

Implementing Caring Contacts for Suicide Prevention in Non-Mental Health Settings

VA







U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

Addressing Veteran suicide risk in emergency departments & urgent care

Caring Contacts is an evidence-based suicide prevention intervention that involves sending patients at risk for suicide brief, non-demanding expressions of care over a year. The goal of this Partnered Implementation Initiative is to implement and evaluate Caring Contacts in emergency department and urgent care settings to reach Veterans who may not engage with mental health services. This project focuses on VA's top clinical priority: suicide.

Caring Contacts

-  Suicide rates for Veterans are higher than the general population and suicide prevention is a high priority for the VA.
-  Most suicide deaths occur within 30 days after discharge from the hospital or emergency department, making this an important time period and setting to target.
-  Caring Contacts is an evidence based suicide prevention intervention that consists of sending brief, non demanding expressions of care and concern.
-  Caring Contacts was adapted for Veterans and the VA emergency department setting in a VISN 16 QUERI PII pilot in Little Rock.

"I appreciate them sending the cards out though to check on me because, you know, I have several suicide attempts. That made me feel good, that hey, I'm being thought about."

Dear [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

It was an honor to serve you in the emergency department.

We are here for you. Should you need anything, please contact us.

Lori Davis, RN and Your Emergency Department Team
555-555-5555



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Implementation/Evaluation Strategies

The implementation approach and evaluation are guided by the Integrated Promoting Action on Research Implementation in Health Services (i-PARIHS) framework. The project will use implementation facilitation, an evidence-based implementation strategy used often in VA, to support sites in implementing Caring Contacts.

External facilitators will work with site champions at 28 VA medical centers across VISNs 5, 6, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19, 22, and 23. Facilitation will be provided in a stepped wedge design to allow all site to participate, maximize available facilitators, and allow for comparisons.

Months	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	21-22	23-24
Wave 1	Facilitation		Stepdown									
Wave 2	Waiting Period	Facilitation			Stepdown							
Wave 3	Waiting Period			Facilitation			Stepdown					
Wave 4	Waiting Period					Facilitation			Stepdown			

Anticipated Impacts



Anticipated impact: Increase outpatient visits and decrease emergency/inpatient visits.



Anticipated impact: Reduce suicidal behavior.



Product: Caring Contacts implementation planning guide & toolkit that includes educational materials, research summaries, FAQ, and leadership briefings.

For more information, check out:

<http://vaww.mirecc.va.gov/caringcontacts/index.asp>

If you would like to learn more or partner with us, please contact our Program Coordinator, Susan Jegley at susan.jegley@va.gov.

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