NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 4-5, 2022
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 14: Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Programs
Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, In their National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide report, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) noted that in 2019, 6,261 veterans died by suicide which was a 52.3 percent higher rate than non-veterans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The rate of veteran suicide decreased in 2019 from 2018 and 2017 levels, respectively, according to VA's 2021 National Veterans Suicide Prevention Annual Report; and

WHEREAS, The current rate of veteran suicide, reflecting thousands of lives lost each year, warrants greater attention from VA, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and organizations that serve veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA is advancing a public health approach to reduce deaths by suicide among the greatest number of veterans possible; and

WHEREAS, Increased coordination of suicide prevention activities among cooperating partners could help improve services and outcomes for veterans, while making suicide prevention efforts more sustainable in the long term; and

WHEREAS, VA indicated that there remained much more to be known and understood about the dynamics and intervention factors of suicide prevention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 4-5, 2022, That The American Legion urges Congress to provide oversight and accountability of the Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) Suicide Prevention Programs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA and other collaborating organizations conduct research on non-VA health care encounters for the purposes of developing, testing, informing, and evaluating community-based efforts to reach veterans outside of VA; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA and other collaborating organizations conduct research to evaluate the harms of current crisis responses, particularly among high-risk veteran subpopulations to identify novel solutions for responding to crises and to evaluate the effectiveness of promising new approaches; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That relevant data, including geographic or demographic data collected in the effort to identify at-risk individuals and/or facilities be shared publicly to improve the suicide prevention readiness of the surrounding community.