

**MANDATORY SUICIDE RISK AND INTERVENTION TRAINING FOR VHA
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy for the implementation of mandatory training of VHA health care providers on suicide risk and intervention.
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** None.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** None.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Patient Care Services (10P4), Mental Health Services (10P4M) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed at 202-461-4173.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 2008-051, dated August 28, 2008 is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of July 2019.

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MANDATORY SUICIDE RISK AND INTERVENTION TRAINING FOR VHA HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy for the implementation of mandatory training of VHA health care providers on suicide risk and intervention. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 7301(b), 7302(a)(1).

2. BACKGROUND:

a. There are approximately 21 million Veterans in the United States and 8 million Veterans who receive care within VHA. Between 2001 and 2009, the rate of suicide for all Veterans who used VHA services was an average of 36.4 per 100,000 individuals.

b. To address this threat to the well-being of the Nation's Veterans, the 2004 Mental Health Services Strategic Plan outlined plans to develop a system response for addressing the risk of suicide among Veterans through mandatory education programs. VHA, through a coordinated effort between Mental Health Services (MHS), the Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention in Canandaigua, NY, and the VHA Employee Education System (EES), has developed a web-based learning program for VHA that educates VHA health care providers on suicide risks and interventions, and incorporates the best practices for suicide prevention. ***NOTE:** Additional suicide prevention information will be provided during the annual "Suicide Prevention Month" activities.*

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that all VHA health care providers must complete the required suicide risk and intervention training module and pass the post-test within 90 days of entering the position.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary of Health or designee is responsible for oversight of the Suicide Risk and Intervention Training Program.

b. **Office of Patient Care Services, MHS.** MHS is responsible for:

(1) Developing, revising, managing, and implementing the ongoing suicide risk and intervention training.

(2) Working collaboratively with EES to produce the training module.

c. **VHA Employee Education System.** VHA Employee Education System (EES), is responsible for:

(1) Collaborating with MHS and field-based subject matter experts to develop suicide prevention training module content, and producing the training modules.

(2) The development and maintenance of the web-based training with completion reports available through the Talent Management System (TMS).

d. **Veterans Integrated Network Director.** Each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), Director is responsible for ensuring that all VHA health care providers within their area of responsibility complete suicide risk and intervention training as required by this directive.

e. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that VHA health care providers are assigned the task of completing web-based suicide risk and intervention training through TMS. *NOTE: Trainees are exempt from the mandatory requirement, but are encouraged to complete the training module as part of their overall educational experience within VHA.*

(2) Tracking completion of this web-based training course.

f. **Vet Center Regional Managers.** The Vet Center Regional Managers are responsible for ensuring that all VHA health care providers within their area of responsibility complete suicide risk and intervention training as required by this directive.

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. DEFINITIONS:

a. **VHA Health care Provider.** For the purposes of this directive, a VHA health care provider is defined as a full-time, part-time, or intermittent employee engaged in patient care as a Physician, Psychologist, Registered Nurse, Social Worker, Physician Assistant, Pharmacist, or Dentist, as well as any employee serving in the capacity of Case Manager or Vet Center Team Leader and Counselor.