

**A1**  
**American Medical Student Association**  
**House of Delegates 2022**

**Introduced by:** Tyra-Lee Brett, Jimena Rivera, Alex Dorsett, Jamie Sampson, Ashley Bell, Sujay Ratna, Jordan Sharder, Deekpuk Deggal

**School(s):** Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough Community College, Icahn School of Medicine, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough Community College

**Subject:** Principles Regarding Veteran Health

**Type:** Amendment of Principles

---

WHEREAS AMSA has always supported and encouraged efforts to educate the public about the prevalence and treatability of mental illness to eliminate the stigma that prevents the diagnosis and successful treatment of the mentally ill. [ PPP pg. 106]

WHEREAS AMSA supports mental health policies that are scientifically substantive, socially valuable, and place the individual above the disease. (1997) [PPP pg. 106]

WHEREAS throughout the world, approximately 800,000 people die by suicide every year, accounting for 1.5% of all deaths. [1]

WHEREAS Veterans and military personnel represent 20% of all known suicides in the US. Rates of suicide increased during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and between 2000 and 2010, the suicide rate among Veterans rose higher than the rate among civilians. [2]

WHEREAS the average number of Veteran suicide deaths per day has remained between 17 and 18 annually. In 2018, an average of 17.6 Veterans died by suicide each day. [3]

WHEREAS only 30 percent of veterans receive VA health care and fewer than 50 percent use any VA benefits or services at all, VA believes it is their responsibility to work with like-minded organization to prevent suicide among all Veterans. [3]

WHEREAS Suicide prevention advocacy will help counter the stigma that can prevent Veterans from seeking help. It also will support the delivery of suicide prevention activities that are culturally appropriate for Veterans. [3]

WHEREAS AMSA recognizes the multifaceted health disparities and issues that veterans and soldiers face after returning from deployment and/or retiring from active or reserve duty. (2019) [PPP pg. 90]

WHEREAS AMSA while we have policy regarding Veterans mental health, we have no such stance for veteran's suicide. [ PPP pg. 106]

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Principles regarding veteran health (pg. 90) be AMENDED BY ADDITION to state:

The American Medical Student Association:

5. BELIEVES that all veterans and soldiers have a right to full health care that addresses all health needs, including those specifically relevant to military service. (2019)

6. BELIEVES that all soldiers should have reliable access and continuous health care services that address their physical and mental health needs that follows their transition from discharge back to civilian/veteran life. (2019)

7. RECOGNIZES the prevalence of the suicide rate among the veteran population as a public health crisis.

a. ENCOURAGES premedical students, medical students, and physicians to work with veterans' mental health programs to focus on the prevention of depression and suicide which could be the result of post-traumatic stress disorder.

b. SUPPORTS the creation and welfare of community-based mental health awareness and service programs including, but not limited to, suicide prevention programs and, walk-in health centers.

~~7.~~ 8. URGES the implementation of strong, collaborative initiatives by the US Department of Defense, US Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Department of Health and Human Services, other relevant governmental agencies, related non-governmental agencies and nonprofits, and private entities to ensure that the mental health needs of veterans and soldiers are being comprehensively addressed. (2019)

~~8.~~ 9. SUPPORTS reforms to the US Department of Veterans Affairs health care system to ensure timely and appropriate care for all veteran health needs. (2019)

a. SUPPORTS reforms to increase veteran access to VA health services.

b. SUPPORTS efforts to ensure that all veterans, regardless of age, have appropriate transportation services to and from VA health services.

c. SUPPORTS efforts to ensure that all veterans, regardless of disability, have the appropriate means of mobility around VA facilities or have assistance with movement.

d. OPPOSES the privatization of the US Department of Veterans Affairs health care system and its related services when it comes at the expense of existing VA health services

68

69 Fiscal Note: None

70 Citations

71

72 1. Fazel, Seena, and Bo Runeson. "Suicide." New England Journal of Medicine, vol. 382,  
73 no. 3, 2020, pp. 266–274., doi:10.1056/nejmra1902944.

74 2. Nelson HD, Denneson L, Low A, et al. Systematic Review of Suicide Prevention in  
75 Veterans [Internet]. Washington (DC): Department of Veterans Affairs (US); 2015 Nov.  
76 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. Available from:  
77 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK385002/>

78 3. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Mental Health and Suicide  
79 Prevention. 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. 2020. Retrieved  
80 {date} from  
81 [https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/datasheets/2020/2020\\_National\\_Veteran\\_Suicide](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/datasheets/2020/2020_National_Veteran_Suicide_Prevention_Annual_Report_508.pdf)  
82 [Prevention\\_Annual\\_Report\\_508.pdf](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/datasheets/2020/2020_National_Veteran_Suicide_Prevention_Annual_Report_508.pdf)

83

84