

VETERANS UPDATE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

MARCH, 2017

VCL A CRITICAL PART OF COMMITMENT



The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it has resolved a major challenge with the Veterans Crisis Line.

Prior to the opening of the new Atlanta call center, the call rollover rate often exceeded 30 percent, while the current call rollover rate is less than 1 percent, with more than 99 percent of all calls being answered by the VCL.

"Suicide prevention is one of our highest priorities," said Secretary

of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin. "Fixing the Veterans Crisis Line was a critical step in keeping our commitment to Veterans."

There are three easy ways to reach a VA professional, who is specially trained to attend to emotional crises for Veterans:

Dial the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number, 800-273-TALK (8255), and press 1 for Veterans to reach a VCL responder;

Text 838255 — A VCL responder

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 22, 9 - 10:30 a.m., Middletown VA Clinic Veteran Town Hall, Middletown, R.I.
VFW, 52 Underwood Ln.

April 29, 2 - 3:30 p.m., New Bedford VA Clinic Veteran Town Hall, New Bedford Vet Center, 73 Huttleton Ave., Unit 2, Fairhaven.

May 6, 2 - 3:30 p.m., Hyannis VA Clinic Veteran Town Hall, Cape Cod Vet Center, 474 West Main Street, Hyannis.

July 17- 21, Summer Sports Clinic for Disabled Veterans, Contact your provider to apply.

will text back.

Chat online at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>.

MYHEALTHeVET UNVEILS UPGRADES SUGGESTED BY VETS

Thanks to feedback we received from Veterans and family members, the MyHealtheVet team is excited to unveil some of your requested upgrades!

You may have noticed that the website has been making some changes recently, but don't worry, you won't have to relearn how to use the site. And My HealtheVet is now mobile friendly!

Visit the enhanced site at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/web/myhealthevet/home>, or call 401-952-2655 for more information.



Online
My Health, My Care: 24/7 Access to VA

TO DAD ACROSS THE MILES



From the left, Dr. Susan A. MacKenzie, director of the Providence VA Medical Center, Joseph V. Zarrella, Raymond J. Zarrella, and Derek D. Annese-Zarrella at the Providence VA Medical Center Friday, March 3, 2017, with a framed photo of, and poem by, Joseph F. Zarrella titled, "To Dad Across the Miles." (Providence VA Medical Center photo by Winfield Danielson)

Like many of his generation, Joseph F. Zarrella, from Cranston, R.I., enlisted in the Navy during World War II at the age of 17. While serving in the South Pacific on the USS Blue Ridge, three Japanese Kamikaze suicide planes attacked his ship. Two were shot down, along with a Mitsubishi G4M "Betty" bomber, but the pilot of the third suicide plane veered away at the last second for reasons unknown, killing only himself.

Thinking he might not be so lucky next time, Joe wrote and sent a poem entitled "To Dad Across the Miles" home to his father, Vincent M. Zarrella, a World War I Navy Veteran. The poem was published in the local newspaper June 9, 1945, and the family clipped it from the paper, socking it away for safe keeping.

More than 70 years later, Derek D. Annese-Zarrella, a student living in Cranston with his grandfather Raymond J. Zarrella, found the clipping in the boiler room of the family home. An Army Veteran of the Korean

war, Ray was Joe's younger brother, along with two others: Vincent Jr., a Korean War Air Force Veteran, and Tom, who served in the Marine Corps Reserves. "Four brothers, four branches of service," Derek said proudly of his grandfather and grand uncles.

Joe returned from the war and the four brothers operated the Garden City Lanes bowling alley in Cranston for more than three decades. They also owned and operated Zarrella Plumbing and Heating, which was in business for 50 years and completed many projects at the Providence VA Medical Center.

Derek's grandfather Ray, the last surviving brother, is a patient at the Providence VAMC, as was Joe. Derek said he thought it would be great if Veterans and other people visiting the VA hospital could see it and be reminded of the service and sacrifice of so many during the Second World War. So, he had the poem framed with a photo of his grand-uncle, and he and Ray donated it to the Providence VAMC.

The framed poem is on display in



Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave
Providence, RI 02908
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):
401-457-3336

Website:
www.providence.va.gov

Facebook:
[facebook.com/
VAProvidence](https://facebook.com/VAProvidence)

the 7th floor elevator lobby across from a World War II uniform.

Ray, Derek and Joe's son, Joseph V. Zarrella, a resident of Johnston, R.I., visited the VA medical center Thursday, March 2, 2017, to see the poem and meet with the facility director, Dr. Susan A. MacKenzie, who thanked them for their donation and recognized their family's service. "Sharing stories like this is one of those things that make VA so special," she said. "We're honored by the donation and by the family's service."

"Thank you, so much," said Ray as his family prepared to go. "And thank God for the VA. I couldn't do without it."