

VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

Cicely Burrows-McElwain, MSW, LCSW-C

VA Suicide Prevention
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Department of Veterans Affairs

Stacey Owens, MSW, LCSW-C
Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

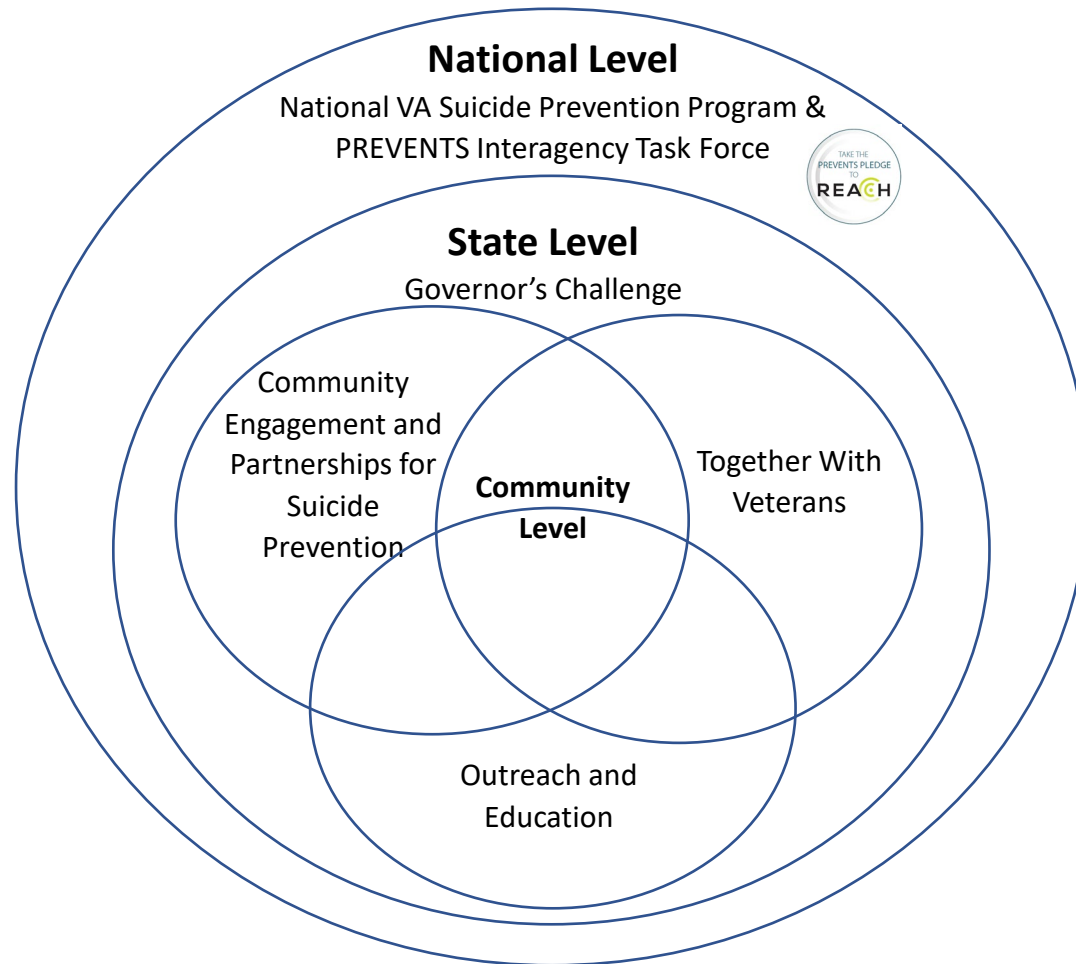
SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Community-Based Interventions



Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) serves as unifying model, from national to community levels, for all community-based efforts to end Veteran suicide.

- ***The Governor's Challenge*** is a collaboration with VA and SAMHSA where state policy makers partner with local leaders to implement a comprehensive suicide prevention plan.
- ***Together with Veterans*** is focused on Veteran-to-Veteran coalition building and Veteran leadership development for suicide prevention.
- ***Community Engagement and Partnerships for Suicide Prevention (VISN Expansion)*** is focused on community coalition-building and enhanced capacity for outreach and education.

Outreach and Education provides SAVE, VHA facility partnerships, events, etc. through local Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) and does not change their critical role.

Cross-Agency Collaboration

Cross-Agency Collaboration: Creating the Initiative



In 2018, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) partnered to advance the strategic implementation of suicide prevention policies and practices for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF).

About the Governor's Challenge

Objective

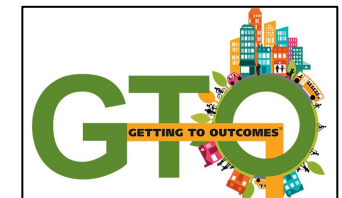
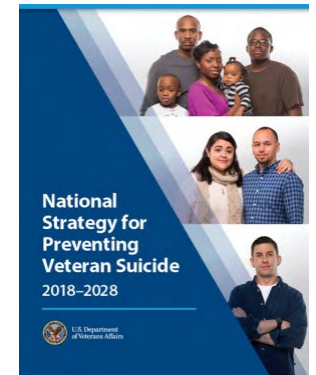
- Create a **Strategic Action Plan** with strategies intended to reduce suicide among SMVF
- Implement the strategies on the plan, demonstrate successful outcomes, and **Influence Policy Change** to support statewide practices that will reduce SMVF suicide

Approach

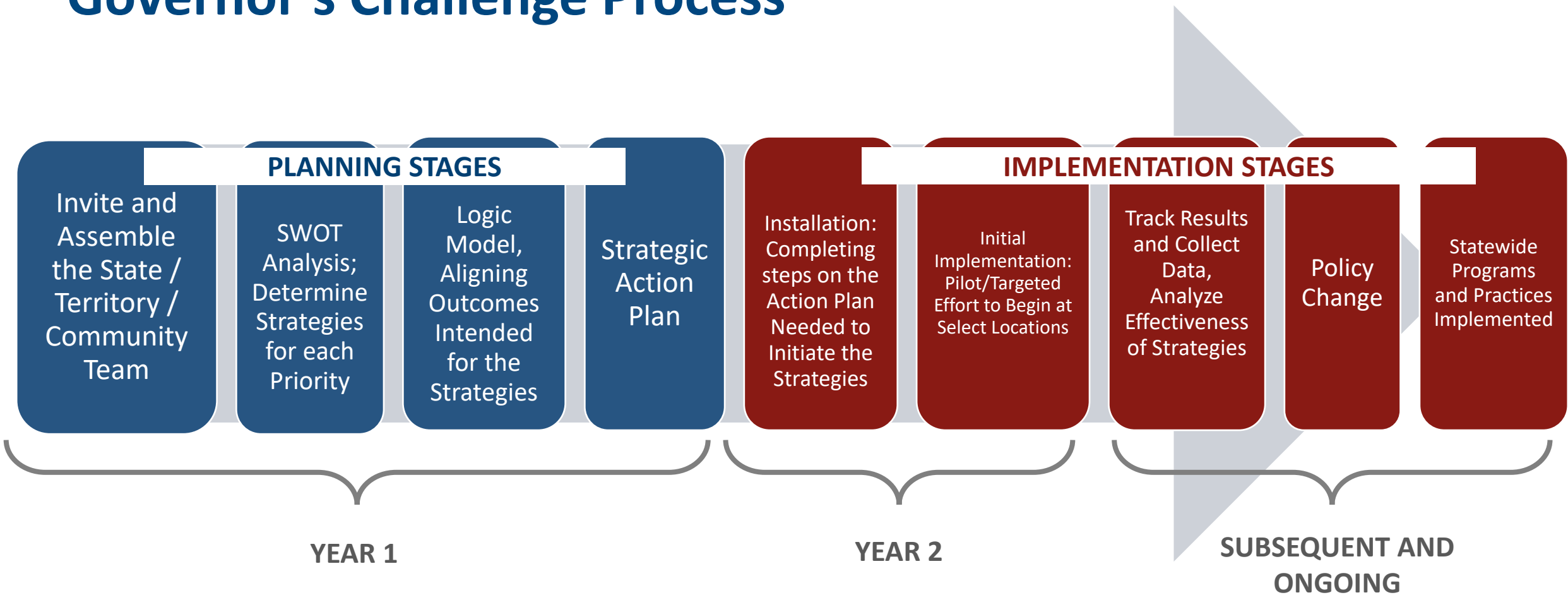
- **Form a Team** within each participating state/territory with interagency military and civilian collaboration
- *SAMHSA's Strategic Planning Framework, VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide 2018-2028, and RAND's Getting-To Outcomes Models* were used to structure the **Process Stages** and formulate content
- Teams participate in various **Technical Assistance Events** facilitated by VA/SAMHSA to advance through the process

*Strategic Prevention Framework: [20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/2k19/2k19-0620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf)

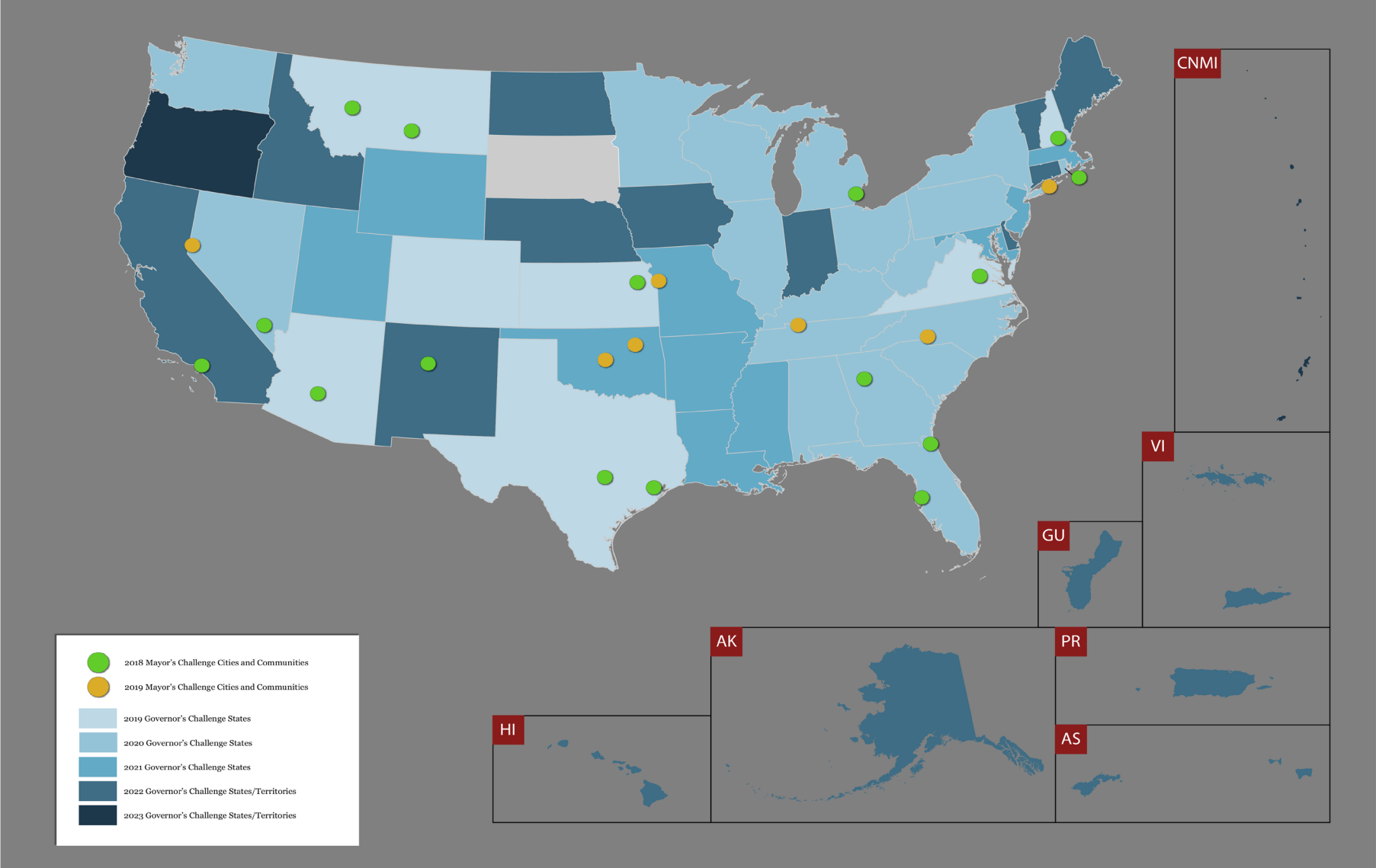
*RAND GTO: <https://www.rand.org/health-care/projects/getting-to-outcomes.html>



Governor's Challenge Process



Mayor's and Governor's Challenge Communities, States, and Territories Across the Country



Governor's Challenge

3 Priority Areas

Focused Priority Areas for SMVF Suicide Prevention



1. Identify SMVF and screen for suicide risk
2. Promote connectedness and improve care transitions
3. Increase lethal means safety and safety planning

Example Strategies/Best Practices



Identify SMVF and Screen for Suicide Risk

- *Ask the Question* as a trained/mandated practice
- Integrating a universal screening instrument, i.e., Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) within all community-based mental health provider agencies

Promote Connectedness and Improve Care Transitions

- Caring Contacts as a standard practice post-crisis hospitalization
- Telehealth and Telepsych
- Outdoor Veteran Expo Events

Increase Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning

- CALM and VHA Lethal Means Safety (LMS) Trainings
- Media/Promotional/Educational campaigns promoting LMS
- Crisis Response Planning (CRP) training

Examples: Best Practices in Action

NH's Ask the Question Website

ONE QUESTION
can make a big difference.

Select your profession to see how:

- Aging & Senior Services
- Children's Services & School Systems
- Employment & Vocational Services
- Faith-Based Groups

www.askthequestion.nh.gov

an official NEW HAMPSHIRE government website

Home About Providers Resources Connect Search

ASK THE QUESTION

Law Enforcement & First Responders - Vignette

Richard's Story

Richard joined the Army right after 9-11 and deployed multiple times. He drove a tank in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After returning home from a deployment, he was driving home from work when he was pulled over by a police officer for speeding and driving too close to the center of the road. He was tired, was not paying attention, and was still experiencing "battlemind," a condition where a returning warrior has difficulty shedding behaviors that are necessary at war but inappropriate in the civilian world. He had been driving aggressively - just as he was trained to do in Afghanistan.

The police officer did not know about Richard's recent deployment and began talking to Richard about the dangers of driving aggressively. Richard became agitated and he and the police officer began arguing. He was eventually arrested. Throughout the interchange, the police officer never asked Richard if he had served in the military. When that information was finally shared, the police department knew more about the circumstances for Richard's driving habits.

They linked him to the local Vet Center for counseling to facilitate a smoother transition to civilian life. The Police Chief discussed this in a meeting with highway patrol the next day and they agreed that they would inquire - whenever safely possible - about military status and recent deployments in order to best understand a situation.

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[Portable Document Format \(.pdf\)](#). Visit nh.gov for a list of [free .pdf readers](#) for a variety of operating systems.

Provider Resources
[Resource List](#)

NH's Ask the Question Toolkit & Video Series



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ATQ Toolkit Version 2.0, 2022

- Toolkit and videos were created so they can be utilized by states other than New Hampshire in their current form.
- Many pieces of the Toolkit are customizable for teams or organizations to revise to fit their needs.

"Ask the Question" Web Series
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services
10 videos • 138 views • Last updated on Jun 26, 2023

NH DMAVS presents the "Ask the Question" Web Series. A 10-part video series that discusses why you should ask the question "Have you or a family member ever served in the military?".

These videos were designed to supplement the "Ask the Question" Toolkit. This free, printable toolkit is found at: <https://www.askthequestion.nh.gov/documents/at-toolkit.pdf> or scan the QR code found at the end of the videos.

Additional "Ask the Question" resources are available at the website: <https://www.askthequestion.nh.gov/>

- 1 Ask the Question: Introduction
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 45 views • 1 month ago
- 2 Ask the Question: History of "Ask the Question" in New Hampshire
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 31 views • 1 month ago
- 3 Ask the Question: Military Health History & Other Important Questions
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 19 views • 1 month ago
- 4 Ask the Question: Stigma and Discrimination
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 16 views • 1 month ago
- 5 Ask the Question: Who are VSMF?
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- 6 Ask the Question: When the Answer is "Yes"
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 15 views • 1 month ago
- 7 Ask the Question: Building a Team
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 13 views • 1 month ago
- 8 Ask the Question: Ask with Strategic Intent
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- 9 Ask the Question: The Searles Family Story
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 34 views • 1 month ago
- 10 Ask the Question: Opportunities to Collaborate
NH Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services • 22 views • 1 month ago

Missouri's State Agency Approach to "Ask the Question"

Supporting SB 120, VETERAN QUESTIONS ON STATE AGENCY FORMS (SECTION 42.390)

- This act requires that every state agency shall ensure that any form used to collect data from individuals that was first created or subsequently modified on or after August 28, 2021, include the following questions:
 - (1) Have you ever served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States and separated from such service under conditions other than dishonorable?
 - (2) If answering Question 1 in the affirmative, would you like to receive information and assistance regarding the agency's veteran services?
- Every state agency shall prepare information regarding applicable services and benefits that are available to veterans and provide such information to those who answer the questions in the affirmative.

Missouri's State Agency Approach to "Ask the Question"

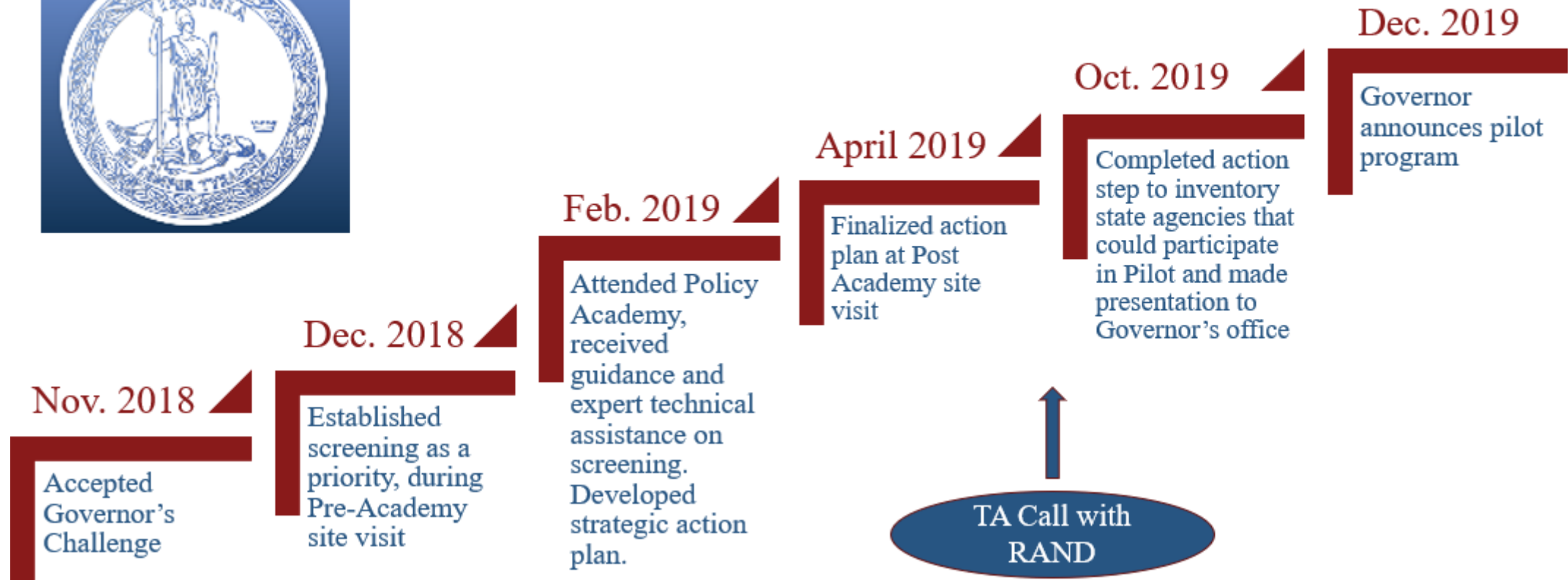
The MO Governor's Challenge Team has supported the implementation of SB 120 by -

- Creating a toolkit to assist state agencies with implementing SB 120 ATQ requirement
- Informing agencies on statute requirement and promoting ATQ toolkit
- Responding to questions

Additional work ahead (Phase II):

- Planning next phase of ATQ which will create "Gold Standard" for identifying SMVF in state agencies which includes a referral process
- Finalizing plans to explore suicide prevention training for state employees

Virginia's Success Story



The Virginia Identify, Screen, and Refer Pilot

For Immediate Release: December 27, 2019

New Program to Help Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Families

More than 40 community organizations and state agencies to help eliminate gaps in access to care

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced a new pilot program to help prevent suicide and close gaps in access to care for service members, veterans, and their families.

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2019/december/headline-850263-en.html>

Virginia's Identify, Screen, and Refer (VISR) Program 2.0

- VISR 2.0 kicked off in January 2023 and will continue to build upon the first iteration and is recruiting additional agencies, including additional segments of Department of Veteran Services
- Next Steps
 - Retaining working groups, and trying to build them around similar agency type/mission (different groups for healthcare orgs, VSOs, etc.)
 - Getting a full sense of desired data ahead of time, then working with each working group to find out (a) what data are feasible to gather and (b) optimal way to gather it
 - Partnering with a George Mason University to help with infrastructure and guidance on data collection
 - Using a data collection platform (Qualtrics) to streamline data collection – make it easier for agencies to report AND for us to collect and manage

VA and Community Crisis Center Partnership

CARE COORDINATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD
AND
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center

This Care Coordination Agreement (the Agreement) serves to confirm the mutual understandings of The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD (The Harris Center) and Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center a referral partner for those individuals who receive community-based mental health and/or substance use disorder services from The Harris Center, in accordance with the terms set forth below. The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the parties' understanding regarding their collaborative treatment planning and care coordination activities.

Houston's Harris Center and Debakey VA Medical Center MOU for crisis care coordination -- January 2019

Houston's Success Story

https://www.houston.va.gov/features/Mayors_Challenge_Prevent_Veteran_Suicide.asp



Transforming Lives



Dec. 2017

Accepted the Mayor's Challenge

Mar. 2018

Attended Policy Academy, received expert technical assistance

May 2018

Added essential team member at Post Academy site visit after identifying need for VA mental health representation

July 2018

Collaborated with Houston crisis map team, recognized need for collaboration between the Harris Center and the VA Medical Center

Nov. 2018

Texas accepts Governor's Challenge and holds Pre-Academy site visit. Team includes Mayor's Challenge team leads. Team supports VA collaboration strategy

Jan. 2019

Houston's Harris Center and Debakey VA Medical Center signed MOU to coordinate crisis care

Thank you!

Questions?

Cicely Burrows-McElwain, MSW, LCSW-C
Director
Technical Assistance Resource Center
Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention
VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
Cicely.Burrows-McElwain@va.gov

Stacey Owens, MSW, LCSW-C
Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison
Center for Mental Health Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration
Stacey.Owens@samhsa.hhs.gov