

Governor Phil Murphy

On Veteran's Day, Governor Murphy, DMAVA Commissioner Brigadier General Dr. Lisa Hou, and Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman Announce Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

11/11/2021

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy, Brigadier General Dr. Lisa Hou, The Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA), and Acting Commissioner of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Sarah Adelman today announced the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families. The initiative will bring together state and federal agencies to combat suicide among members of the military and their families. This work will build on existing suicide prevention efforts across the state and assist with further implementation of best policies and practices using a comprehensive public health approach.

"New Jersey's veterans and service members are a source of immense pride for our state," **said Governor Murphy**. "This initiative recognizes the struggles that many of our bravest men and women face and will engage all aspects of government in meeting the challenge of preventing and reducing suicides."

"Together with 34 other states, New Jersey is engaging at the local, county, and state level to implement best, and evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce suicide among Garden State heroes and their families," **said Adjutant General and DMAVA Commissioner Brigadier General Hou**. "Purposefully, our effort will advance the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide by enhancing and aligning local and statewide suicide prevention efforts."

"Suicide is a significant public health concern among veterans and service members. Through these partnerships, and by enacting suicide prevention policies and best practices, we can help save the lives of men and women who have given so much to protect ours," **said Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "I urge anyone needing help to call our 24/7 suicide prevention help line at 1-855-654-6735. No matter what you're going through or feeling, you are not alone. We are here to listen."

This initiative establishes a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Department of Human Services, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration with the goal of preventing suicide among New Jersey's veterans. These efforts will advance the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' *National Strategy for Preventing Veteran*

Suicide by enhancing and aligning local and statewide suicide prevention efforts. The New Jersey Departments of Health and Children and Families are additional partners in the initiative, providing expertise and guidance for this critical effort.

The objectives of the Challenge include:

- Convening a state interagency military and civilian team of leaders to develop an implementation plan to prevent suicide among veterans.
- Implementing promising, best, and evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce suicide.
- Engaging with city, county, and state stakeholders to enhance and align local and state-wide suicide prevention efforts.
- Increasing knowledge about the challenges and lessons learned in implementing best policies and practices by using state-to-state and community-to-community sharing.
- Defining and measuring success, including defining assignments, deadlines, and measurable outcomes to be reported.

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
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609-292-6000

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