VETERAN SUICIDE IN NORTH CAROLINA, 2015-2019

The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) is a CDC-funded statewide surveillance system that collects detailed information on violent deaths that occur in North Carolina including: homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention, and deaths of undetermined intent. NC-VDRS triangulates information from death certificates, medical examiner reports, and law enforcement reports to understand and aid in the prevention of violent deaths. For more information, please visit https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/About/ncVDRS.htm.

- Veteran status was available for 98.9% of the 10,414 violent deaths that occurred among NC residents ages 18 and older from 2015-2019.
- 1,550 (14.9%) of these deaths occurred among NC veterans. Most veteran violent deaths were suicides (81.9%).
- The average suicide rate from 2015-2019 was 2.4 times higher among veterans than non-veterans (37.8 and 15.5 per 100,000 respectively). Veteran suicide rates were consistently higher than non-veterans across all age groups.
- The suicide rate was highest for veterans ages 18 to 34 with a rate of 74.9 per 100,000, and was 5.4 times higher than the rate for non-veterans among the same age group.

### Suicide Rates by Veteran Status and Age Group

**NC-VDRS, 2015-2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Rate*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;74</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rate per 100,000 NC population
Rates calculated using census population estimates.

- Of veteran suicides, 95.1% were male. The rate among male veterans was 2.1 times that of female veterans (39.9 and 18.6 per 100,000 respectively).
- Most veteran suicide victims were non-Hispanic (NH) white (87.2%), while 8.4% were NH Black and 4.4% were of another race/ethnicity.

### Veteran Specific Method of Death:

**NC-VDRS, 2015-2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Veteran</th>
<th>Non-Veteran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firearm</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poisoning</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp Instrument</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Method*</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other includes fall, drowning, fire/burns, motor and other transport vehicle, and other methods of death.
Veteran Suicide Circumstances* by Age Group: NC-VDRS, 2015-2019

- The suicide circumstances differed slightly by veteran status. More veterans had a physical health problem (39.1%) than non-veterans (25.1%).
- A smaller proportion of veterans had a history of suicide attempt(s) (10.9%), and fewer had a substance use problem other than alcohol (10.4%) compared to non-veterans (18.5%, and 20.8% respectively).
- Among the veteran suicides, circumstances differed by age group.
- More veterans ages 18 to 34 had an intimate partner problem (47.4%) than older veterans (19.3%), and were more likely to have had a job-related problem (18.7%) than older veterans (5.6%).
- Veterans ages 18 to 34 were less likely to have left a suicide note (26.8%), and to be currently receiving mental health treatment (39.7%) than older veterans (32.1% and 40.2%, respectively).
- Veterans ages 35 and older were much more likely to have had a physical health problem (45.9%) than veterans ages 18 to 34 (6.7%).

* Among those with reported circumstance information. 95.1% of veteran cases had circumstance information. Twenty-four veterans ages 18-34 and 56 veterans ages 35 and older were missing.

More information on suicide prevention efforts can be found at:

State Resource Partners
N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services
https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mhddzas
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
https://www.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov/
N.C. Military and Veteran Affairs
https://www.milvets.nc.gov/nc4vets

National Resources
The Suicide Prevention Resource Center
http://www.sprc.org/
The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
https://afsp.org/
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
(for suicide crisis calls) 1-800-273-8255

The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System is supported by Cooperative Agreement 5NU17/CE002613-05-00 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

N.C. Division of Public Health / www.publichealth.nc.gov / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425
N.C. Violent Death Reporting System / 919-707-5432
State of North Carolina / Department of Health and Human Services / www.ncdhhs.gov
N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.
2019 FINAL DATA 8/16/21
Please see the NC-VDRS 2018 Annual Report for additional data and technical information: https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/ViolentDeathData.htm