

# [IAVA Research Director Testifies Before House Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

**Testimony draws attention to VA and VSO's work to reduce suicide among veterans**

WASHINGTON (May 11, 2016) – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) [Research Director Jacqueline Maffucci, Ph.D](#), will testify tomorrow before the House Committee of Veterans Affairs oversight hearing: [Combating the Crisis: Evaluating Efforts to Prevent Veteran Suicide](#). The hearing will review the effectiveness of the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (VA) efforts to reduce veteran suicide as directed under the 2015-passed Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act, and is in anticipation of forthcoming updated VA data on the subject. Dr. Maffucci will share insights from her own research with IAVA's 425,000 post-9/11 veteran and civilian members focused on: access to care; interdisciplinary approach to care; research; and supporting those at risk.

"The signing of the Clay Hunt SAV Act into law was an important first step to addressing the unconscionably high rates of veteran suicide," said Dr. Maffucci. "While we are encouraged by the VA's commitment to implementing the SAV Act – specifically progress in data collection, community outreach, collaboration between VA and nonprofits and increased community outreach – there is still much work to be done. IAVA looks forward to continuing to be a part of the implementation while working with the VA and Congress to fill in the gaps in service, care, reduction of stigma and access to care."

Since IAVA launched its Campaign to Combat Suicide in the spring of 2014, more veterans have sought help to address mental health challenges. For example, over the past year IAVA's Rapid Response Referral Program (RRRP) program has seen a 39 percent increase in the number of clients approaching the organization for support with mental health care. The Campaign to Combat Suicide was a result of IAVA members continually identifying mental health and suicide as the number one issue facing post-9/11 veterans in its annual membership survey.

Dr. Maffucci's full testimony can be found [here](#). IAVA [led the effort](#) to pass the historic veteran suicide prevention legislation named after Marine veteran Clay Hunt who died by suicide in March 2011.

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health hearing will be held Thursday, May 12 at 10 a.m. and will be streamed at [veterans.house.gov](#).