



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
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NGB-SFSS

5 August 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR The Adjutants General of all States, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commanding General of the District of Columbia

SUBJECT: Army National Guard (ARNG) Suicide Prevention Month, September 2008

1. References:

a. Memorandum, ARNG, NGB-ARM, 12 December 2005, subject: Army National Guard Suicide Prevention Program Guidance Memorandum.

b. Army Regulation 600-63, Army Health Promotion, 7 May 2007.

2. I am designating September 2008 as Suicide Prevention Month for the ARNG. This coincides with National Suicide Prevention Week, observed 7-13 September 2008, and World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2008. Our theme for this year as designated by the Army is "Shoulder to Shoulder; No Soldier Stands Alone." The goal is to promote the buddy system, and highlight available resources in the military and local communities that support our Soldiers and Families in times of stress.

3. During calendar year 2007, ARNG Soldier suicides increased by 50 percent, and a similar trend is taking place in calendar year 2008. Suicides are preventable, and as leaders and Soldiers we must focus attention on providing solutions to reduce this trend and save lives. One significant way to do this is by partnering with the ongoing Department of Defense, national, and community programs already in place.

4. It is my goal that every company commander incorporates suicide prevention/awareness activities for Soldiers and Families into the September Inactive Duty Training. Suicide prevention is a commander's program according to paragraph 4-4, AR 600-63, and it is important that commanders give time and attention to this important subject. Possible activities and events might include: static displays by local helping agencies; screening services by VA Mental Health personnel; Family picnic with special speaker hosting a community health fair at the armory; "Ask your buddy, Care for your buddy, Escort your buddy (ACE)" Suicide Prevention classes; chaplain presentations to unit leadership on leadership responsibilities and stigma reduction; and unit support and participation in local community suicide prevention month activities.

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5. Commanders should coordinate with their State's JFHQ Public Affairs Office and local media to publish existing civilian and military hotlines as well as articles about suicide prevention, stress, depression, Family violence and abuse, substance abuse, and the identification of agencies that can help. Commanders should also emphasize these topics in the monthly unit and Family newsletter.

6. Printed media such as posters, ACE training materials, leader's guides and graphic training aids can be ordered or downloaded free of charge from the United States Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine Web sites at:
www.us.army.mil/suite/page/334798 and
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpmw/Readiness/suicide.aspx>.

7. State Suicide Prevention Program Managers (SSPPM) can provide support to chaplains and commanders with ideas and training resources for the weekend events. Upon conclusion of the month, the SSPPM should provide a report detailing the number of activities completed, the nature of the activities, and the number of Soldiers involved to the ARNG Suicide Prevention Section (MSG Marshall Bradshaw) at DSN 327-9727, 703-607-9727, or marshall.bradshaw@us.army.mil.

8. The point of contact is Ms. Erin Thede, Chief, Soldier Family Services and Support Division at DSN 327-7597, 703-607-7597, or erin.thede@us.army.mil.



CLYDE A. VAUGHN
Lieutenant General, GS
Director, Army National Guard

CF:

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