



Media Release

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Contact:

Helen Chavez, Communications Director

Cell: (213) 453-4316

Office: (213) 974-5555

L.A. County Supervisors Tackle Veteran Suicide Prevention

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a [motion](#) today authored by Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Sheila Kuehl that aims to decrease the number of veteran decedents by suicide. As a result, a newly chartered L.A. County Veteran Suicide Review Team will implement a data-driven and collaborative death review process to collect data, analyze veteran suicides, identify gaps in service, and understand opportunities to enhance support structures.

“We have to do more to prevent this terrible loss of life among the men and women from our County who have courageously answered the call of duty,” said **Supervisor Kathryn Barger**. “Forming the collaborative Veteran Suicide Review Team will bring many benefits, including a case review process that will spot trends, challenges and opportunities to better support our veterans in their communities. We can’t turn a blind eye to this crisis. It won’t go away or get better on its own.”

The motion cites data from a recent [report](#) completed by the Department of Mental Health and the County’s Chief Information Office in January 2022 that found a 16% increase in L.A. County veteran suicides from 2017 to 2018 – a figure that is double the State’s 8% veteran suicide rate increase for the same period.

“It is a tragic fact that the incidence of veteran suicide continues to rise,” said **Supervisor Sheila Kuehl**. “It is critical that we do more to understand this phenomenon so we can better meet the needs of veterans who have mental health issues and prevent these tragic deaths. This motion moves us into a year-long process to make recommendations for policy and programming changes so we can successfully reduce the number of veterans who take their own lives.”

The initiative will bridge the gap between local, state, and federal governments in

order to save their lives.

“Suicide within the veteran community is a challenge that strikes at the heart of the American collective that requires an ‘all in’ collective solution,” said L.A. County Director of Mental Health, **Dr. Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.** “The Veteran Suicide Review Team developed under the leadership of our Board of Supervisors is an unprecedented example of such an approach in bringing together veterans and multiple county departments alongside city, state and federal government to improve our understanding of root causes and system solutions. Proactive data collection and analysis are critical to inform our practices and policies with a focus on prevention, intervention and postvention strategies. It has been an honor to help elevate the need for this collective process and now see it come to fruition.”

The Board of Supervisors also approved the new Veteran Suicide Review Team’s charter, scope of work and procedures.

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