Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) Initiatives

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Task Force Implementation Plan

• Based on DoD Task Force recommendations, OUSD (P&R) developed an implementation memo guiding the Department’s suicide prevention efforts. P&R detailed this plan to Congress.
  o Of the Task Force’s 76 recommendations:
    ➢ 36 required new actions from DoD
    ➢ 34 had action planned, underway or completed
    ➢ 6 did not merit any action by DoD

• A General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) developed nine priority groups of actions based on the Implementation Plan:
  - Group 1 – Issue Policy Directive
  - Group 2 – Increase Fidelity of Data and Data Processes
  - Group 3 – Develop a Program Evaluation Process
  - Group 4 – Improve Strategic Messaging and Reduce Stigma
  - Group 5 – Develop Means Reduction Policy
  - Group 6 – Conduct a Comprehensive Training Evaluation
  - Group 7 – Evaluate Access and Quality of Behavioral Health Care
  - Group 8 – Review and Standardize Investigations
  - Group 9 – Develop a Comprehensive Research Strategy

* In final coordination

Completed
In Progress

- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY13
  - Sections 580-582 designate individual with responsibility for all DoD suicide prevention oversight
  - Mandates creation of a comprehensive suicide prevention policy (by July 1, 2013)
  - Allows mental health professionals and commanders to inquire about privately-owned firearms, ammunition, and potentially other dangerous weapons that could pose a threat for Service members identified as at risk of suicide or a danger to others

- DSPO’s strategy continues to also be guided by several other sources:
  - Executive Order: “Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families”
  - RAND Study
  - DoD and VA Integrated Mental Health Strategy Consolidated Implementation Plan
  - Section 533 of NDAA for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012
Timline: Evolution of DoD Suicide Prevention Program

- **2008**: NDAA 09 Section 733 mandated a DoD Task Force to examine matters of suicide prevention.
- **2009**: DoD Task Force issued a report with 76 recommendations.
- **2010**: RAND published “The War Within: Preventing Suicide in the U.S. Military.”
- **2011**: DoD submitted a Phase 1 Report, which assessed foundational recommendations.
- **2012**: Executive Order was issued on DoD/VA mental health access.
- **2013**: DoDD 6490.14 was released.

**Key Events**:
- **2008**: DoD Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide by Members of the Armed Forces was established.
- **2009**: SPARRC was chartered.
- **2010**: SPGOSC was established.
- **2011**: SPARRC was chartered.
- **2012**: NDAA 12 Section 533 directed DoD to enhance its suicide prevention program.
- **2013**: NDAA 2013 is signed.

**Acronyms**:
- **SPARRC**: Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee
- **SPGOSC**: Suicide Prevention General Officer Steering Committee
- **Vets4Warriors**: Becomes Part of DSPO

**NDAA**: National Defense Authorization Act
Progress and Accomplishments

• **Policy** – Issued the first DoD-wide comprehensive policy, DoDD 6490.14, on suicide prevention.

• **Suicide Data Repository** – Created joint DoD/VA Suicide Data Repository with CDC to increase the fidelity of suicide-related data and improve data processes. Mortality data includes all Service members going back to 1979.

• **National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (NSSP)** – Advanced national suicide prevention strategy through the Action Alliance and developed *community action teams* on best practices.

• **ePPBES (electronic Planning, Programming, and Budgeting Execution System)** – Utilized automated resource management tool to analyze all DoD suicide prevention and resilience programs and resources.
  - Tool has provided greater visibility into Service-level compliance
  - ePPBES maps to the goals of the NSSP
Progress and Accomplishments

- **Public Affairs Guidance** – Provided standardized suicide prevention education and training to DoD public affairs officials to promote messaging that encourages help-seeking and prevents suicide contagion.

- **Military Crisis Line Campaign** – Implemented an aggressive 12-month campaign with VA to increase awareness of DoD crisis support services. DSPO has participated in dozens of events and provided more than 54,000 crisis support materials.
Progress and Accomplishments

- **Suicide Prevention Month (SPM) Activities:**
  - Chaplains’ Forum
  - Army Health Fair
  - DSPO Orientation Day
  - Warrior Care Policy Webinar
  - Summit on Community-based Approaches
  - Out of the Darkness Walk

- **Provided materials to stakeholders for other SPM events:**
  - Suicide Prevention 5K Run at **Camp Buehring in Kuwait**
  - Suicide Prevention Standdown at **Ft. A.P. Hill**
  - Events at installations including **Camp LeJeune, Ft. Leavenworth,** and **Ft. Riley**
  - Military Appreciation events at **Major League Baseball** games
  - Job-related event held by **Hiring Heroes** for wounded warriors and their families
Progress and Accomplishments

• **Military Family Guide**
  - Provides information on suicide warning signs, risk factors, actions to help those in crisis, and more
  - Published in August 2013
  - Available for download at [www.suicideoutreach.org](http://www.suicideoutreach.org) and in print

• **Partners In Care** – Expanded program in which faith-based organizations provide services and support to members of National Guard and their families.
  - Local faith-based organizations can bring hope and offer support and continuity of spiritual care to increase resilience
  - Offers diverse, pluralistic, inter-faith network of participating faith communities
  - Voluntary involvement
Progress and Accomplishments

- **Gun Locks** – Distributed more than 100,000 gun locks to the Services through events nationwide to promote safety and reduce gun-related suicides.

- **Lethal Means Reduction** – Defined policies to ensure the safety of high-risk individuals from military and privately-owned weapons.

- **Drug Take-Back** – Developed 14 recommendations with DoD pharmacists for the delivery and disposal of unwanted or unused medications.
Progress and Accomplishments

• Reserve Component Suicide Postvention Plan – Expanded distribution of a toolkit that provides commanders with insight and guidance for supporting their unit, families and communities after a suicide event.

• SF-86 Strategic Campaign Plan – Launched effort to minimize false perceptions regarding the impact of behavior healthcare on personal security clearances.

• Vets4Warriors – Established oversight of a peer counseling and outreach program for Service members and their families.

• Suicide Prevention and Resiliency Resource Inventory (SPRRI) – Assessed needs of National Guard & Reserve leaders and support professionals; issued recommendations to improve prevention and resilience.

• Translation and Implementation of Evaluation, Research and Studies (TIERS) – Developed a framework for the translation of suicide prevention research and evidenced-based practices into policies and programs.
Looking Forward: Activities Through 2013 and Beyond

- Conducting oversight of DoDD 6490.14 implementation by the Services
- Fulfilling NDAA 2013 requirements
- Expanding efforts with VA to respond to 2012 EO to enhance the mental health services of Service members, Veterans and their families
- Improving data fidelity through partnerships with VA and CDC
- Implementing DoD-wide program evaluation in measures of efficiencies and effectiveness
- Exploring for Service members use of therapeutic sentencing techniques developed by Veterans Treatment Courts in military justice proceedings
- Taking co-leadership of the MilVets Task Force for the Action Alliance
Looking Forward: Enhancing Resilience

- DoD Directive (DoDD) 6490.14, among other things, requires DoD to:
  - Foster a command climate that encourages personnel to seek help and build resilience.
  - Facilitate a holistic approach to well-being through total fitness.
  - Provide continuous access to quality care and other supportive services to strengthen resilience and readiness of DoD personnel and their dependents.
  - Take steps to identify members who are at risk for suicide.
  - Determine best practices of suicide prevention, resilience, or preventative programs.
  - Provide robust training standards on suicide prevention.

- DSPO is expanding services, including peer support and research, to enhance the resilience of Service members.
Looking Forward: Enhancing Resilience

- In 2013 DSPO-led workgroup meetings confirmed Joint Chiefs of Staff’s definition of resilience as “the ability to withstand, adapt, recover, and or grow in the face of challenges and demands.”

- Through policy guidance and identifying best practices, DSPO aims to use Total Force Fitness to boost readiness and resilience.

- Populations targeted for resilience efforts:
  - Individual
  - Family
  - Unit
  - Active Duty
  - Reserve

- Initiatives will address the resilience needs of the military through several focus areas to offer a comprehensive, holistic, and expanded approach to suicide prevention.
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