



VETERAN SUICIDE
PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox
Suicide Prevention Grant Program

March 2024

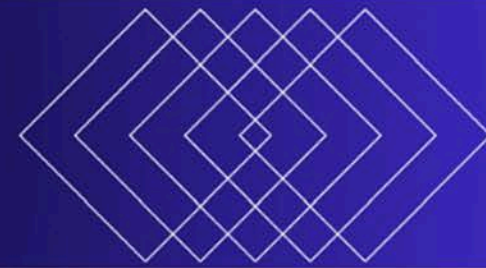
The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (SSG Fox SPGP) enables the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide resources toward community-based suicide prevention efforts to meet the needs of Veterans and their families through outreach, suicide prevention services, and connection to VA and community resources.

The grant honors Veteran Parker Gordon Fox who, joined the Army in 2014 and was a sniper instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Known for a life of generosity and kindness to others in need, Fox died by suicide on July 21, 2020, at the age of 25.



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Introduction

In Maine, between 2015 and 2021, 1,728 Mainers died by suicide. Of these, 337 had a history of military service.* Research reveals that many veterans who die by suicide utilized health services in the weeks or months leading up to their deaths.** Health care settings that know how to identify veteran patients, screen for suicide ideation, and offer connections to community and crisis resources offer an opportunity to prevent suicides.

In 2023, the Maine Medical Association, Center for Quality Improvement (MMA-CQI) was awarded a grant by the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services to collaborate on the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program. Our work supports health care providers across the State of Maine by providing education and support around the implementation of a veteran screening process to identify veterans at risk for depression and suicidal ideation. This toolkit provides users with a step-by-step process for identifying veterans, screening for depression and suicide ideation, and connecting with Health Affiliates Maine for veteran social drivers of health and behavioral health needs and/or with Maine Crisis Services for crisis intervention support.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the staff of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services for helping to make this toolkit possible. The staff provided valuable input and brought the right people to the table. We are grateful for the work they do every day to improve the lives of Maine Veterans.

We also want to thank Health Affiliates Maine and the Maine Crisis Line for collaborating with us on the example workflows. These two organizations worked with us to ensure that each step in the workflows was well thought out and clearly represented. We are grateful for their dedication in supporting all Mainers through the services they provide.

We want to acknowledge the New Hampshire Division of Community Based Military Programs, Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services for the use of their Ask the Question Toolkit, *Serving NH's Veterans, Service Members and their Families: A Toolkit for developing cultural competence in your health care/service delivery setting*. **Green section headings** in this toolkit denote information from the NH Toolkit.

This toolkit includes downloadable tools and resources that providers and veterans will find useful. The example workflows can be downloaded as Word documents and modified to suit your practice's needs for identifying veterans and knowing what to do at different decision points. For ease of use, page 23 of the toolkit is a complete list of all links in the toolkit.

The information in this toolkit is provided as an informational resource only and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.

Thank you for your interest in this toolkit and for the work you do providing care to the veterans in your practice. If you have questions about the toolkit, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@mma-cqi.org.

* Wren, J.A. (2023). Characteristics of completed suicides among Maine residents who served in the Military, 2015 to 2021. Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, University of Maine. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mcspc_healthsafety/72/

** Corr, Allison (2022). More Health Care System Interventions Needed to Curb Veteran Suicide Rate. Retrieved 3/15/2024.

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2022/11/11/more-health-care-system-interventions-needed-to-curb-veteran-suicide-rate>

Ask the Question Campaign to Identify Veterans

Introduction: Why should your health care/service delivery setting take special care with Veterans, Service Members, and their Families (VSMF)?

With the majority of Veterans seeking their health care and services outside of the VA, it is paramount for civilian health care and service providers to be competent in caring for veterans in a culturally responsive manner that both honors and appreciates their military service. Health care settings that know how to identify veteran patients, screen for suicide ideation, and offer connections to community and crisis resources offer an opportunity to prevent suicides.

Who Are Veterans, Service Members, and their Families (VSMF)?

For the purposes of this Toolkit, we are casting a wide net and are intending to include any person with a connection to military service within their immediate family. This includes active duty, all branches, all components, those who previously served for any length of time and their immediate family members.

For the purposes of this Toolkit, “family members” are defined by the Service Member or Veteran—the individuals they identify as “family” and a significant part of their lives regardless of bloodline or legal status. However, it is important to recognize that each organization and program, including the Veterans Administration, has very specific definitions and eligibility criteria for services that may differ from the way we define Veterans, Service Members, and their family members in the pages of this Toolkit.

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations defines a “Veteran” as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.”

Other common definitions for who is a military veteran include any person who served for any length of time in any military service branch (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard). There are two important ways to consider the answer to this question when serving those who have ever served.

1. With regard to medical care and service delivery within your facility/organization, a Veteran is anyone who ever served for any length of time in any military service branch and may have encountered exposures and experiences that make them medically and culturally unique, regardless of the conditions of their discharge or separation.
2. With regard to veterans’ benefits, VA care, and qualifications for veterans’ services outside of your facility, the Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services has Veteran Services Officers whose job is to help veterans with eligibility for services.

Ask the Question (ATQ)

“Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”

It is important to appreciate that each word in this question has value and purpose. Do not ask “Are you a Veteran?” It is paramount that the question be asked in a manner that allows all who have worn the uniform to feel included in the inquiry. Not everyone who has served identifies as a “Veteran” because they do not feel comfortable with the term, their discharge status prohibits it, or because their service involved work with the National Guard or Reserves and they were never activated. The word “ever” is important because we want anyone who has ever “signed on the line” to serve their country to feel included in this question even if the person was dishonorably discharged or was released before completing basic training. This word also makes clear that service of any era, peacetime or war, is of value and important to disclose.

Frequently Asked Question About Asking for Military Health History

Q: Why are you asking me for this information?

A: While we have always treated Service Members, Veterans and their families, we have since learned how important it is that any care, diagnosis or treatment we provide to you considers all possible exposures or unique experiences had during military service including during peace time, foreign or domestic. In doing so, we can provide you with the best and most informed care.

Q: Do I need to have been deployed or honorably discharged for my military service to be relevant?

A: Absolutely not! Our practice appreciates all those who have served!

Q: Will my information be shared with the VA, DoD, or other third party?

A: No. While we are very proud of the Veterans we serve, consistent with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Act of 1996, we will safeguard your service status and will not share this information with any third party without your written consent.

Q: How will this information be used?

A: Your history of military service will be captured in your medical record so that any provider in our system who has the opportunity to treat you will have access to all relevant information. Also, this information will be used to document the volume of Service Members, Veterans and family members for whom we provide care (just as we document the number of children, people with disabilities or people over the age of 65, etc.) so we can consider our patient population when improvement efforts in our facility are made.

Q: What if I don't want to provide this information?

A: You are under no obligation to report on your military service. We will always strive to provide you with the best possible care.

When the Answer is “Yes”

When the answer is YES, then connect the military and Veteran client/patient to appropriate resources or treatment. This may include recommending that the client/patient seek treatment or services at a VA Medical Center. Not all Service Members or Veterans are eligible for care at the VA. If they are not already enrolled at the VA, refer them to a [Veteran Services Officer](#) in the state who can evaluate their eligibility and assist them with filing a VA claim and enrolling for care.

Collaborate with other professionals in your state to ensure you continue to have a solid understanding and familiarity about the services and supports available to the military and Veteran population in your local area and state as well as those available nationally. Build relationships with the people, organizations, networks, and resources that can inform your work.

Serving NH's Veterans, Service Members and their Families: A Toolkit for developing cultural competence in your health care/service delivery setting

https://www.dmav.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt401/files/inline-documents/sonh/2022-ask-the-question-toolkit_0.pdf

The New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services has created an “Ask the Question” 10-part web series that can be viewed on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGc9i1a9JFWxQbSl7IJDMRERmyU6YXop5>

ATQ: Introduction

ATQ: History of “Ask the Question” in New Hampshire

ATQ: Military Health History & Other Important Questions

ATQ: Stigma and Discrimination

ATQ: Who are VSMF?

ATQ: When the Answer is “Yes”

ATQ: Building a Team

ATQ: Ask with Strategic Intent

ATQ: The Searles Family Story

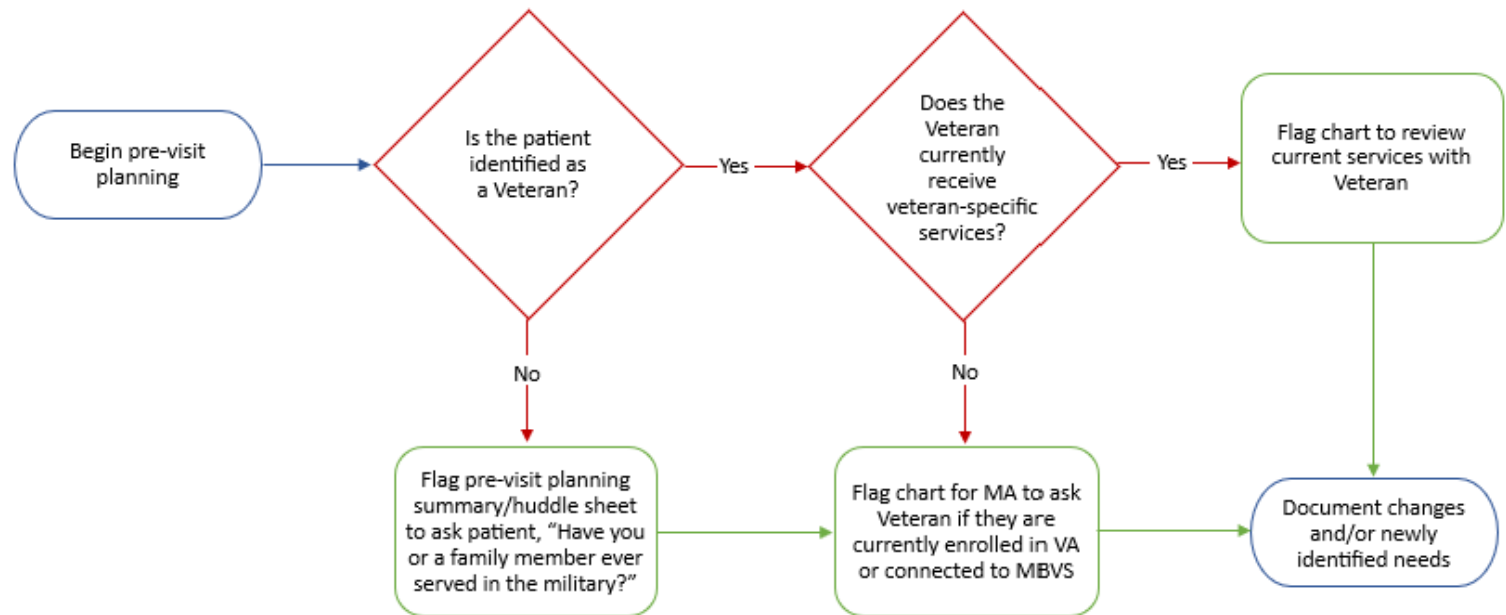
ATQ: Opportunities to Collaborate

We want to express our thanks and appreciation to the New Hampshire Division of Community Based Military Programs, Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services for making their toolkit available for anyone to use. We have shared only a small amount of the information included in the NH toolkit and encourage all health care settings to review it and the 10-part web series to find out more about how civilian health care and service providers can become more competent in caring for veterans in a culturally responsive manner that both honors and appreciates their military service.

Practice Example Workflows

The following example workflows were developed to guide practices through the process of identifying veterans in primary care practices, assessing them for suicide risk, and connecting them to the appropriate community-based case management services.

Step 1: Pre-visit Planning to Identify Veterans



Shape Key

- Terminator
- Decision
- Process

Notes

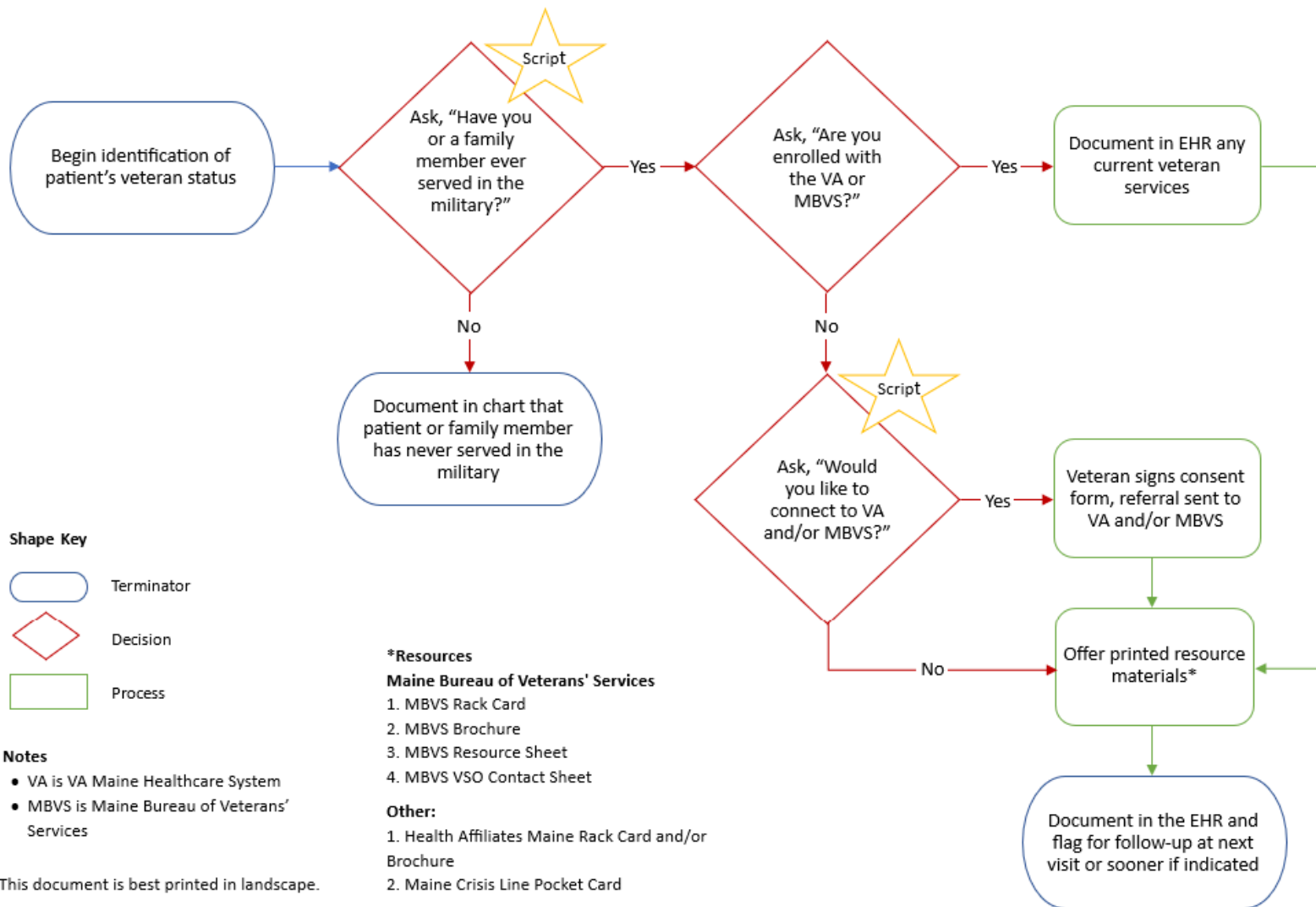
- VA is VA Maine Healthcare System
- MBVS is Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

This document is best printed in landscape.

The link to the Word document allows you to download or print the workflow and modify it to suit the needs of your practice.

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step1_Previsit_Planning_Workflow_Printable.docx

Step 2: Ask the Question Workflow to Identify Veterans



The link to the Word document allows you to download or print the workflow and modify it to suit the needs of your practice. The links to the printable resources can be found on page 23 of this toolkit.

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step2_ATQ_Workflow-Printable.docx

Step 2: Ask the Question Workflow Scripts



Ask, “Have you or a family member ever served in the military?”

- If the patient responds “no,” document in the EHR that the patient or family member has never served in the military. Below are some questions you may receive when asking about military service.
- If the patient responds “yes,” ask if they are currently enrolled with the VA Maine Healthcare System (VA) or the Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services (MBVS). If they respond “yes,” ask them what services they are currently connected to and document these services in the EHR. If they respond “no” please see script for the second question below.

Q: Why are you asking me for this information?

A: It is important for us to know so that we can provide you with the most informed care that considers all possible exposures or unique experiences you had during military service. Knowing this also helps us to connect you with any community resources you may want.

Q: Do I need to have been deployed or honorably discharged for my military service to be relevant?

A: No, we treat everyone who has ever served in the military.

Q: Will my information be shared with the VA, DoD, or other third party?

A: No, we will not share your service status or health information with any third party without your written consent.

Q: What if I don’t want to provide this information?

A: You are under no obligation to report on your military service. We will always strive to provide you with the best possible care.



Ask, “Would you like to connect to VA and/or MBVS?”

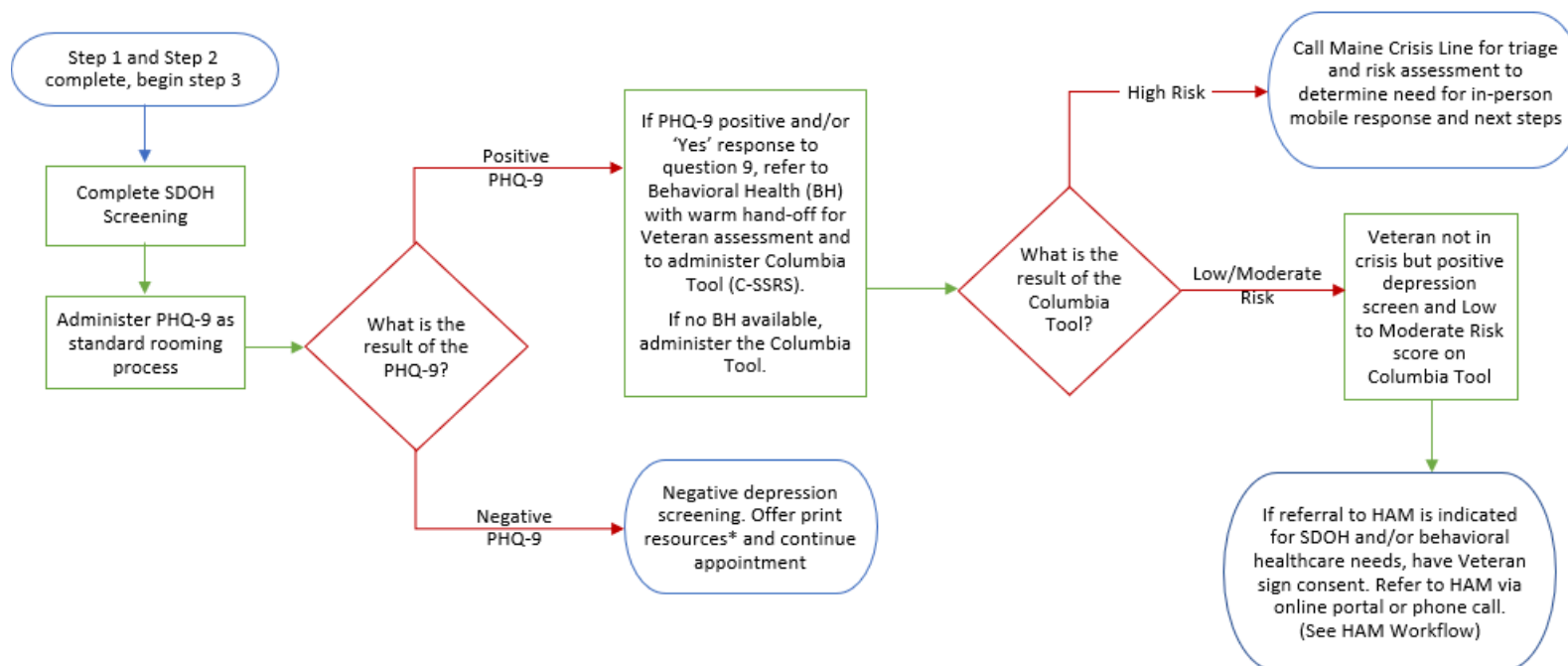
- If the veteran responds “yes,” flag the chart for a referral.
- If the patient responds “no,” let the patient know that there have been recent changes in legislation that might now make them eligible for veteran services they might not have been eligible for in the past, and suggest they call MBVS or their local Veteran Services Officer.

Q: Why should I connect to the VA and/or the Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services?

A: The Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services serves as the state’s advocate for veterans and their families. I’d like to share their brochure and a resource card with you.

The Bureau has Veteran Services Officers on staff who can assist you with getting connected to Veterans Affairs (VA) if you haven’t enrolled with them already. If you have, they can assist you with the re-evaluation of your VA health and benefits claim. Eligibility requirements are **constantly updated and something may have changed** that makes you eligible for a service or benefit you weren’t eligible for in the past based on your military service. I encourage you to reach out to the Maine Bureau of Veterans’ Services if you have any questions or concerns about your benefits.

Step 3: Workflow to Identify Veteran Social Drivers of Health and Behavioral Health Needs



Notes

Health Affiliates Maine (HAM) provides veteran-specific community case management needs for ANY Veteran (regardless of service status)

This document is best printed in landscape.

*Resources

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

1. MBVS Rack Card
2. MBVS Brochure
3. MBVS Resource Sheet
4. MBVS VSO Contact Sheet

Other:

1. Health Affiliates Maine Rack Card and/or Brochure
2. Maine Crisis Line Pocket Card

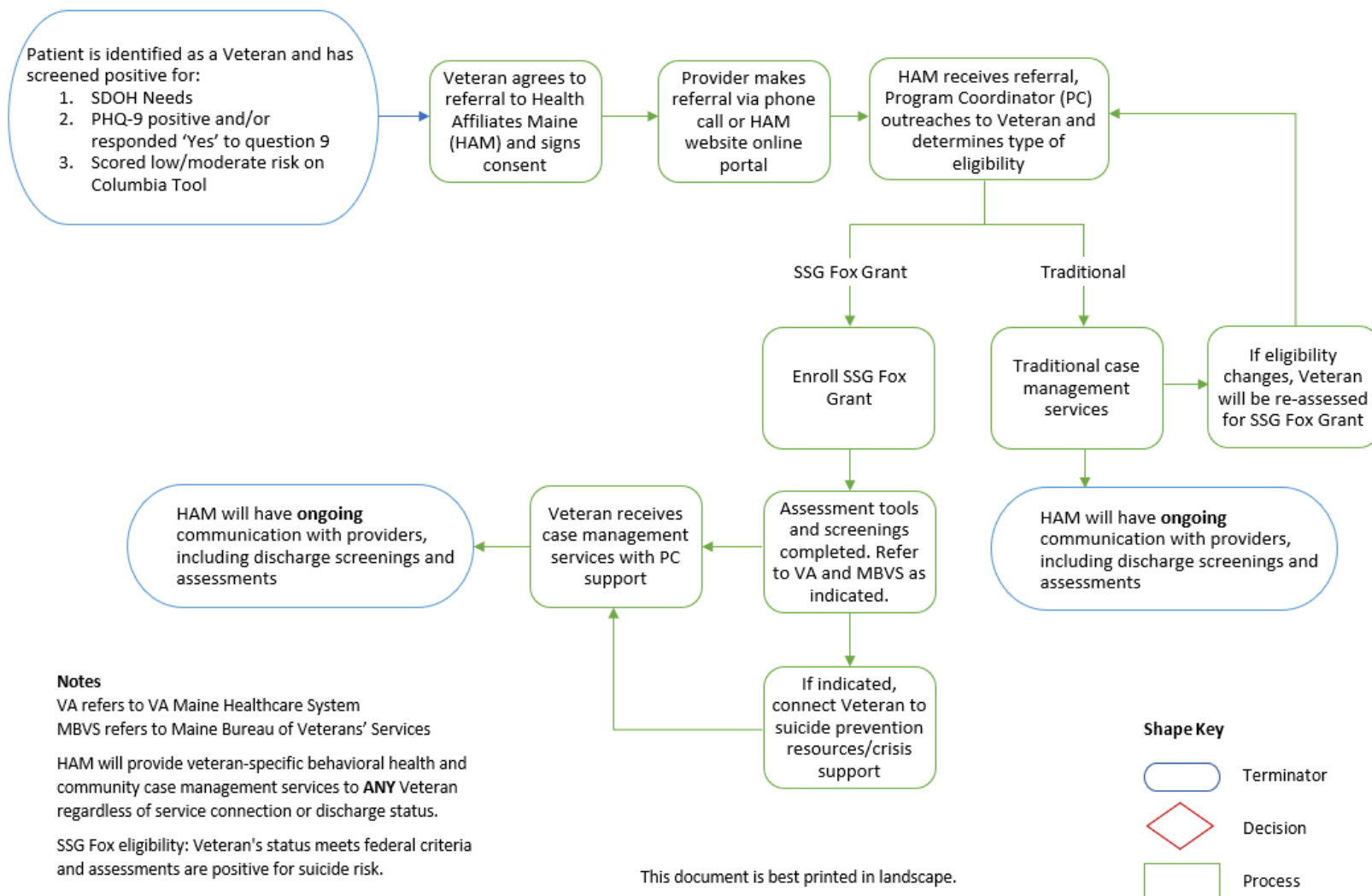
Shape Key

- Terminator
- Decision
- Process

The link to the Word document allows you to download or print the workflow and modify it to suit the needs of your practice. The links to the printable resources can be found on page 23 of this toolkit.

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step3_SDOH_BH_Needs_Workflow_Printable.docx

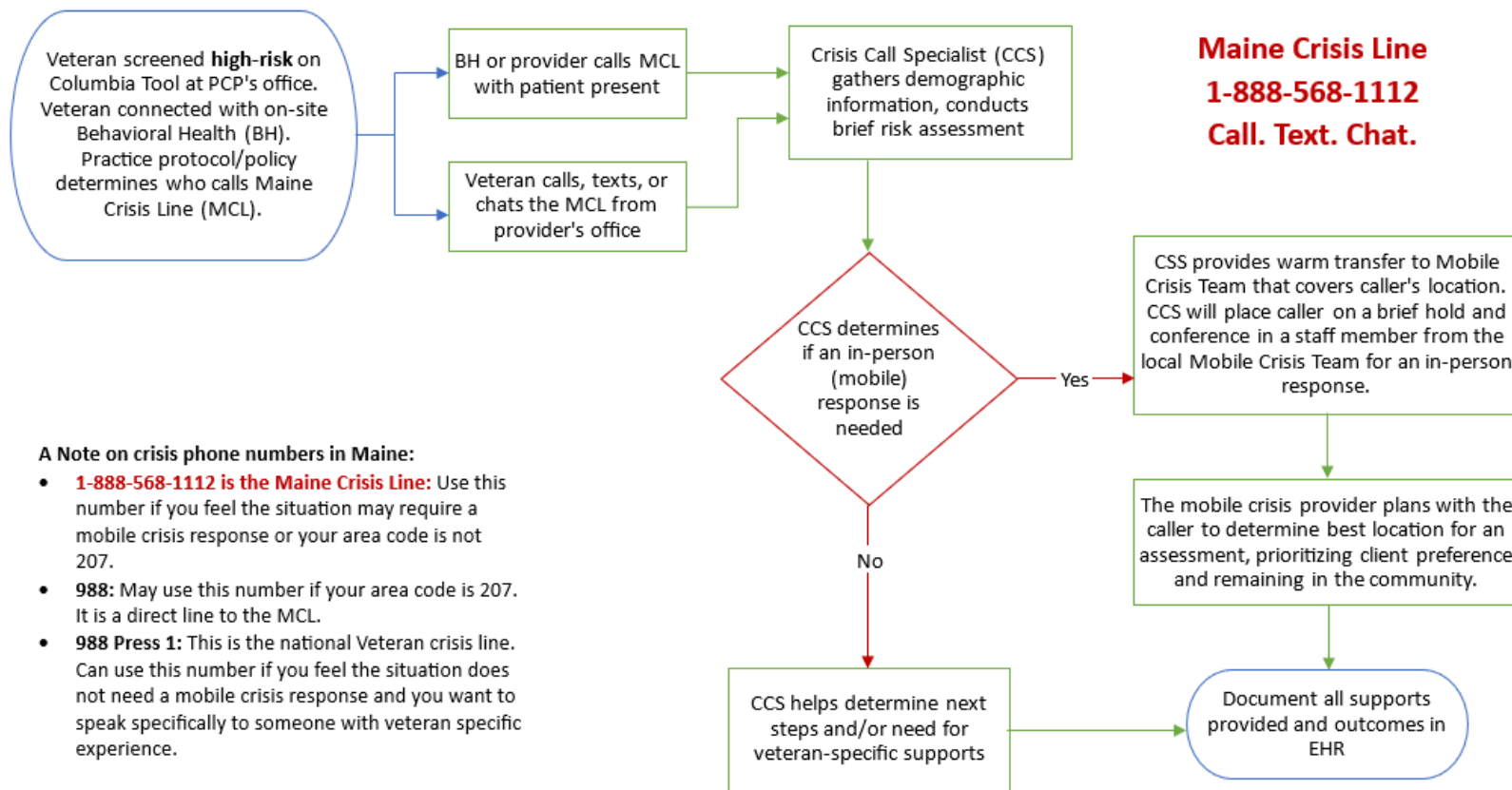
Health Affiliates Maine: Veteran Support Workflow



The link to the Word document allows you to download or print the workflow and modify it to suit the needs of your practice.

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/HAM_Workflow_Printable.docx

Maine Crisis Line Workflow



Maine Crisis Line
1-888-568-1112
Call. Text. Chat.

A Note on crisis phone numbers in Maine:

- **1-888-568-1112 is the Maine Crisis Line:** Use this number if you feel the situation may require a mobile crisis response or your area code is not 207.
- **988:** May use this number if your area code is 207. It is a direct line to the MCL.
- **988 Press 1:** This is the national Veteran crisis line. Can use this number if you feel the situation does not need a mobile crisis response and you want to speak specifically to someone with veteran specific experience.

Additional Notes:

- If an in-person response is not needed, the Crisis Call Specialist will help determine next steps, which may include creating a safety plan, developing coping techniques, collaboration with current providers, referral to new providers, crisis residential services, and follow-up.
- The Crisis Team can follow the Veteran for 60 days.

This document is best printed in landscape.

Shape Key

- Terminator
- Decision
- Process

The link to the Word document allows you to download or print the workflow and modify it to suit the needs of your practice.

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/MCL_Workflow_Printable.docx

Tools

Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRC)

The Columbia Lighthouse Project was formed under the auspices of Columbia University to disseminate the Columbia Protocol, also known as the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). The following information on how to use the Columbia Protocol is from The Columbia Lighthouse Project website. For more information on the Columbia Tool and The Columbia Lighthouse Project, visit: <https://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/about-the-scale/>.

A UNIQUE SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Columbia Protocol, also known as the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), supports suicide risk assessment through a series of simple, plain-language questions that anyone can ask. The answers help users identify whether someone is at risk for suicide, assess the severity and immediacy of that risk, and gauge the level of support that the person needs. Users of the tool ask people:

- Whether and when they have thought about suicide (ideation)
- What actions they have taken – and when – to prepare for suicide
- Whether and when they attempted suicide or began a suicide attempt that was either interrupted by another person or stopped of their own volition

USING THE COLUMBIA PROTOCOL

ASKING QUESTIONS

Protocol administrators ask a series of questions about suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The number and choice of questions they ask depend on each person's answers. The questioner marks "yes" or "no," as well as how recently the thought or behavior occurred and a scoring of its severity. The shortest screeners are condensed to a minimum of two and a maximum of six questions, depending on the answers, to most quickly and simply identify whether a person is at risk and needs assistance. For a more thorough assessment of a person's risk, Columbia Protocol askers should use the standard scale.

The Columbia Protocol questions use plain and direct language, which is most effective in eliciting honest and clear responses. For example, the questioner may ask:

- "Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?"
- "Have you been thinking about how you might kill yourself?"
- "Have you taken any steps toward making a suicide attempt or preparing to kill yourself (such as collecting pills, getting a gun, giving valuables away, or writing a suicide note)?"

DETERMINING NEXT STEPS

To use the Columbia Protocol most effectively and efficiently, an organization can establish criteria or thresholds that determine what to do next for each person assessed. Decisions about hospitalization, counseling, referrals, and other actions are informed by the “yes” or “no” answers and other factors, such as the recency of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

The Columbia Lighthouse Project provides many examples of triage documents that Columbia Protocol users in hospitals, primary care practices, behavioral health care facilities, military services, prisons, and other settings employ to make these decisions. The Project also provides assistance to any organization that is thinking through its policy and establishing a care plan.

Columbia Suicide Severity Rate Scale (C-SSRS)

Always ask questions 1 and 2.	Past Month	
1) Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?		
2) Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?		
If YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5 and 6. If NO to 2, skip to question 6.		
3) Have you been thinking about how you might do this?		
4) Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?	High Risk	
5) Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?	High Risk	
Always Ask Question 6	Life-time	Past 3 Months
6) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? <i>Examples: Took pills, tried to shoot yourself, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, or collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, took out pills but didn't swallow any, held a gun but changed your mind or it was grabbed from your hand, went to the roof but didn't jump, etc.</i> If yes, was this within the past 3 months?		High Risk

If YES to 2 or 3, seek behavioral healthcare for further evaluation.
If the answer to 4, 5 or 6 is YES, get **immediate help: Call or text 988, call 911 or go to the emergency room.**
STAY WITH THEM until they can be evaluated.

Safety Plans

Safety plans can be a useful tool to support veterans and their loved ones so they understand which steps to take during a crisis. It is a collaborative process and should be created by the veteran with the help of loved ones or mental health professionals and kept easily accessible. The following plan is veteran-specific and links to download it can be found below.

MY SAFETY PLAN*

Please keep this plan with you at all times or have a picture of it on your phone so you have support whenever you need it and share a copy with family members or friends you trust.

STEP 1: RECOGNIZING WARNING SIGNS

These are my warning signs that things are starting to feel out of control. Sometimes these warning signs are connected to my thoughts of suicide.

Thoughts: _____

Feelings: _____

Behaviors: _____

Symptoms: _____

STEP 2: USING INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES

When I notice these warning signs, these are things that I can do on my own to help make sure I do not act on my suicidal thoughts or urges.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION

When my initial coping strategies do not fully resolve the situation, I will reach out to others.

Who helps me take my mind off my problems?
Who helps me feel better when I socialize with them?
Are there places I can go that help me take my mind off my problems?

1. Name: _____ Phone: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone: _____

3. Place: _____

4. Place: _____

STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP IF DISTRACTION ALONE DOESN'T FULLY WORK

When I need to talk about how I'm feeling, I will contact the people in my life who care about me, are supportive, and want to help.

1. Name: _____ Phone: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone: _____

3. Name: _____ Phone: _____

STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS

When I need to talk to a mental health professional or other provider, I will call one:


1. Therapist/Clinician Name: _____

Phone: _____

2. Primary Care Provider: _____

Phone: _____

3. **Maine Crisis Line: 1-888-568-1112**



STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFE

To help keep myself safe, I will remove or safely store things I could use to hurt myself.

Firearms: _____

Medications: _____

Household toxins/poisons: _____

Sharp or other dangerous objects: _____

Who can help keep these items safe and securely stored?

Name: _____

* Adapted from Stanley & Brown's (2008) *Safety Plan Treatment Manual to Reduce Suicide Risk: Veteran Version*

Link to Download 8.5x11 Version

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Safety-Plan-with-988-Veteran-Print-8.5x11.pdf>

Link to Download 5x7 Version

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Safety-Plan-with-988-Veteran-Print-5x7-1.pdf>

Resources

The following resources provide information for your staff and for your veteran patients and their families. Links are provided to the source for easy download.

Maine Medical Association, Center for Quality Improvement Asynchronous Trainings

MMA-CQI offers two trainings to assist healthcare professionals in supporting their veteran patients. The trainings include information on how to screen veterans for depression and suicide risk and how to guide at-risk individuals through referral pathways. Also offered is information that can be shared with veterans on how to connect to resources and VA benefits.

The free asynchronous trainings are:

- *Support Your Veterans: Referral Pathways and Resources to Meet Identified Behavioral Health Needs* available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqjTsEozpRo>.
- *Promoting Mental Health and Improving Care for Veterans Experiencing Suicidality* available on the MMA-CQI Learning Lab at <https://qclearninglab.org>. This training offers 2.5 CME credits (*AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*).

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services Resources

Veteran Services Officers Contact Sheet

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/VSO-Contact-Sheet-Final-March-2024.pdf>



OVERVIEW

Below you will find a list of Veteran Services Officers and their contact information based on their locations.

Location:	Contact Name:	Phone and Email:
Bangor	Mike Smith - VSO	207-941-3005 bangor.maineBVS@maine.gov
Caribou	Barrett Fisher - Claims Supervisor	207-492-1173 caribou.maineBVS@maine.gov
Lewiston	James Fisher - VSO	207-753-9106 lewiston.maineBVS@maine.gov
Machias	Lynette - VSA	207-255-3306 machias.maineBVS@maine.gov
Portland	Doug Doughty - VSO	207-822-2391 portland.maineBVS@maine.gov
Springvale	Gerard Dubois - VSO	207-324-1839 springvale.maineBVS@maine.gov
Central Claims	John Marchalietta - VSO	207-287-9933 maltvsome@va.gov
Mobile NVSO	Travis Landes - VSO	207-287-9933 mobilenorth.mbvs@maine.gov
Mobile SVSO	J.T. Sherburne - VSO	207-324-1839 mobilesouth.mbvs@maine.gov
Homeless Veteran Coordinator	Matt Kennedy, Tom Pangborn, Scott Swisher	207-287-7019 hvc.mainebvs@maine.gov

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

Rack Card

MAINE BUREAU OF VETERANS' SERVICES

www.maine.gov/veterans
207-287-7020



FIELD OFFICES

AUGUSTA
194 Winthrop Street (Camp Keyes)
207-287-7020
Email: mainebvs@maine.gov

BANGOR
35 State Hospital Drive
207-941-3005

CARIBOU
14 Access Highway, Suite 5
207-492-1175

LEWISTON
35 Westminster Street
207-753-9106

MACHIAS
7 Court Street, Suite 2
207-255-3306


PORTLAND
151 Jetport Boulevard, Room 138W
207-822-2391

SPRINGVALE
634 Main Street
207-524-1839

TOGUS
Veterans Administration Center
Building 248, Room 110
207-287-7019

VETERANS' RESOURCES

We're working with VA to continue serving Veterans in our community.




Scan QR Code

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

207-287-7020
Email: mainebvs@maine.gov
www.maine.gov/veterans

VA Maine Healthcare System

Mental Health Care: 207-623-8411 x 5515
Patient Advocate: 207-623-8411 x 5760
www.va.gov/maine-health-care




Scan QR Code

Veterans Crisis Line

24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones

You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

Dial **988** then **Press 1**.
Text: **838255**
Chat: www.veteranscrisisline.net




Maine Crisis Line

Free, confidential, 24/7 support for anyone needing support.

Call, text or chat support for individuals or families experiencing a behavioral health crisis or having thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm.


1-888-568-1112 (Voice) or **711** (Maine Relay)



2-1-1 Maine

A statewide helpline to find local resources that help you stay healthy, safe, independent, with all contacts fielded by specialists in Maine 24/7.


Dial: **2-1-1** (or 866-811-5695)
Text your zip code to **898-211**
www.211maine.org



NAMI Maine

Here for service members and their family supports with help and hope.

800-464-5767, Press 1
namimaine.org




Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

Trifold

This trifold provides veterans with information and resources related to:

- Tax exemptions
- Eldercare, burial and survivor benefits (Maine Veterans' Homes, Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery)
- Veteran identification (copies of DD 24s, driver's licenses)
- Education
- Recreation (park and museum passes, Disabled Veterans Controlled Moose Hunt)
- Employment
- Financial assistance (emergency financial assistance)
- Field office locations

Employment



Veteran Assistance at Career Centers:
All of Maine's Career Centers have dedicated Veteran Employment Representatives who help veterans find jobs by assisting with resume writing, networking, and interviewing skills.


State of Maine Veteran Hiring Preference:
Any veteran candidate who meets the minimum qualifications for a State job is guaranteed an interview, including veterans with an Other Than Honorable discharge. Gold Star spouses are also eligible for the hiring preference.

Accelerated Occupational Licensing Initiative:
Provides fast-track civilian licensing for veterans with military expertise in Boiler, Electrical, Fuel, and Plumbing.

Health Care Employment For Military Veterans:
All veterans discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, who completed health care related military training while in the Armed Forces, may utilize their military credentials when seeking civilian employment. Qualified veterans will receive individualized assistance when connecting one-on-one with the Department of Labor's program staff to facilitate the transition.

FMI: Please email mainebvs@maine.gov

Financial Assistance




Veteran Emergency Financial Assistance:
VEFA was created to provide assistance for Maine Veterans who suffer an emergency and do not have sufficient savings or access to other financial assistance to resolve the emergency. Examples of assistance may include: Damage to the veterans home due to fire, flood or hurricane that is not covered by insurance; Illness of the veteran or family member that results in hardship, assistance to prevent or resolve the veteran being homeless; and any other condition that puts the veteran at risk of not having the basic necessities of food, shelter, or safety.

The Bureau may approve up to \$2,000 to a veteran who is currently a resident of Maine.

FMI: Please email mainebvs@maine.gov

MAINE BUREAU OF VETERANS' SERVICES

State of Maine Veterans' Benefits



207-287-7020
maine.gov/veterans

BENEFITS INDEX


Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

Seven Field Offices Located in:


- Caribou
- Bangor
- Machias
- Togus
- Lewiston
- South Portland
- Springvale

Phone: 207-287-7020

Central Office: MaineBVS@maine.gov
Veterans' Cemetery System: MVMCS@maine.gov
Maine Veterans Homes: info@mainevets.org
MBVS Website: www.maine.gov/veterans




Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 0



2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.
Call 211 OR 1-866-811-5695

[https://www.maine.gov/veterans/docs/MBVS%20Benefits%20Brochure%20\(2023\).pdf](https://www.maine.gov/veterans/docs/MBVS%20Benefits%20Brochure%20(2023).pdf)

Tax Exemptions



Military Pensions:
Fully exempt from income tax as of 1/1/2016.


Property Tax: \$50,000 for paraplegic veterans; \$6,000 for veterans who served during a recognized war period and are 62 years or older, or receive 100% disability as a Veteran, or became 100% disabled while serving.

FMI: Please visit <https://www.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax/sidebar/exemptions.htm>

Vehicle Registration: 100% permanent and total, service-connected disabled veterans exempt from one registration fee, title fee, and driver license renewal fee.

FMI: Please email mainebvs@maine.gov

Eldercare, Burial and Survivor Benefits




Maine Veterans' Homes: Six locations across Maine providing expert rehabilitative, skilled nursing, and long-term care for Maine's veterans, spouses and Gold Star parents. FMI: info@mainevets.org

Maine Veterans Memorial Cemeteries: With two cemeteries in Augusta, one in Caribou, and one in Springvale, Maine offers beautiful, final resting places for honorably discharged veterans and their eligible dependents. FMI: mvmcs@maine.gov

Gold Star Family Plates: Gold Star families may receive a specially designated license plate to honor their fallen family member. Maine's program is distinct in that it not only provides Gold Star Plates to those who lost a family member to combat, but also to those whose family member died while honorably serving as an active member of the United States Armed Forces, but did not die in combat.

FMI: mainebvs@maine.gov

Veteran Identification



Free Copies of DD 214: Maine veterans may request a free copy of their DD 214 from the Bureau's archive of more than 45,000. Veterans must have this critical document to prove veteran status for everything from retail discounts to applying for state and federal benefit programs.


Military Service Driver's License: Honorably discharged veterans may obtain a driver's license that identifies them as a veteran. The designation allows the license-holder to prove veteran status to obtain retail and restaurant discounts, as well as free admission to most of Maine's State Parks.

Complimentary Veteran License Plates/Special Veteran Plate: Maine's Bureau of Motor Vehicles offers honorably discharged veterans (former POWs, Purple Heart recipients, Medal of Honor recipients, and disabled veterans) various license plates that are exempt from registration fees.

Veterans may also select a Special Veteran License Plate (at cost), that include a Commemorative Decals of their choice, reflecting the branches of service, specific awards or commendations, campaign awards for service in a hostile fire zone, among others.

FMI: www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/registration/index.html

Education



Veterans Dependents Educational Benefits: 100% tuition waiver at University of Maine schools, Community Colleges, and Maine Maritime Academy for dependents of 100% permanent and total, service-connected disabled veterans who have been residents of Maine for five years.

Postsecondary Education for Maine National Guard Members: 100% tuition waiver at University of Maine schools, Community Colleges, and Maine Maritime Academy for fully qualified, drilling members of Maine's National Guard.

FMI: Please email mainebvs@maine.gov

Recreation



Free Lifetime Veterans Park & Museum Pass: Maine veteran residents who were honorably discharged may receive a free, lifetime park pass for complimentary admission to most of Maine's State Parks and Historic Sites.

Free Active Military Personnel Day Use Park Pass: Maine's active duty personnel may receive a free day use park pass that provides complimentary admission for the service member and his/her spouse and children to most of Maine's State Parks and Historic Sites.

Disabled Veterans Controlled Moose Hunt: First of its kind in the nation, the Moose Hunt offers 25 disabled veterans (15 in-state residents and 10 out-of-state residents) the opportunity to tag a moose, with nearly all guide services, equipment, lodging, food, and meat processing costs covered by sponsors.

The Hunt is a joint effort of the Bureau of Veterans' Services, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Smoldering Lake Outfitters in Bridgewater, ME.

Disabled Veterans Free Licenses: Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50% or more may receive a complimentary license to fish, trap, hunt a range of wildlife (bear, migratory bird, pheasant, wild turkey, among others). The license remains valid for the life of the license holder, as long as the license holder continues to satisfy residency requirements and the license is not revoked or suspended.

Disabled Veteran Access to State Parks: Any veteran displaying a specially designated disabled veteran license plate or other placard (in accordance with Title 29-A, section 523, subsections 1 and 2) is allowed free admission to any state-owned park, camping area or beach.

FMI: Please email mainebvs@maine.gov

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

Maine Veterans' Resources Sheet



MAINE VETERANS' RESOURCES

	PHONE NO:	WEBSITE:
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services (MBVS)	(207) 287-7020	www.maine.gov/veterans
MBVS Veterans' Emergency Financial Assistance Program <i>(Run by partner agencies)</i>	Fedcap-Veterans Forward (844) 653-0316 American Legion (207) 873-3229	www.maine.gov/veterans/benefits/tax-finance-benefits/
VA Maine Healthcare System	Main Telephone: (207) 623-8411 Mental Health Care: (207) 623-8411 x 5515	www.va.gov/maine-health-care
Veterans Benefits Administration	(207) 621-6938	www.benefits.va.gov/togus
Vet Centers <i>(Bangor, Lewiston, Caribou, Portland, and Springvale)</i>	B: (207) 947-3391 L: (207) 783-0068 C: (207) 496-3900 P: (207) 780-3584 S: (207) 490-1513	www.va.gov/maine-health-care/locations/
Health Affiliates Maine <i>(Case Management)</i>	(877) 888-4304	www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com
Spurwink <i>(Veterans' Counseling)</i>	(888) 889-3903	www.spurwink.org
Maine Crisis Line	(888) 568-1112	www.heretohelpmaine.com



We're working with VA to ensure Veterans' CSH is our continuity.

All the Schick Research Bank Program






MAINE VETERANS' RESOURCES

	PHONE NO:	WEBSITE:
211 Maine	211	www.211maine.org
Preble Street <i>(Housing)</i>	(207) 775-0026	www.preblestreet.org
Volunteers of America Northern New England <i>(Housing)</i>	(207) 229-8306	www.voanne.org/services/veterans-services
Veterans, Inc. <i>(Housing)</i>	(800) 482-2565	www.veteransinc.org
Pine Tree Legal	(207) 774-8211	www.ptla.org
Legal Services for the Elderly	(800) 750-5353	www.mainelse.org
Maine Career Centers	(888) 457-8883	www.mainecareercenter.gov
Veterans Upward Bound <i>(Veterans' Educational Support)</i>	(207) 780-4627	www.usm.maine.edu/veterans-upward-bound
VAST Program <i>(Veterans' Adaptive Sports)</i>	(207) 310-8694	www.pinelandfarms.org/recreation/vast




Health Affiliates Maine Resources

Rack Card



Veterans Case Management

Veterans Case Management from Health Affiliates Maine (HAM) helps **reduce veterans' life stressors** by providing personalized support according to each veteran's specific needs.

With a referral from their provider, veterans will be connected to a HAM Veterans Case Manager who will help them **navigate resources and services** to find benefits they are eligible for.

Veterans Case Management is a free, grant-supported service.

If a referred veteran does not have MaineCare, the service will be provided through a grant from the Office of Behavioral Health Services and/or support from the Veterans Administration Staff Sergeant Parker Gordan Fox grant.

healthaffiliatesmaine.com • (877) 888-4304

AREAS OF SUPPORT INCLUDE:

- Housing stability or access
- Accessing heat, food, clothing
- Community access, finding social opportunities
- Employment or education
- Healthcare or behavioral health
- Financial or legal challenges
- Childcare/family support needs
- Military or veteran-specific resources, activities, and support services

NO WRONG DOOR


At Health Affiliates Maine, there are no wrong doors when it comes to supporting veterans. If you are concerned about a veteran, don't hesitate to make a referral. **Regardless of eligibility for a specific program, once referred, all veterans will be guided to the appropriate support services.**

How to Make a Referral

Use our online referral form at healthaffiliatesmaine.com/referral or call 207-333-3278.

Health Affiliates Maine is a statewide mental health and substance use agency deeply committed to ending the stigma that surrounds mental illness and to supporting Maine's behavioral health professionals.

TOLL-FREE: (877) 888-4304
FAX: (207) 333-3037
healthaffiliatesmaine.com



Use the link below to order rack cards and brochures for your practice.

<https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/>

This trifold provides information on the services Health Affiliates Maine provides for veterans, how to make a referral, and what to expect once a referral has been made. Use the link below to order rack cards and brochures for your practice.

At Health Affiliates Maine, we can help reduce the weight on your shoulders by listening and providing support where you need it. 60% of people who served do not know all the benefits they now qualify for since recent system changes.

AREAS OF SUPPORT INCLUDE:

- Housing stability or access
- Accessing heat, food, clothing
- Community access, finding social opportunities
- Employment or education
- Healthcare or behavioral health
- Financial or legal challenges
- Childcare/family support needs
- Military or veteran-specific resources, activities, and support services.

Who We Are

Health Affiliates Maine (HAM) is a statewide mental health and substance use agency founded to help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use, and to support behavioral health professionals.

With our network of clinicians, case managers, and Behavioral Health Home teams, we provide mental health and substance use counseling, case management, and psychiatric treatment to people of all ages.

For individuals, we work to normalize the reality that all of us struggle at some point with mental health or substance use issues.

For behavioral health professionals, we work as an advocate, insurance biller, and red tape navigator, so they can focus on what matters: helping Mainers build resilience and reach their potential.

Our Mission

Health Affiliates Maine believes that we all struggle at times with mental health or substance use issues. Our mission is to empower and support Maine's behavioral health professionals so that they may help individuals to enhance their own quality of life. By removing barriers that stand between Mainers and their access to behavioral health services, we build healthier communities.


Have you ever *served* in the U.S Armed Forces or military?

Do you feel *overwhelmed* by the responsibilities and stressors of life?

You may benefit from Veterans Case Management.



TOLL-FREE: (877) 888-4304
 FAX: (207) 333-3037
healthaffiliatesmaine.com



<https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/>

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- After you have completed the referral form on our website (healthaffiliatesmaine.com/referral), or by calling, our Program Coordinator will reach out to you within seven business days.
- The Program Coordinator will get to know you and help identify what support system might best fit your needs. The first call is a no-commitment conversation about the kinds of support we offer and anything you might want to talk about. This first call also helps us determine what services you might be eligible for.
- If you are interested in enrolling, you will be assigned a case manager.
- If you are experiencing significant mental health stressors or concerns, you may also continue to work with our Program Coordinator for additional support.
- Once your needs, strengths, resources, and barriers have been identified, an action plan will be developed collaboratively. You can work with the case manager to determine what frequency and duration of meetings work best for you.
- Meetings may occur via phone, telehealth, in person or a combination.

NO WRONG DOORS

This grant-funded service is provided at no cost, with no obligation and no hoops to jump through.

We listen closely to meet you where you're at and provide guidance based on your specific needs and interests.

At Health Affiliates Maine, there are no wrong doors when it comes to supporting veterans. **Regardless of eligibility for a specific program, all veterans will be guided to appropriate support services.**

Learn More

Scan the QR code or visit us at www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/



DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A REFERRAL?


If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, do not hesitate to call our Referral Coordinator.

To make a referral:
Call toll free 1-877-888-4304
Visit healthaffiliatesmaine.com
Email referral@healthaffiliatesmaine.com

*This service is made possible with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral Health and through the Veterans Administration Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox grant.

Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox, who joined the Army in 2014, was a sniper instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Known for a life of generosity and kindness to others in need, Fox died by suicide on July 21, 2020, at the age of twenty-five.

If you are someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, you are not alone. **Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988, press option 1**, or call the **Maine Statewide Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112**.



healthaffiliatesmaine.com • (877) 888-4304

Crisis Contact Details

Today there are many options for connecting veteran patients to crisis services, however, there are nuances to be aware of when determining which is the appropriate number to call for a particular situation. Below is a brief description of a few of these numbers:

1-888-568-1112 is the Maine Crisis Line (MCL). Call this number if you feel the situation may require a mobile crisis response or the phone number you are calling from does not have a 207 area code.

In addition to being able to call this number during a crisis, it is also possible to text or chat. A call, text, or chat to this number does not need to be a crisis. There is an opportunity to connect with MCL before a situation escalates to a crisis or you or your veteran patient want to feel comfortable knowing what happens when they do call, text, or chat.

Text 1-888-568-1112

Chat live at <https://heretohelpmaine.com> and select “CHAT”

For more information or to order pocket cards: <https://www.opportunityalliance.org/crisis>



988 is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Calls to this number from a 207 area code are routed to the Maine Crisis Line. Calls to this number from a phone with an area code that is not 207 are routed through the Lifeline network to the crisis provider for the area code associated with the phone and then routed to MCL.

Text 988

Chat live at <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>

For more information: <https://988lifeline.org/about/>

988 Press 1 is the Veterans Crisis Line: The Veterans Crisis Line serves Veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and those who support them. This number connects you to a trained responder outside of Maine. All of these responders are trained in crisis intervention and military culture and many are Veterans who understand the challenges service members and their loved ones face. At the end of the call, if the Veteran consents, they can be referred to the VA Maine Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

Text 838255

Chat live at <https://veteranscrisisline.net/chat>

For more information: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/about/how-it-works/>

Toolkit Links

New Hampshire Ask the Question Toolkit

1. *Serving NH's Veterans, Service Members and their Families: A Toolkit for developing cultural competence in your health care/service delivery setting:*

https://www.dmav.s.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt401/files/inline-documents/sonh/2022-ask-the-question-toolkit_0.pdf

2. The New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services has created an “Ask the Question” 10-part web series:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGc9i1a9JFWxQbSl7IJDmRErmyU6YXop5>

Example Workflows

3. Step 1: Pre-visit Planning to Identify Veterans:

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step1_Previsit_Planning_Workflow_Printable.docx

4. Step 2: Ask the Question Workflow to Identify Veterans:

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step2_ATQ_Workflow-Printable.docx

5. Step 3: Workflow to Identify Veteran Social Drivers of Health and Behavioral Health Care Needs:

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Step3_SDOH_BH_Needs_Workflow_Printable.docx

6. Health Affiliates Maine: Veteran Support Workflow:

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/HAM_Workflow_Printable.docx

7. Maine Crisis Line Workflow:

https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/MCL_Workflow_Printable.docx

Tools

8. Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) Project:

<https://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/about-the-scale/>

9. Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) Tool:

<https://cssrs.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/Community-Card-Patients-3.pdf>

Toolkit Links (Continued)

10. Veteran Safety Plan 8.5x11:

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Safety-Plan-with-988-Veteran-Print-8.5x11.pdf>

11. Veteran Safety Plan 5x7:

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Safety-Plan-with-988-Veteran-Print-5x7-1.pdf>

Resources

12. Maine Medical Association, Center for Quality Improvement Asynchronous Trainings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqjTsEozpRo>

<https://qclearninglab.org/>

13. MBVS Veteran Services Officers Contact Sheet:

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/VSO-Contact-Sheet-Final-March-2024.pdf>

14. MBVS Rack Card:

https://www.maine.gov/veterans/docs/Resources_Card.pdf

15. MBVS Trifold:

[https://www.maine.gov/veterans/docs/MBVS%20Benefits%20Brochure%20\(2023\).pdf](https://www.maine.gov/veterans/docs/MBVS%20Benefits%20Brochure%20(2023).pdf)

16. MBVS Maine Veterans' Resource Sheet:

<https://qclearninglab.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/SSG-Fox-Resource-Sheet.pdf>

17. Health Affiliates Maine Rack Card:

<https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/>

18. Health Affiliates Maine Trifold:

<https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/>

19. Maine Crisis Line Pocket Card:

<https://www.opportunityalliance.org/crisis>

Contacts

Maine Medical Association, Center for Quality Improvement

Email: info@mma-cqi.org

Website: <https://www.mainemed.com/>

Learning Lab: <https://qclearninglab.org/>

Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services

Email: <https://www.maine.gov/veterans/about/key-staff.html>

Website: <https://www.maine.gov/veterans>

Health Affiliates Maine

Veterans Case Management: <https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/veterans-case-management/>

Website: <https://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com/>

Maine Crisis Line

Senior Director of Crisis Services: Michelle Hansen

Email: michelle.hansen@opportunityalliance.org

Phone: 207-542-4439

Director of the Maine Crisis Line: Christina Cook

Email: christina.cook@opportunityalliance.org

Phone: 601-298-4530

Website: <https://www.opportunityalliance.org>

VA Maine

Website VA Maine Health Care: <https://www.va.gov/maine-health-care/>

Suicide Prevention Team (non-crisis)

Email: VHASPCME-402TOGSuicidePreventionTeam@va.gov

Phone: 207-623-8411 ext. 5017

Supporting our veterans and service members is a sacred duty that transcends mere obligation. These brave men and women have selflessly dedicated their lives to safeguarding our nation's freedom, often at great personal cost. Their unwavering commitment, resilience, and sacrifice deserve our utmost respect and gratitude.

We can honor their service by advocating for their well-being: ensuring access to quality healthcare, mental health support, education, and employment opportunities. We must recognize that their sacrifices extend beyond the battlefield—many face physical and emotional challenges long after their service has ended.



Maine Medical Association Center for Quality Improvement

30 Association Drive | P.O. Box 190

Manchester, Maine 04351

www.mainemed.com

qclearninglab.org



SCAN here to provide feedback
on this toolkit through Survey Monkey



SCAN here for printable
PDF version of this toolkit