



Supporting Providers Who Serve Veterans

Request a consult with srmconsult@va.gov

Learn more at www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/consult

As we prepare for Suicide Prevention Month in September, this edition of the SRM newsletter spotlights medication safety as part of lethal means safety. Medication safety has become increasingly important with recent rises in opioid abuse and deaths due to overdose. The pandemic likely contributed to an unprecedented increase in overdose deaths in the United States.

However, there are ways we can all make a difference. Reducing stigma and increasing our knowledge base as providers are excellent starting points. Additionally, safe storage of medications is a critical and simple strategy for preventing both overdose and suicide. We encourage you to check out the resources we've compiled below to learn more. Thank you for joining us as we raise awareness for suicide prevention and overdose prevention this September.

Warm regards,
Bridget and Hal

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Request a consult

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Get inspired and see hope in action. Hear from Veterans who once struggled with suicidal thoughts but have found purpose and connection again.

Make the Connection: [Suicide | Warning Signs & Treatment | Military Veterans | Make the Connection](#)

Here are some excellent implementation toolkits to review as you plan your 2022 awareness events:

- [Suicide Prevention Lifeline's Promote National Suicide Prevention Month](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [National Alliance for Mental Illness](#)



Safe Medication and Overdose Awareness Month

National Overdose Awareness Month occurs each August with International Overdose Awareness Day recognized on August 31st. This annual global campaign aims to raise awareness about the risks of overdose and helps to remember those who have died by overdose, honor surviving family and friends, and reduce stigma.

Overdose is a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. Recent data have shown that over 70% of overdose deaths involve an opioid and that opioids were involved in 20% of suicide deaths in the U.S. Given the impact of the pandemic, it is more important than ever to bolster prevention efforts, including the promotion of medication safe storage and disposal.



What Can You Do Right Now?



Learn about using naloxone, a medication that immediately reverses an overdose event caused by opioid medications. It's available at nearly every pharmacy and can be stored in your household. Learn more here:

- [Lifesaving Naloxone \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Opioid Safety | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)

Store opioid and benzodiazepine medications safely within your household or dispose of unneeded medications. Learn how:

- [Prescription Safety \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [WTC Health Program Pharmacy Benefits Factsheet \(cdc.gov\)](#)

To find out more about Overdose Awareness and Prevention:

- [What Should You Do During a Drug Overdose? | Get Smart About Drugs](#)
- [Stop Overdose \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- For VA Employees, visit the [Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution \(OEND\) SharePoint](#)

To find out more about Safe Medication Storage and Disposal:

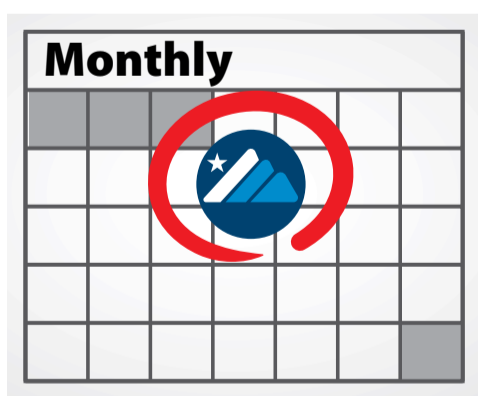
- [VA Center for Medication Safety \(VA MedSAFE\)](#)
- [Medication disposal: How-to guide for different types \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](#)
- CDC's resource- Your Prescription Medicine: Tips for Safe Storage and Disposal [Prescription Safety \(cdc.gov\)](#). Link to [one pager](#), link to [wallet card](#).

For information on how to talk with Veterans about Lethal Means Safety, please visit:

- [Lethal Means Safety & Suicide Prevention - MIRECC / CoE \(va.gov\)](#)

Upcoming MIRECC Lecture Series

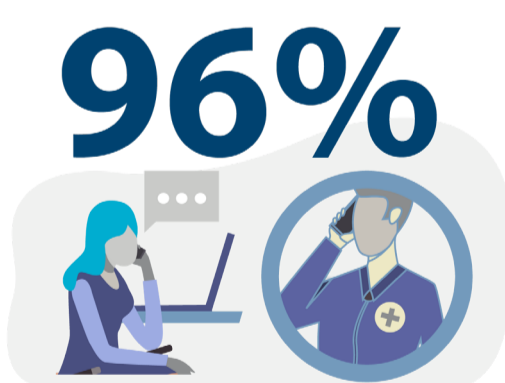
- **July Monthly SRM- 7/13 @ 2:00pm ET- Addressing Therapy Interfering Behaviors (TIBs) in the Context of Suicide Risk** presented by Dr. Lauren Borges
- **August Monthly SRM- 8/10 @ 2:00pm ET- Suicide Prevention in Substance Use Disorders** presented by Dr. James Haug & Erin Higgins, LCSW, LAC
- **August Quarterly CPG- 8/23 @ 12:00pm ET- Lithium for Suicide- A Therapeutic Risk Management Informed Approach** presented by Dr. Hal Wortzel
- **September Monthly SRM- 9/14 @ 2:00pm ET- TBD**



What SRM providers are saying:

Providers continue to find SRM valuable.

"It's always refreshing to have some new tools and a different lens to view things. Sometimes doing consults like this can feel uncomfortable as a clinician as there can be those worries that we're not doing enough or being ineffective if our clients are not improving. [My consultant] made the process very comfortable and collaborative..."



96% of providers who consulted about a particular Veteran at risk for suicide reported that the SRM consultation experience impacted their approach to care.

LEARN MORE?



Check out our refreshed SRM Factsheet for additional information on the program. You can also share or post this handout on your own website to help spread awareness of SRM.

How to Request a Consult

To request a free consult, email SRMconsult@va.gov and one of our team members will be in touch to get you connected with a consultant.



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