# 2023 Annual Report
## Veteran Suicide in Northeast Florida
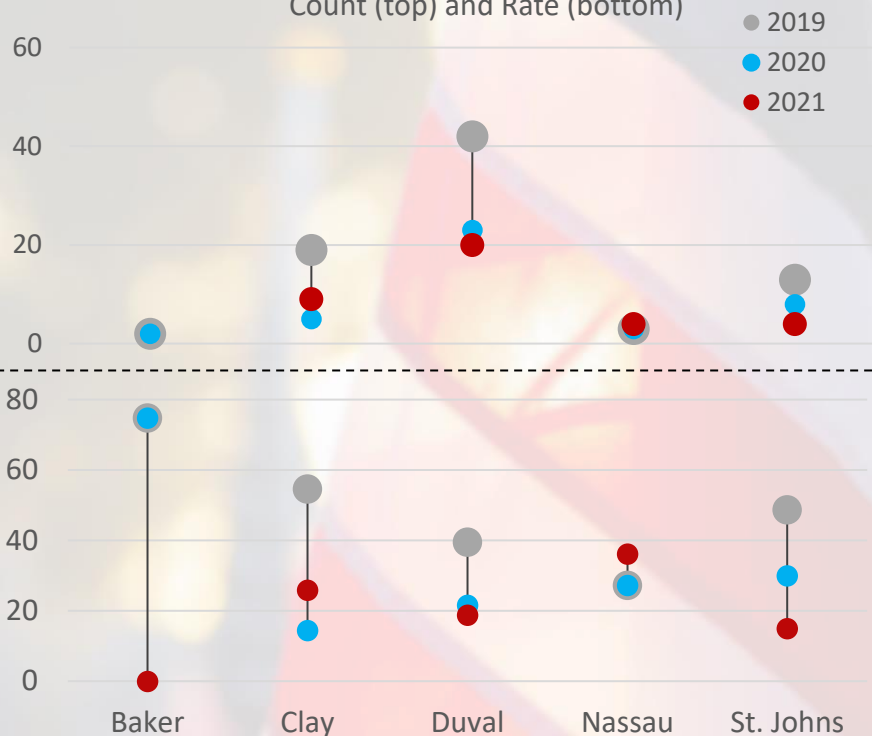
**THE FIRE WATCH** — YOUR TURN TO STAND.

### Overall Summary

As a part of its mission to end veteran suicide, The Fire Watch created the Watch Stander program, equipping community members with the skills they need to identify veterans in crisis and point them toward resources. The Fire Watch is also working hard to ensure that data is tracked, by gathering data from the American Community Survey and the Florida Department of Health and performing independent analyses, including this report on the original five county region of Northeast Florida (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties), with data partner NLP Logix. Tracking data is beneficial to The Fire Watch in two ways:

- Identifying emerging trends within veteran suicide data to create tailored approaches to pre-emptively combat areas of concern.
- Ensuring that the efforts put forward by The Fire Watch are a part of "turning the curve" and decreasing veteran suicides.

Data provided is based on the most recent release of Department of Health death counts for veterans whose census tract is known. The rate of suicide is calculated based on the total population and the percent of veterans published by the US Census Bureau. The rate of suicide among veterans has decreased significantly in the five-county area from the baseline year of 2019. Results were generally consistent across counties, with raw counts of veteran suicide in 4 of the 5 counties either remaining the same or decreasing. Trends that should be monitored were seen in suicides among minority veterans.



Veteran Suicides by Year
Baseline (2019) vs 2021
Count (top) and Rate (bottom)

- 2019
- 2020
- 2021

**78** Veteran suicides in 2019 in Northeast Florida

**40** Veteran suicides in 2020 in Northeast Florida

**42** Veteran suicides in 2021 in Northeast Florida

**42** Veteran suicides per 100K in 2019 in Northeast Florida

**22** Veteran suicides per 100K in 2020 in Northeast Florida

**23** Veteran suicides per 100K in 2021 in Northeast Florida

Between 2019 and 2021, there has been a significant reduction in the number of veteran suicides in the five-county area (46%). Nassau county has one additional veteran suicide in 2021 versus 2019. Over the same time period, Baker, Clay, Duval, and St. Johns all saw decreased veteran suicides. Similarly, there was a modest reduction in the number of suicides in the non-veteran population.

In 2019, there were 194 non-veteran suicides (14.65 per 100K civilians). In 2020, there were 198 non-veteran suicides (14.95 per 100K civilians). Finally, in 2021, there were 187 non-veteran suicides (14.12 per 100K civilians).

When considering the means of suicide, the use of firearms has increased - 34 of the 42 veteran suicides in 2021 were from a firearm (81%). During the 2019 baseline year, firearms were used in 71% of veteran suicides. This increase paired with a decrease in hanging/suffocation-related suicides. In comparison, 51% of non-veteran suicides involved a firearm.

Veterans who die by suicide are

**5x**

more likely to use a firearm than those who have not served.

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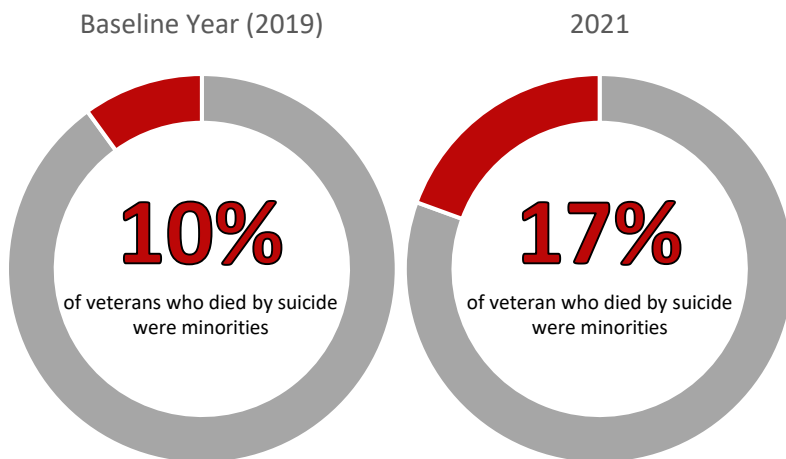## Veteran Suicide in Northeast Florida

### Veteran Suicide Demographics

When considering the demographics of veterans who die by suicide, there are variations in the 2021 data. The proportion of minority suicides in the veteran community has ranged around 10% for the last ten years. This year, this proportion increased to 17%. This increase shifts the balance for 2021 to a disproportionate ratio of minority deaths. This is a trend that should be monitored to see if this continues in future years.

The rate of suicide by gender has remained constant.

The rate of suicide by age group fluctuated from the baseline year, but these fluctuations are not beyond what is expected based on prior years.

### Veteran Suicides for Non-minorities and Minorities

**Baseline Year (2019)**

**10%**

of veterans who died by suicide were minorities

**2021**

**17%**

of veteran who died by suicide were minorities

### Geographic Breakdown

Over the last 10 years, at least one veteran suicide has occurred in each of the ZIP codes in the five-county area. However, in 2021 there were no veteran suicides in 27 of the 59 ZIP codes in the five-county area. The ZIP Codes with the most veteran suicides in 2021 were 32068, 32043, and 32256.

32068 (4 suicides in 2021) is a largely populated ZIP code with a higher-than-average veteran population percent (16%). This zip code had one more suicide than it did in the baseline year.

32043 (3 suicides in 2021) is a largely populated ZIP Code in Clay County centered around Green Cove Springs that also has a higher-than-average veteran percentage (16%)

32256 is a heavily populated ZIP code with a lower population of veterans on Jacksonville's Southside.



Veteran Suicides
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