



Jesse Brown VA Medical Center *News and Announcements*

The VA has numerous tools in the fight against Veteran suicide. You are probably familiar with the Veteran Crisis Line, and are probably also aware that each facility has staff dedicated specifically to the prevention of suicide. However, one of the newest tools that we have in the fight against Veteran suicide is called REACH VET.

REACH VET is based on a program developed by investigators in VHA and the National Institute of Mental Health. They created a predictive model that allows calculation of the statistical risks of suicide and related adverse outcomes on the basis of clinical and administrative data. REACH VET is supported by VA senior leadership as part of establishing that suicide prevention remains the top clinical priority.

Each month at Jesse Brown VA, we receive a list of Veterans who represent the top 0.1% of statistical risk. These Veterans, over the next 30 days, have a risk of suicide that is 33 times greater than the average VA patient. Additionally, these Veterans have a risk of suicide attempts that is 81 times greater than the average VA patient, and are also at increased risk for a host of negative outcomes including medical and psychiatric hospitalization, death from illness, and death by accident.

Once a Veteran has been identified via REACH Vet, our task is to reevaluate the care that is being provided to see if any elements are missing. Additionally, we then reach out to the Veteran to get their impression of the care that they are receiving, and to see if there are any elements that they feel are missing. The outreach is an opportunity to further assist the Veteran, find out how they are doing at the present time, and connect them to needed services.

By engaging Veterans early, the goal is to decrease the likelihood that more serious problems will develop later. The REACH VET program has proven a decrease in the percentage of missed appointments, a decrease in hospitalizations, and a lower rate of mortality.

Carlos Anchondo, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, has been the REACH VET Coordinator at Jesse Brown VA since the program was initially rolled out in November 2016. This initiative has made such a difference in the lives of the Veterans that have went through this program and improved their clinical care.