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***Service Dogs Saving Lives (SDSL) Places Special Emphasis
During Mental Health Awareness Month
on Role of Service Dogs as an Aid for Suicide Prevention***

Sussex County, DE – “Suicide is a leading cause of death and an important public health problem in the United States. It is a tragedy for all involved—the people and their families, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and communities.” *

With over 45,000 lives lost to suicide in 2022, Delaware is no exception to the rise in deaths by suicide. In Delaware, as nationally, men are more likely to die by suicide than women. For non-Hispanic white males, in particular, the rate between 2014 and 2018 was 26.3 per 100,000 people in the state. While Delawareans with an armed forces background comprise less than 10% of the state's population, they accounted for nearly 20% of suicides between 2014 and 2018. In Sussex County, the rate of suicide for males between the years of 2014-2018 was 22.9% - at a rate per 100,000 population – highest percentage of the 3 Delaware counties.**

Service Dogs Saving Lives has been using multiple platforms to raise awareness about mental health struggles and the importance of using service dogs to save lives. In Ocean View on June 7, 2024, a community event will be held at the Hope Center (81 Central Avenue) from 4:00 – 6:30 pm to explain the methodology of using highly trained service dogs as suicide prevention agents for veterans, first responders, and others suffering with mental health issues and suicide ideation.

ABOUT SDSL: The mission of [*Service Dogs Saving Lives*](#) is to transform suicide prevention through canine companions as a vital lifeline for veterans, first responders, and others suffering from mental health challenges.

*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2021). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP21-07-01-003, NSDUH Series H-56). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

**Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, My Healthy Community, "Insights from the 2014-2018 [Delaware Suicide Surveillance Study](#)."