



DoD Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces

**Update for the Defense Health Board
8 June 2010**

**Ms. Bonnie Carroll, Co-Chair
MG Philip Volpe, Co-Chair**

**Col Joanne P. McPherson
Executive Secretary**



Overview

- **Task Force Membership**
- **“Charter” (specified tasks from NDAA 09)**
- **March, April, May Meeting Summaries**
- **Site Visit Update**
- **General Observations**
- **General “Findings”**
- **Future Sessions**
- **Feedback (Questions; Thoughts)**



Task Force Membership

- Dr. Alan Berman
- COL (Dr) John Bradley
- Dr. Robert Certain
- CMSgt Jeffory Gabrelcik
- SgTMaj Ronald Green
- Ms. Bonnie Carroll
- Dr. Janet Kemp
- Dr. Marjan Holloway
- Dr. David Jobes
- Dr. David Litts
- Dr. Richard McKeon
- MGySgt Peter Proietto
- CDR Aaron Werbel
- MG (Dr) Philip Volpe



Charter from Congress

- Methods to **identify trends and common causal factors** in suicides by members of the Armed Forces.
- **Methods to establish or update suicide education and prevention programs** conducted by each military department based on identified trends and causal factors.
- An **assessment of current suicide education and prevention programs** of each military department.
- An **assessment of suicide incidence by military occupation** to include identification of military occupations with a high incidence of suicide.
- The appropriate **type and method of investigation** to determine the causes and factors surrounding each suicide by a member of the Armed Forces.



Charter from Congress

- The **qualifications of the individual appointed** to conduct an investigation.
- The **required information to be determined by an investigation** in order to determine causes and factors.
- The appropriate **reporting requirements following an investigation**.
- The **appropriate official or executive agent within the military department and DoD** to receive and analyze reports on investigations.
- The appropriate **use of the information gathered** during investigations.
- Methods for **protecting confidentiality** of information contained in reports of investigations.



March Meeting

- **Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Program**
- **US Army Reserve**
- **Army National Guard**
- **Suicide Prevention in Primary Care
Community Health Approach**
- **Warrior Resiliency Program Research**



April Meeting

- Michigan Buddy to Buddy Support Program
- US Coast Guard
- VISN 19 suicide prevention research
- Medical Incident Investigation
- The Role of Messaging



May Meeting

- New Jersey Veterans Helpline
- ABHIDE database
- Anti-stigma programs

May 11-14, 2010

- Task Force Deliberations and Writing Sessions



Site Visit update

March 2010

- Camp Pendleton, CA
- Ft Benning, GA
- Ft Bliss, TX
- Lackland AFB, TX
- Langley AFB, VA
- Naval Station SD, CA
- Robins AFB, GA

April 2010

- Ft Carson, CO
- Ft Riley, KS
- Jacksonville NAS, FL
- Peterson AFB, CO

May 2010

- Ft Campbell, KY



General Observations

- The Services are heavily engaged in Suicide Prevention.
- Leadership is involved at all levels.
- Cannot know for sure just how many suicides there would be if it were not for current program and leadership efforts.
- There is a relationship between increased optempo, deployments & separations with overall stress on the force and increased suicide rates.
- Suicide is multi-factorial; Suicide Prevention must be multi-solutional.



General Findings

- Prevention
 - Stigma & Culture
 - Deployment/Dwell Time
 - Ops Tempo/Stress on the Force
 - Leadership
- Intervention
 - Training – Buddy, Family & Supervisory
 - Peer to Peer Programs
 - Crisis Intervention
- Postvention
 - Resiliency
 - BH Resources & Utilization
 - Investigations



Future Sessions

- **June 9-10, 2010**
 - Task Force continues drafting report
- **June 22-24, 2010**
 - Review final draft
 - Conduct “Red Cell” review
- **July 13-15, 2010**
 - Review & Finalize Report; Briefing to DHB
- **August 2010** – Socialization; Brief ASD-HA & SECDEF



Questions?

Other Considerations?

Offers of Advice and/or Assistance?