

# **National Strategies for the Prevention of Veteran Suicide**

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Monday, October 28, 2019

El Dorado, AR

Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs  
& House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative  
and Military Affairs Joint Meeting

Disclaimer: Information provided is based on my understanding and expertise. It is not necessarily the policies and procedures of the VA.

# Suicide

- **Suicide is a global phenomenon (WHO)**
- 18<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death worldwide in 2016
  
- **National public health problem** (as defined by CDC)
- 10<sup>th</sup>-leading cause of death in the U.S.
- 45,000 deaths per year (up almost 30 percent since 1999)
- Costs \$69 billion annually
  
- **Veteran populations at risk**
- Younger Veterans
- Women Veterans
- Veterans in a period of transition
- Veterans with exposure to suicide
- Veterans with access to lethal means
- “Other than honorable” discharges

# **Implementing Strategic Directions**

## **Healthy and Empowered Veterans, Families, and Communities**

Work with community partners and policymakers to promote resources for Veterans and to promote mental health awareness and treatment.

## **Clinical and Community Preventive Services**

Share resources, training opportunities, interventions, and lethal means safety resources with providers outside VA and with clergy, first responders, law enforcement officials, and community partners.

## **Treatment, Recovery, and Support Services**

Work with local emergency departments and hospitals to promote Veteran suicide prevention resources and to ensure continuity of care for all Veterans admitted to an inpatient mental health unit.

## **Surveillance, Research, and Evaluation**

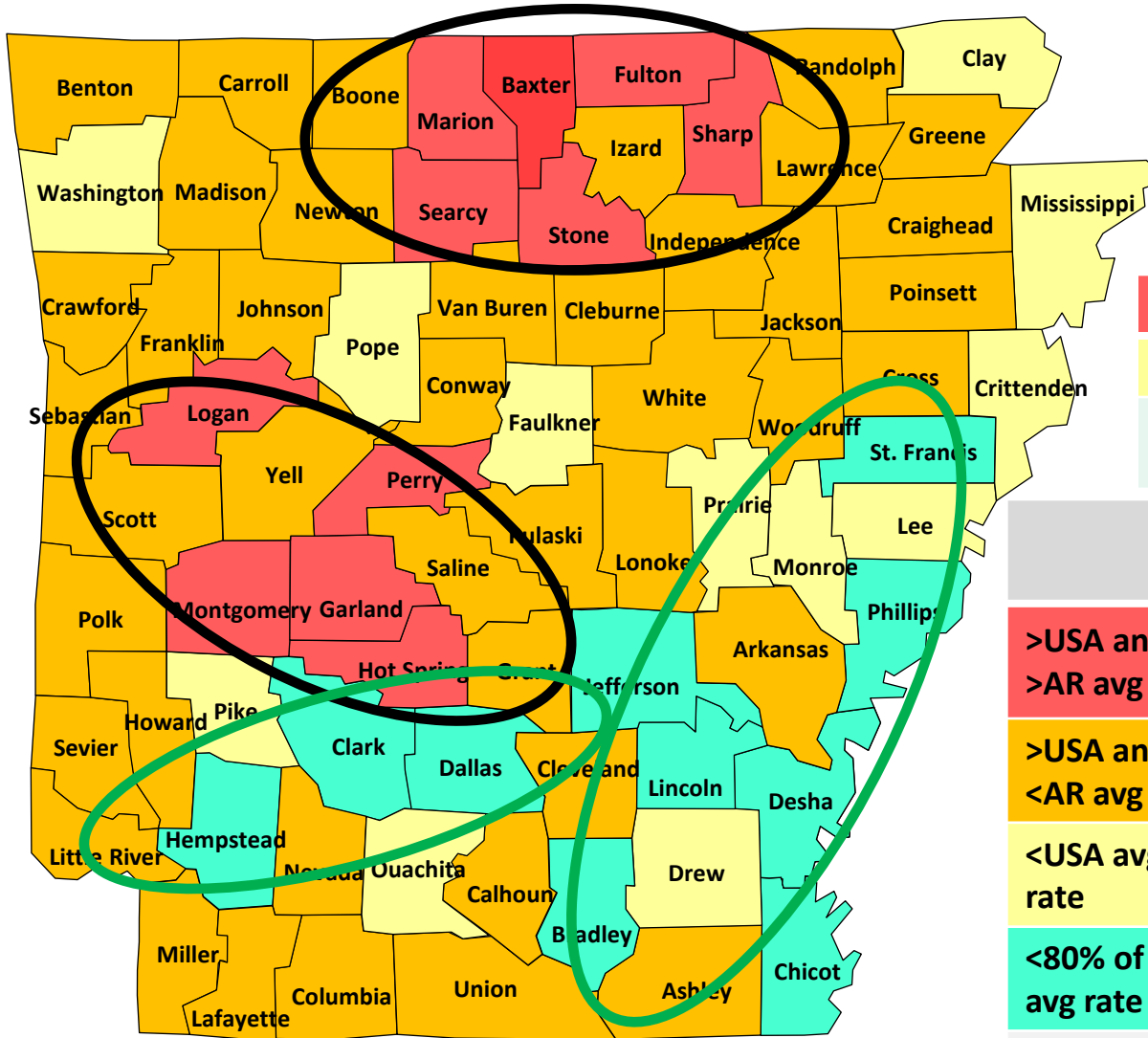
Share the VA National Suicide Data Report and National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide with community partners.



Me + Self Care + Professional Care + Community = Whole Health

# Focusing Community Engagement

Arkansas Counties by CDC Suicide Rates: 1999-2017



What can we learn from resilient communities and apply in those experiencing our highest suicide rates?

Arkansas Avg Rate	20.8 per 100k
USA Avg Rate	14.0 per 100k
CDC: 1999-2017 Final Data Published 12/6/2018	

	High Limit	Low Limit	Counties
>USA and >AR avg rates	—	≥20.8	11
>USA and <AR avg rates	<20.8	≥14.0	42
<USA avg rate	<14.0	≥11.0	12
<80% of USA avg rate	<11.2	—	10
			75