



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
 - Training – Buddy, Family & Supervisory
- Intervention
 - 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?