



*Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary*

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## **Maryland Department of Health launches program to reduce suicides among Maryland service members, veterans**

**Baltimore, MD** – The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) today fully launched the Trained Military Assistance Provider (TMAP) Program, a new initiative to reduce suicides and increase lethal-means safety for service members and veterans.

Developed by the Maryland Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families, **this training is free to all Maryland-based primary care staff**. The initiative was first launched as a pilot program in 10 Maryland primary care practices.

“Maryland’s service members and veterans benefit from specially targeted medical and mental health care,” said MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader (CAPT, U.S. Navy, Retired). “With this new resource, we aim to reach providers and practices and let them know we have the information and the tools to help this population before they reach a crisis.”

Maryland is home to approximately 350,000 veterans, 30,000 active duty service members and 18,000 reservists/national guard members, according to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.

According to the [National Library of Medicine](#), 45% of people who died by suicide saw their healthcare provider the month prior and 84% the year prior to their death.

“Educating doctors and nurses, as well as front desk staff and lab techs, is vital. The healthcare team can be appropriately utilized to recognize a service member in need,” said Dr. Lisa Burgess, MDH Acting Deputy Secretary for the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). “It is important that we train everyone on how to recognize warning signs as well as how to have

conversations about safely storing weapons, what medications the patient can access, and what protections they can put in place.”

Participants are trained on mental health, suicide risk assessment and intervention. The curriculum helps providers better understand military and veteran culture, and create a safety plan in a military-culturally competent way.

Led by Maryland’s Commitment to Veterans (MCV) a division within BHA, TMAP offers 3.5 hours of online training, over 10 self-paced courses on topics including:

- Military culture
- Safety planning
- Barriers to care
- Lethal means counseling
- Risk assessment tools

Once completed, providers will become “Trained Military Assistance Providers” and will receive a physical and a virtual toolkit with resources, including gun locks, locking medicine bags, as well as promotional materials.

TMAP training is provided by PsychArmor, a nationally recognized nonprofit leader and preferred training provider for military cultural awareness. Their podcast, [Behind the Mission](#), will feature an interview with MCV Director Joy Ashcraft on December 6, 2022, to discuss the TMAP program.

[Learn more](#) or access the training: [bit.ly/MDHTMAP](http://bit.ly/MDHTMAP).

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