

# SB-783

## Veterans: Suicide



Prepared by the  
ELDERLY CARE  
EVERYWHERE POLICY  
TEAM



## ELDERLY CARE EVERYWHERE

Largest youth lobbying group for senior citizens and senior care in California.

### Executive Summary

Senate Bill No. 783 (SB 783), introduced by Senator Archuleta and coauthored by Senator Rubio during the 2023-2024 Regular Session of the California Legislature, aims to establish a veteran suicide prevention training pilot program in Los Angeles and Nevada Counties. This program seeks to provide specialized training and certification in suicide prevention for military-connected populations, ensuring high-risk veterans receive streamlined and prioritized access to effective services tailored to their unique needs.

The bill authorizes the counties to hire a suicide prevention subject matter expert (SME) to conduct a thorough needs assessment and develop an individualized, intense training curriculum. The SME will also foster collaboration and communication with current community partners and implement evidence-based practices consistent with guidelines from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Defense, ensuring the highest standards of care and intervention.

SB 783 mandates that individuals trained by the program identify indicators of elevated suicide risk and provide emergency crisis intervention and referrals for veterans exhibiting emotional or psychological distress. The training will go beyond traditional gatekeeper training, equipping nonclinicians, including paraprofessionals and peers, with the necessary skills to support veterans effectively and empathetically.

The bill requires participating counties to submit a report to the Legislature by September 15, 2026, detailing the program's effectiveness and recommending whether it should be continued or expanded to other counties. This initiative will be in effect until January 1, 2029, ensuring a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of outcomes and compliance with developed success metrics. This assessment will be critical in understanding the program's impact and guiding future improvements.

To support the implementation of this pilot program, SB 783 appropriates \$100,000 from the General Fund, to be distributed equally between Los Angeles and Nevada Counties. This funding is essential for establishing the necessary infrastructure and resources to effectively train individuals and support veterans at risk.

In summary, SB 783 is a crucial legislative measure aimed at addressing the pressing issue of veteran suicide through specialized training and evidence-based interventions. By establishing this pilot program, the bill seeks to enhance the well-being and safety of veterans in Los Angeles and Nevada Counties, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of reducing veteran suicide rates and improving the quality of support services for military-connected populations. The initiative represents a significant step towards creating a more supportive and responsive system for veterans in need, reflecting a strong commitment to their health and welfare.



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### Our Position

Elderly Care Everywhere is pleased to express strong support for Senate Bill 783 (SB 783), introduced by Senator Archuleta and coauthored by Senator Rubio. This vital legislation seeks to establish a veteran suicide prevention training pilot program in Los Angeles and Nevada Counties. The focus on enhancing suicide prevention efforts for military-connected populations is a commendable step towards addressing the significant challenges faced by veterans, including alarming suicide rates.

SB 783 acknowledges the urgent need for specialized training and certification in suicide prevention to assist high-risk veterans. By implementing this pilot program, the bill ensures that veterans in crisis can receive immediate and effective intervention. The proposed approach, involving collaboration to hire a suicide prevention subject matter expert (SME), signifies a strategic move towards employing evidence-based practices and evidence-informed interventions tailored to the unique needs of veterans.

The initiative aligns perfectly with the mission of Elderly Care Everywhere to advocate for the health and welfare of all individuals who have served our country. We recognize that veterans often face complex challenges upon returning to civilian life, and mental health support is crucial in facilitating their transition and ensuring their well-being. By focusing on suicide prevention, SB 783 not only seeks to save lives but also to enhance the quality of life for veterans and their families.

Furthermore, SB 783's requirement for a thorough assessment and reporting mechanism ensures accountability and continual improvement of the program. The legislation's emphasis on non-clinician involvement, including paraprofessionals and peers, in the training process is particularly commendable as it fosters a community-based approach to suicide prevention. This inclusion is critical in building a supportive network around veterans, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions through relatable and empathetic engagement.

The appropriation of \$100,000 to kickstart this program is a prudent investment in our veterans' futures, demonstrating California's commitment to its veterans. Elderly Care Everywhere supports SB 783 because it not only addresses an immediate and critical issue but also sets a framework for potential expansion and long-term impact.

By endorsing SB 783, we advocate for a future where our veterans receive the respect, recognition, and crucial support they deserve. This bill is a significant step towards creating a safer and more supportive environment for all veterans, ensuring that those who have served our nation have access to the best possible mental health resources. We urge all stakeholders and the broader community to support this essential legislation, reaffirming our collective commitment to our veterans' welfare and dignity.



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# Letter of Support for SB-783

June 1, 2024

The Honorable Pilar Schiavo, Chair  
Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs  
1021 O Street, Suite 4120  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for SB-783**

Dear Assembly Member Schiavo and Members of the Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs,

On behalf of Elderly Care Everywhere, I am writing to express our strong support for SB 783, which aims to establish a veteran suicide prevention pilot program in Los Angeles and Nevada counties. This bill is crucial in addressing the alarming rates of suicide among veterans, particularly older veterans, ensuring they receive the necessary support and resources.

Older veterans face unique challenges that significantly increase their risk of suicide, including mental health issues, isolation, and difficulty accessing appropriate care. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, older veterans have some of the highest rates of suicide among all age groups. SB 783 addresses this crisis by providing targeted suicide prevention training to veterans service officers, fostering community partnerships, and developing comprehensive training curricula focused on suicide prevention.

The proposed program will enhance the capabilities of veterans service officers, allowing them to better identify signs of elevated suicide risk and provide effective crisis intervention and referrals. This initiative is particularly beneficial for senior veterans who may be more isolated and in greater need of targeted mental health interventions.

SB 783 is a vital step in safeguarding the well-being of our older veterans, who have served our country and now require our support. By passing this bill, California can lead the way in providing the necessary resources and interventions to prevent suicides among senior veterans. We urge you to support SB 783 and ensure our senior veterans receive the care and attention they deserve.

Sincerely,  
Aakrisht Mehra  
Founder/CEO  
Elderly Care Everywhere



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# **About Elderly Care Everywhere**

Elderly Care Everywhere is a transformative nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of senior citizens. Since its inception, the organization has positively impacted over 40,000 seniors through a variety of programs aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

Elderly Care Everywhere has been instrumental in alleviating hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical debt, ensuring that seniors have access to the healthcare they need without the burden of financial stress. With more than 20 chapters across the United States, the organization extends its reach and resources to numerous communities, providing support and advocacy on a national scale.

Beyond U.S. borders, Elderly Care Everywhere has established flood relief camps in India, showcasing its commitment to global humanitarian efforts. The organization's impactful work has been recognized by the government of New Delhi, further highlighting its significant contributions to senior care and welfare. Through these efforts, Elderly Care Everywhere continues to lead the way in senior advocacy, ensuring that the elderly are treated with dignity and respect worldwide.

Thank you for your support of SB-783. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at [connect@elderlycareeverywhere.org](mailto:connect@elderlycareeverywhere.org)