

Will Carr: I know the issue of suicidal elopements came up within the past couple years and there were problems there and that is one section that you guys have addressed recently. Can you tell me what has been done to help make sure that that is not happening in the future?

Rima Nelson: So a lot has been done. So one of the things that we're able to provide today that we were not able to provide two years ago is that we have same-day access to mental health services. We also have social workers that are trained in mental health to cover the emergency department on a 24-hour basis seven days a week. We were also able to expand capacity in the emergency department by adding over 20 more beds so that our wait times in the emergency department has decreased. By doing those things, we can ensure that when a veteran presents with a mental health issue or is in crisis that we're able to immediately take care of that veteran. So that is something that we are able to do. We also look on a daily basis at the number coming into the emergency department, and so yesterday we had 144 visits. Of that 144, we ended up admitting 21 veterans into the medical center, but we also know that our wait time was a little over two hours, which is below the national average. So those are things that we keep track of, but whenever a veteran signs into the emergency department and leaves without being seen, we have a process in place where we make sure that we contact that veteran to make sure that they're okay. So we have put in multiple systems in place to ensure that veterans are receiving

the care, and of course mental health is the area that we need to really make sure we keep an eye out for because we want to make sure we serve veterans that are in crisis.