at the beginning (Britton et al, 2022).
- Callers **almost 5 times** more likely to have **less suicidal ideation** at the end of the call than at the beginning (Britton et al, 2022).
- Callers were **91% less likely to have suicidal urgency** at the end of the call than at the beginning (Britton et al, 2022).
- 83% of callers reported **feeling better** following their call (Rasmussen et al., 2017).
- Veterans more likely to **engage in care** after receiving a responder referral (Britton et al., 2016).



Questions?



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