ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
August 30, 31, September 1, 2022

Resolution No. 32: Behavioral Health Autopsy Program Updates
Origin: Minnesota
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
(As Amended)

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Behavioral Health Autopsy Program (BHAP) is a program managed by VA's VISN 2 Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention initiated in November 2012 VHA Memorandum, 2012-12-11, Behavioral Autopsy Program Implementation; and

WHEREAS, It is used to systematically collect both quantitative and qualitative information related to all veteran deaths by suicide reported to VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, This includes the deaths of veterans who were not registered in, enrolled in, or otherwise receiving VA care, so long as they are suspected to have died by suicide within a VA facility's catchment area; and

WHEREAS, BHAP uses a three-pronged system to increase VA's knowledge of the characteristics and contexts of suicide on the national level, and

WHEREAS, BHAP Chart Analysis Tool (BHAP form) is a comprehensive review of a veteran's Electronic Health Record (EHR) to identify contributory factors to suicide, such as psychosocial stressors and diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, BHAP Family Interview Program conducted by BHAP team members using the Family Interview Tool-Contact Form (FIT-C form) with bereaved family members to introduce and explain the formal interview program and request their participation to understand the circumstances impacting the veteran's life in the time before the death; and

WHEREAS, Reviews of care by Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC's), consist of interviews by a BHAP team member discussing a SPC's perspective of suicide prevention initiatives and possible areas for improvement, including a veteran's death by suicide, identified difficulties, problems or barriers the veteran may have experienced in his/her care, suggested actions that may have helped prevent the veteran's suicide, and any direct action the SPC might have taken because of the care review; and

WHEREAS, SPCs are responsible for completing the BHAP Chart Analysis Tool (BHAP form) within 30 days of becoming aware of a veteran suicide or suspected Veteran suicide; and

WHEREAS, All information collected for BHAP is considered privileged and confidential under the provisions of 38 U.S. Code § 5705 Confidentiality of Medical Quality-Assurance Records; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to amend the current Behavioral Health Autopsy Program (BHAP) form to include a section for veterans that only received primary care service that includes questions on diagnosis, symptoms, pain management and last clinic seen at VA health care systems; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA enter into an agreement with local state Department of Health for sharing of all state BHAP reports without charges and trends or patterns obtained by the BHAP; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That this report, minus personally identifiable information (PII), be made available to organizations conducting suicide prevention research, to further reduce veteran suicides.