

# Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF)

Presenter: Dr. Samuel L. Hayes Jr.  
Governor Challenge Program, Project Manager

## Mission Statement

As part of the Governor's Challenge program, New Jersey is joining forces with community-based suicide prevention initiatives across the nation to reduce the rate of suicides among Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF)



# Priority #1: Identify SMVF and Screen for Suicide Risk

Presenter: Rhonda Hart, LCSW

## Goals

- Identify New Jersey SMVF in non-VA care systems to increase opportunities for contact and referral to relevant resources.
- Assess New Jersey SMVF in non-VA care systems for suicide risk.
- Develop an Ask the Question campaign.



# Priority #2: Promote Connectedness and Improve Care Transitions

Presenter: Patrick W. Carney

## Goals

- Adopt Expiration Term of Service (ETS) sponsorship statewide to maximize the number of transitioning service members and families who receive a warm handoff of service delivery.
- Develop and expand upon existing peer programs within the state to help promote connectedness.

Feeling a sense  
of belongingness  
and **connectedness.**



# Priority #3: Increase Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning for SMVF

Presenter: Robert Eilers, MD

## Goals

- Expand and promote lethal means safety resources for military families.
- Increase awareness of safe storage options in NJ.
- Disseminate lethal means safety media content.
- Raise awareness of NJ's Extreme Risk Protective Order option.



# Mental Health First Aid for Military Veterans and Their Families

Presenter: Jennifer Barrett

- The New Jersey Hospital Association, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, provides Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses that help veteran advocates, faith-based groups, education professionals and other community partners support our veterans, military personnel and their families.
- These courses are designed to give laypeople the tools to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults.
- NJHA is able to bring these courses to all corners of the state, thanks to funding from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NJDMAVA) in their effort to ensure all of New Jersey's Veterans have access to the mental health resources they need and deserve.

# Bringing Veterans Home

Presenter: Nelson Gonzalez

## Our Mission

To effectively end veteran homelessness by enhancing existing systems, creating rapid access to housing, and ensuring homelessness becomes rare, brief, and non-recurring.

