

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, suicide is a national public health challenge and the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, 2nd for people ages 10-35. On average, 129 Americans die by suicide each day, accounting for 47,173 suicide deaths in 2017. Specifically, the number of Veteran and Military suicides has exceeded 6,000 each year from 2008-2017 in the United States. In Washington State, over 1000 Veterans have died by suicide since 2014, with nearly 68% in 2017 by firearm. These deaths cause immeasurable pain among individuals, families, and communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2019, Executive Order 13861 established the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide or PREVENTS (the "Roadmap"), a comprehensive plan to empower Veterans and end suicide through coordinated suicide prevention efforts, prioritized research activities, and strengthened collaboration across the public and private sectors. Specifically, the PREVENTS national public health campaign REACH, will seek to increase awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention to reduce suicide for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, for every individual who feels alone, ashamed, or believes that they would be a burden if their thoughts or feelings were shared, there are scores of others in every community who want to help but are not sure how; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families that brings together interagency teams to address Veteran suicide at the state level. Washington State is participating in this Governor's Challenge with diverse representation including the Veteran Tribal community, non-profit organizations serving Veterans, National Guard and Active Duty mental health leadership, and the state health authority. These subject matter experts are working together to create a suicide prevention plan to support our Military and Veteran community. Additionally, Washington businesses are in the unique position to leverage the learnings from our employees, including Veterans, to encourage a national discussion on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, and collaborate on the offering of military cultural competency and suicide awareness trainings; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the State of Washington do hereby proclaim the State of Washington's support for the implementation of the

PREVENTS "Roadmap"

working with federal, state, tribal, and local leaders to help identify Veterans and other citizens in need of care. I call upon all citizens, Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, corporations, health care providers, first responders, the criminal justice community, institutions of higher learning, the faith-based community, the Arts community, and the research sector in the great state of Washington to raise awareness of mental health, suicide prevention, lethal means safety, and support services available in our communities and to encourage all those in need, to REACH to access help, hope, and community.

Signed this 19th day of August, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee

