



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month *Wisconsin Veterans Can Benefit***

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, concerned about the rising rate of veteran suicides, is developing an initiative to assist veterans to find the hope and help they need in order to eliminate veteran suicide.

“With the increasing occurrence of suicide among military veterans, it is important that we understand the challenges veterans face, how they react to them and assist them in dealing with their issues,” said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos.

This September 2016 is known as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, which promotes resources and awareness around the issues of suicide prevention.

Scocos said, “While we must always be focused on this critical issue, Suicide Prevention Awareness Month brings special attention to it, showing how people can help others and learn how to talk about suicide without increasing the risks of harm.

In 2014, 621 Wisconsin residents took their own lives. Of that group, 17.9 % or 135 were veterans. The rate of veteran suicide is increasing especially in certain age groups. Male veterans rate of suicide is twice that of the non-veteran population.

“We are working on combining resources from several areas to provide training to concerned non-medical people who can respond to anyone having suicidal thoughts and making suicidal comments,” Scocos said. “We need to open the door to others who are concerned for their loved ones, relatives or friends who are veterans and provide the tools for helpful response.”

Personalized peer support is available through Vets4Warriors at 1-855-838-8255. You may also text message to 838255. Veterans who are contemplating suicide or having serious issues can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1.

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