



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Ramon Garcia
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Joseph Palacios
Commissioner, Precinct 4

Public Affairs Division
Julia Benitez Sullivan
Director

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

Veterans Crisis Line is just a phone call away for Vets in need

EDINBURG – To raise public awareness about the importance of Veterans in crisis, Commissioners Court passed a resolution in support of the Veterans Crisis Line.

The crisis line began with grant-funded monies utilized through the Community Service Agency and various partnerships, including the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, after identifying the special needs veterans are rightfully owed.

"Thank you for having us here today," said CSA Executive Director Jaime Longoria. "We're here to raise awareness of a very serious issue in regards to the needs of Veterans."

There are over 9.5 million veterans in the United States with more than 1.5 million veterans living in Texas, and 20,745 veterans live in Hidalgo County.

"Nationwide, 20 veterans per day lose their lives to suicide. Of those, 14 of them had no contact with the Veterans Administration whatsoever," said VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System Suicide Prevention Coordinator Dr. Rodolfo Quintana.

For many veterans, the transition to civilian life is a difficult one, especially for those who return home with symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress or other injuries.

The VA believes that everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide.

"As a 20-year veteran and being born and raised in the Valley, I have seen firsthand the impact that suicide can have on an organization or community," said VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Director Homero Martinez. "Suicide is a national health concern that affects all Americans, whether or not they have served in the military."

Now, veterans and service members in crisis have access to specially trained responders to assist them, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. To speak to a

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trained professional, veterans can call [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255) and press 1. They can also go online and chat at the website www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat; or they can use their text messaging service at 838255.

Hidalgo County supports the Veterans Administration's efforts to support service members and veterans in crisis via the Veterans Crisis Line and encourages all Hidalgo County residents to save the number and to share it with veterans and service members in crisis.

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"I hope we continue to partner and reach out to more veterans," said Precinct 4 Commissioner Joseph Palacios. "This is a very critical issue we are facing that needs special care; thank you for securing this grant."

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Photo 1: Commissioners along with members of the Hidalgo County CSA staff, Veterans Service Office, VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, and partners hold up their phones in support of the Veterans Crisis Line. **Photo 2:** VA Flyer.

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