



The State of Maryland

Executive Department

EXECUTIVE ORDER
01.01.2023.18

Preventing Suicide Among Military Service Member, Veterans and their Families

- WHEREAS, Suicide among service members, veterans, and their families is widespread and preventable, and Maryland is committed to addressing this pressing challenge head on;
- WHEREAS, The suicide rate among veterans is double the general population suicide rate across all age groups in Maryland and suicide rates among service members and families is troublingly high;
- WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (the "VA") and the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ("SAMHSA") have created the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Families to encourage the adoption and implementation of suicide prevention best practices;
- WHEREAS, The prevention of suicide by service members, veterans, and their families requires a comprehensive public health approach, bringing together key State leaders to develop strategic action plans focused on preventing suicide in the veterans, military and military-connected community;
- WHEREAS, Maryland, working alongside the federal government, local governments, private sector entities, and non-profit organizations, will develop an action plan designed to combat the serious issue of suicide among service members, veterans and their families;
- WHEREAS, Screening for a military service connection in varied interactions can provide opportunities for assessment for suicide risk and appropriate referrals to suicide prevention services, to ensure that veterans and members of the military community are not left behind.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

A. The Secretary of Health and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or their respective designees (the "Secretaries"), shall jointly lead Maryland's efforts to prevent suicide among service members, veterans and their families.

B. The Secretaries of Health and Veterans Affairs shall convene an annual meeting at a time and place to be determined, to discuss and assess the State's efforts to prevent suicide among service members, veterans and their families.

C. Within 30 days of the issuance of this Executive Order, the Secretaries of Health and Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the State's short term suicide prevention strategy to identify any necessary adjustments.

D. Thereafter, in cooperation and in consultation with the appropriate State Agencies, the Secretaries shall launch a statewide "Ask the Question" campaign to provide standardized tools to all State Agencies, local governments, private sector entities, and non-profit organizations to screen constituents and customers for a military service connection in order to provide opportunities for appropriate referrals and assessment for suicide risk.

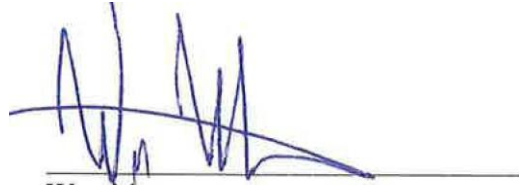
E. The Secretaries shall, through outreach and other appropriate means, elevate awareness of available funding for Maryland counties to advance goals set forth in the Governor's Challenge, including developing a coordinated intervention plan to respond to service members, veterans, and their families experiencing mental health crises, and help identify counties ready to implement the Challenge.

F. The Secretaries shall engage with the VA and SAMHSA to facilitate community and State-level efforts to prevent suicide by service members, veterans, and their families, using all available resources.

G. Every agency, department, office, division, or public authority of the State shall cooperate with the Secretaries, and, to the fullest extent permitted by law, shall furnish such information and assistance as the Secretaries determine is reasonably necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Executive Order.

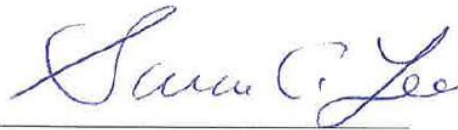
H. This Executive Order shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with all applicable statutes and regulations. Nothing in this Executive Order shall operate to contravene any State or federal law or to affect the State's receipt of federal funding.

GIVEN Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland, in the City of Annapolis, this 9th Day of November, 2023.



Wes Moore
Governor

ATTEST:



Susan C. Lee
Secretary of State

