

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
May 9-10, 2018**

**Resolution No. 20: Suicide Prevention Program**

**Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

**Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission**

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) an average of 20 veterans died by suicide each day in 2014, and veterans accounted for 18 percent of all deaths by suicide among U.S. adults and constituted 8.5 percent of the U.S. adult population; and

WHEREAS, In March 2013, the Pentagon reported more soldiers were dying overseas by committing suicide than from combat wounds, about one a day; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, there was one suicide every 17 hours among all active duty, reserve and National Guard members, according to figures gathered from each branch; and

WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been over 128,000 deployed veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) between 2000-2014; and

WHEREAS, Fewer than half of veterans who report symptoms of combat-related PTSD receive the care they need, and of those who do start treatment, between 20-50 percent do not finish; and

WHEREAS, The Vietnam experience demonstrates that the price of not treating PTSD is paid in suicide, substance abuse, homelessness, unemployment, divorce, and domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act of 2014 was passed into law for the purpose of increasing access to mental health services through peer support and community outreach, and to boost the accountability of mental health care by requiring an annual evaluation of VA mental health and suicide-prevention programs; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion uses System Worth Saving (SWS) site visits to cross-pollinate best practices, identify gaps of care, and evaluate overall performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration Medical Centers and Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Offices; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2018, That The American Legion establish a Suicide Prevention Program and align the program under the TBI/PTSD Committee; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the program be charged with examining recent trends of veteran suicide as it relates to traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, etc. and analyzing best practices in veteran suicide prevention not currently used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the purpose of encouraging aforementioned government agencies to adopt them; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion will conduct a biennial mental health survey in an effort to more accurately assess the veteran experience with traditional and non-traditional mental health resources; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That the System Worth Saving Mail Out Questionnaire include an assessment of each site's emergency and non-emergency mental health processes; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That the TBI/PTSD Committee submit an annual report to the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission, and the National Executive Committee meeting in October, highlighting the results of the mental health survey and other initiatives towards suicide awareness at the VA and within Legion departments.**