



MARYLAND
Department of Health

Veteran and Armed Forces Member Suicides in Maryland Annual Report 2018

Health – General Article § 4-219

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Background

Maryland Ann. Code Health-General Art., §4-219, established a requirement for the Maryland Department of Health to produce an annual report describing deaths due to suicide among Maryland residents who were veterans of the United States Armed Forces, or who were currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces at the time of their death. This statute stipulates that the report is only to include information on suicide deaths disaggregated by age, sex, race/ethnicity, and method of suicide among those who had served in the Armed Forces. This report is to be produced and submitted annually through December 2021 to the State Department of Veterans Affairs, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

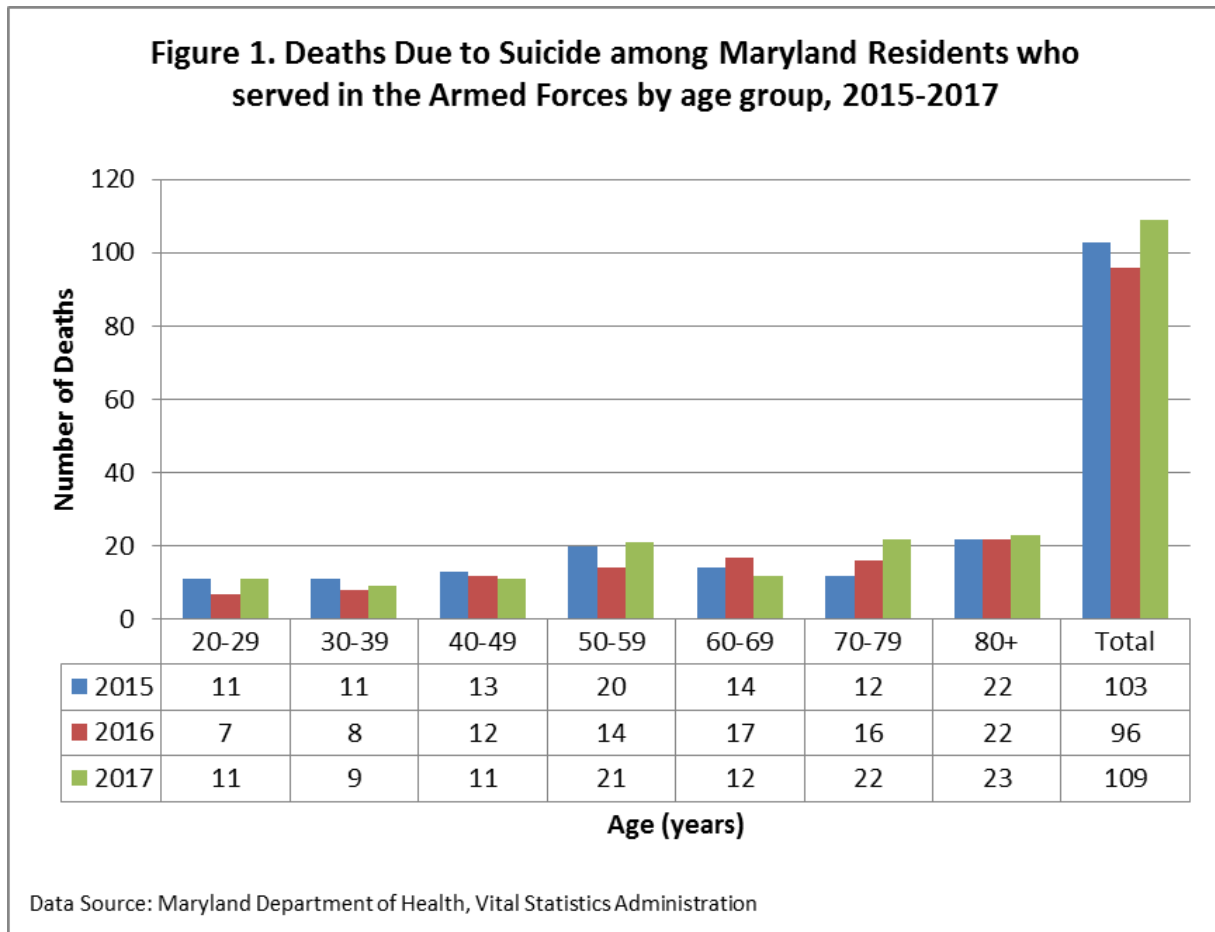
Since January 1, 2015, the Maryland Certificate of Death has included a checkbox that indicates whether a decedent had ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Information on whether the decedent had previously or was currently serving in the Armed Forces is provided by an informant, usually a relative or neighbor, to the funeral facility that submits the death certificate for registration. Therefore there may be cases where veteran service is missed because the informant was not aware that the decedent had served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The checkbox does not differentiate between veteran and current active service at the time of death.

Suicide Deaths among Maryland Residents who served in the U.S. Armed Forces:

Over the three year period that Maryland has been capturing information on Armed Forces service on death records, 2015 through 2017, there was an average of 103 deaths by suicide among Maryland residents who had served in the Armed Forces. Over this period, suicides represented one percent of all deaths among Maryland residents whose death certificate indicated they had served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Deaths by suicide among those who had served in the Armed Forces represented 17.5% of all suicides among Maryland residents during this three year period.

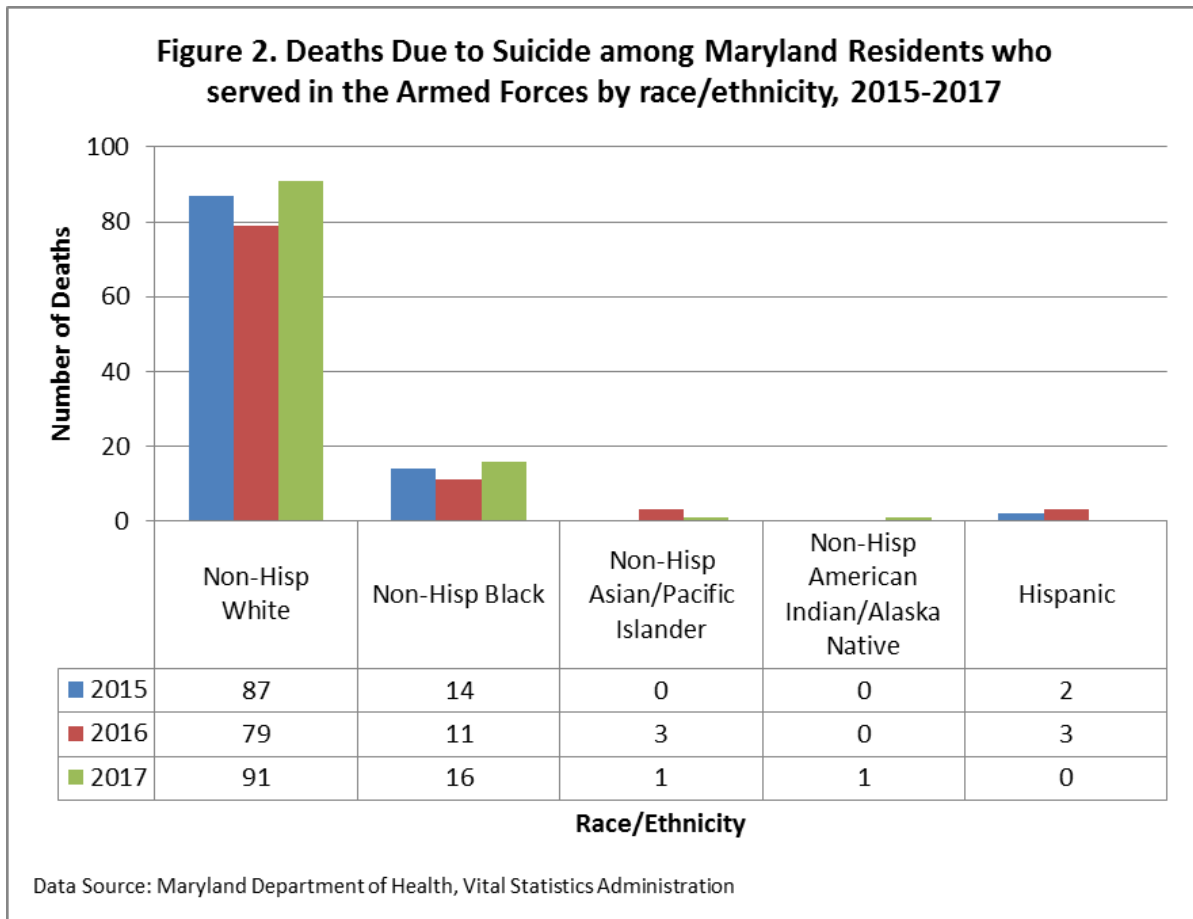
By Age Group

Figure 1, shows the number of suicides by age group and year of death. In each year, the highest number of suicides occurred in the 80 years and older group. The youngest age groups, 20 to 39 years, had the fewest suicide deaths.



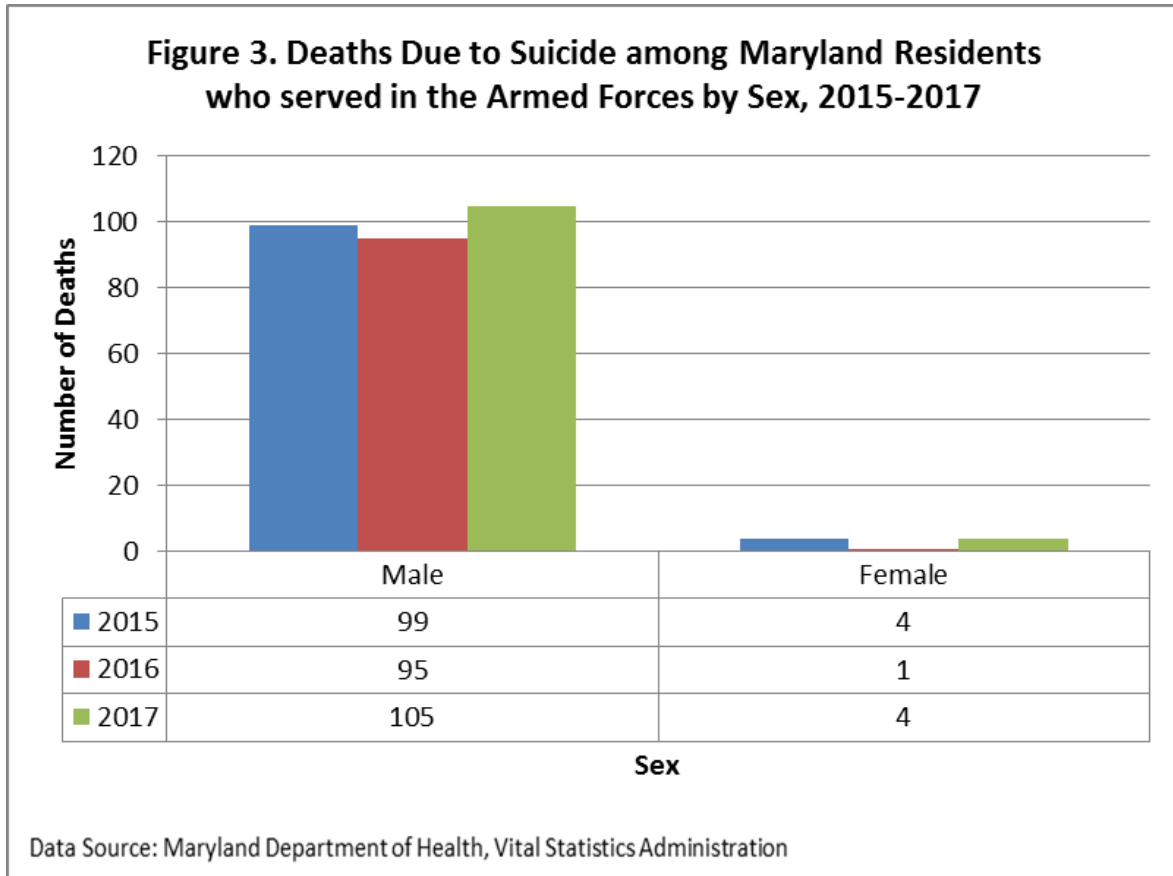
By Race and Ethnicity

The majority of suicide deaths among Maryland residents that had served in the Armed Forces were among non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 2). In 2017, 84% of the suicide deaths occurred among non-Hispanic Whites, 15% occurred among non-Hispanic Blacks, and <1% among other race/ethnicities.



By Sex

In 2017, 96% of suicide deaths among Maryland residents who had served in the Armed Forces were men (Figure 3).



By Method of Suicide

The majority suicides among Maryland residents who had served in the Armed Forces were committed using a firearm (Figure 4). In 2017, 72% of these suicides involved a firearm, 20% were committed by hanging, 4% by exposure to gases and <2% involved drug or alcohol intoxication.

