



Steve Sisolak
Governor



Richard Whitley
Director

State of Nevada

Department of Health and Human Services

**Increasing Connectedness to End Suicide
Among Service Members, Veterans,
and their Families in Nevada**

Office of Suicide Prevention

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Suicide Prevention Coordinator

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Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Administrator, Lisa Sherych



With Gratitude to Caleb Cage

“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”

George Washington

“If we can create a society where respect and friendliness is the passport that we all have when we meet each other...then the military, who literally will go in harm’s way for us, will not seem alien anymore,...they’ll seem like your own brothers and sisters.”

Gen. James Mattis, USMC, Ret., Former U.S. Secretary of Defense, 2019 Reagan National Defense Forum



NDVS OVERVIEW

THE HEROES WE SERVE

How Nevada Compares Nationally

Number of Veterans

Nevada: 218,406 Nationally: 19,998,799

Percentage of Adults Who Are Veterans

Nevada: 10.3% Nationally: 6.60%

Number of Women Veterans

Nevada: 21,715 Nationally: 1,882,848

Percentage of Women Veterans

Nevada: 9.94% Nationally: 9.14%

Number of Military Retirees

Nevada: 29,541 Nationally: 2,156,647

Percentage of Military Retirees

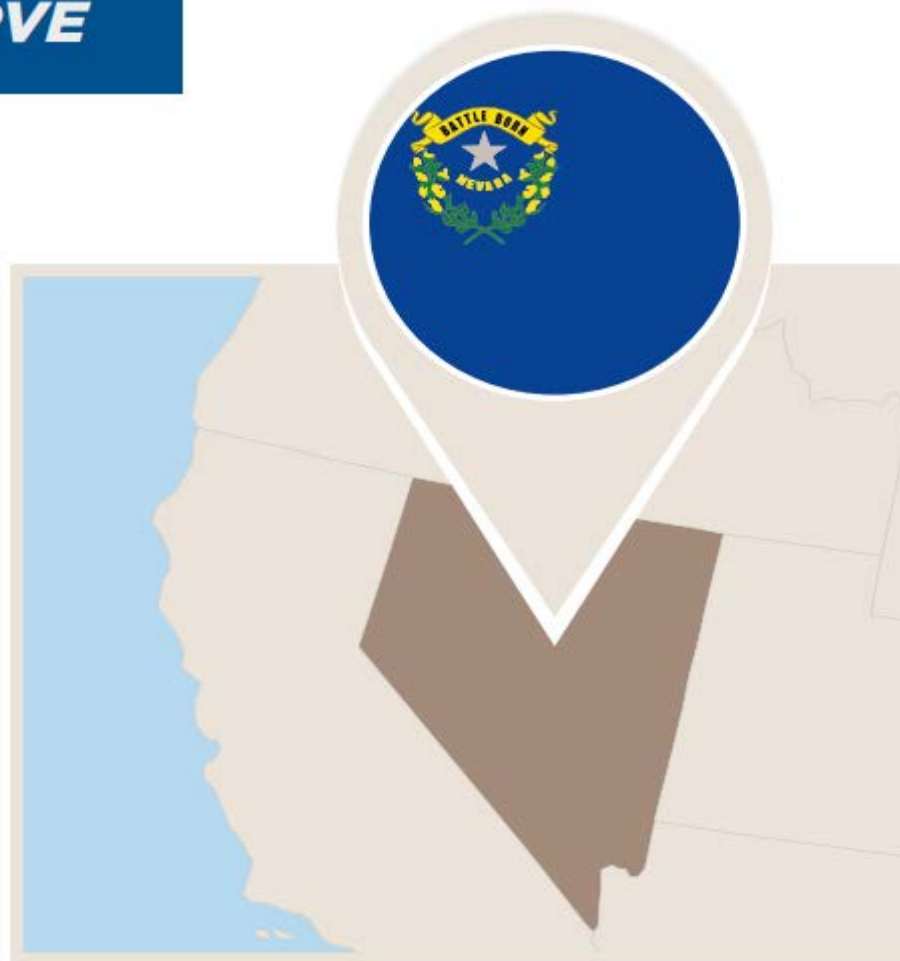
Nevada: 13.53% Nationally: 10.78%

Number of Veterans Age 65 and Over

Nevada: 103,165 Nationally: 9,410,179

Percentage of Veterans Age 65 and Over

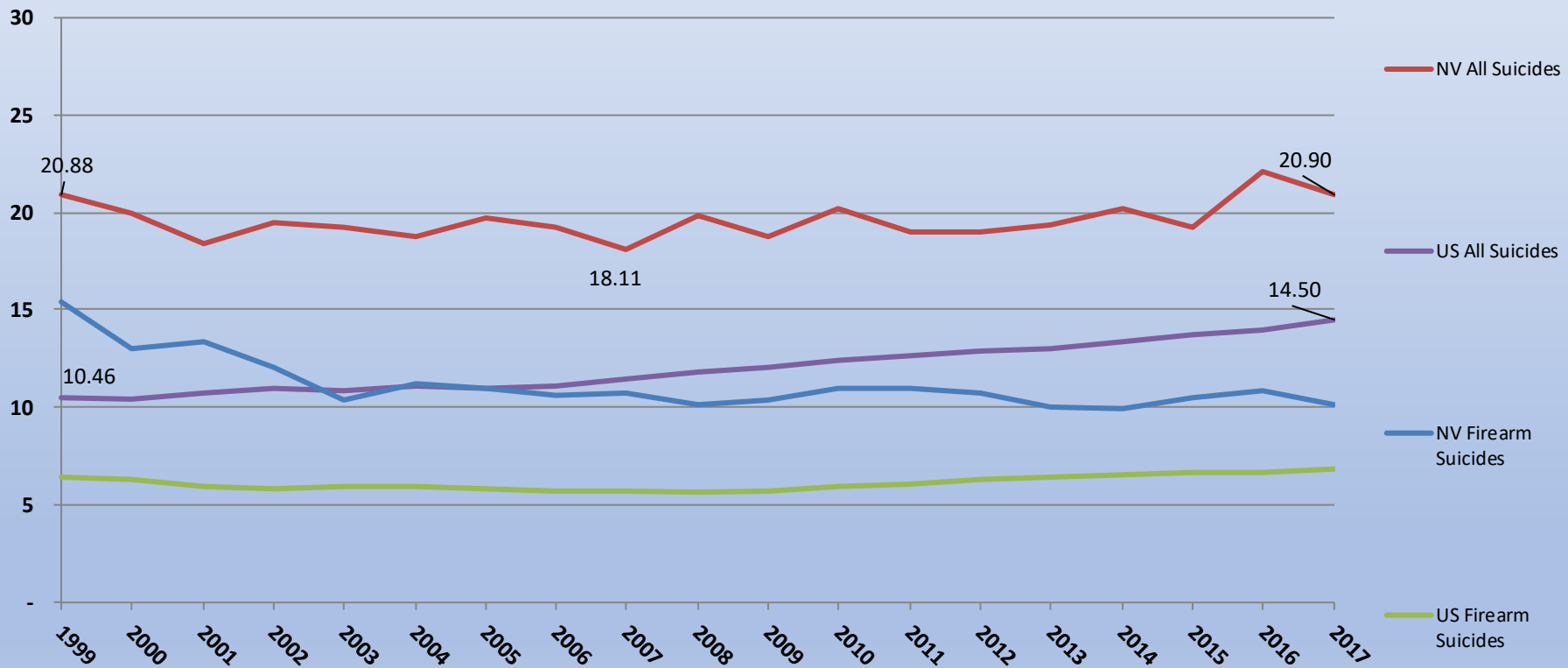
Nevada: 47.24% Nationally: 47.05%



*As of 9/30/17 - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/State_Summaries_NevadaSummaries_Nevada.pdg

Suicide Rates in Nevada and the US --1997-2017

Crude Suicide Rate per 100,000 Population: 1999-2017 Nevada Residents

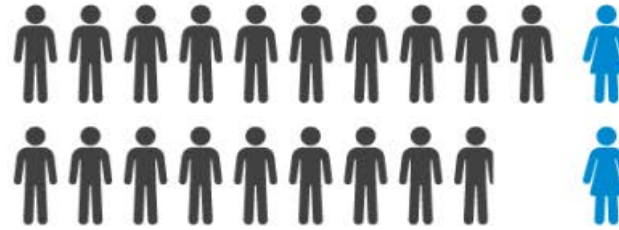


Key Facts About Veterans

Figure 1: The U.S. Veteran Population

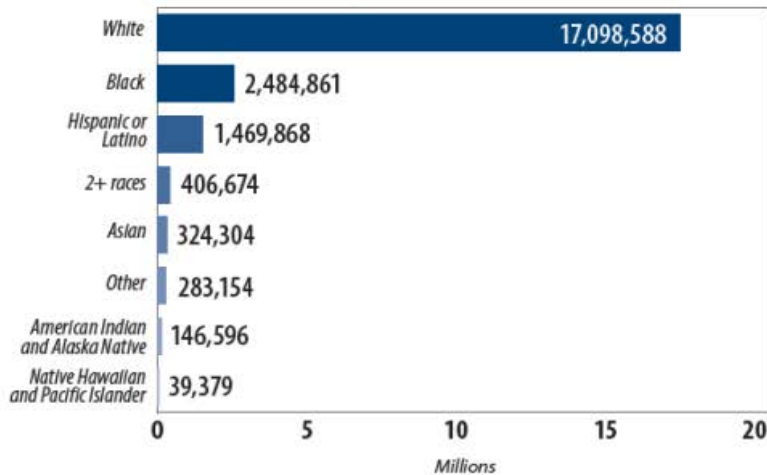
20.7
Million Veterans

18.9
Million Males

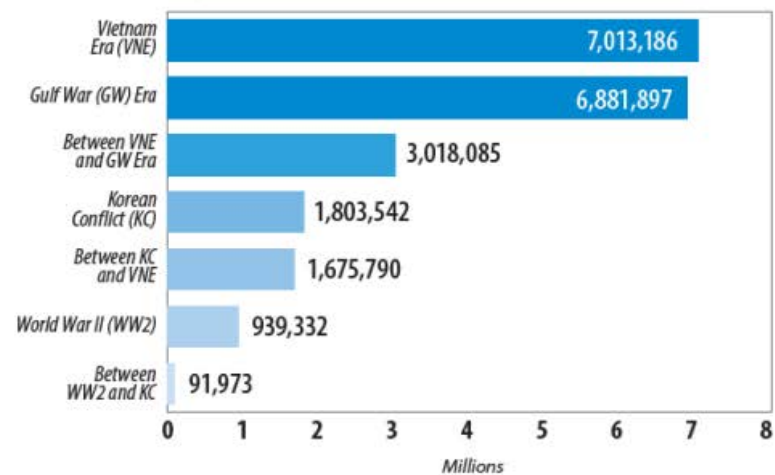


1.8
Million Females

Veterans by Race/Ethnicity



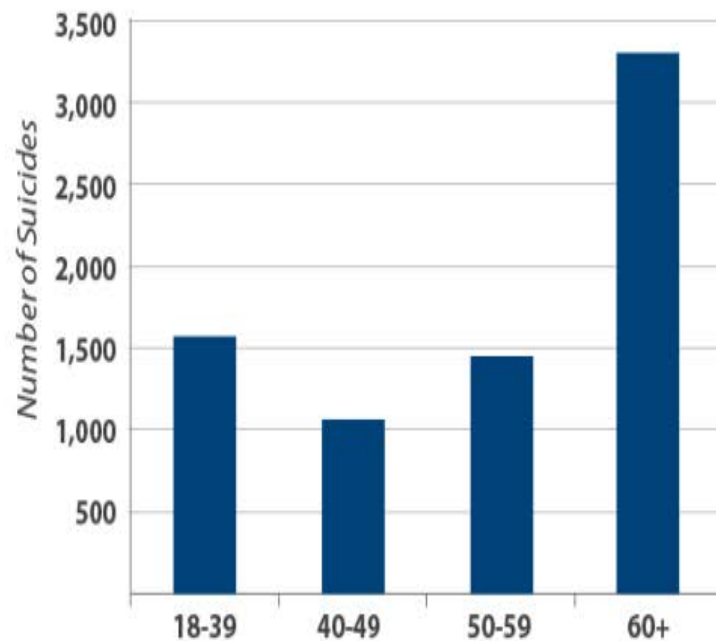
Veterans by Service Era



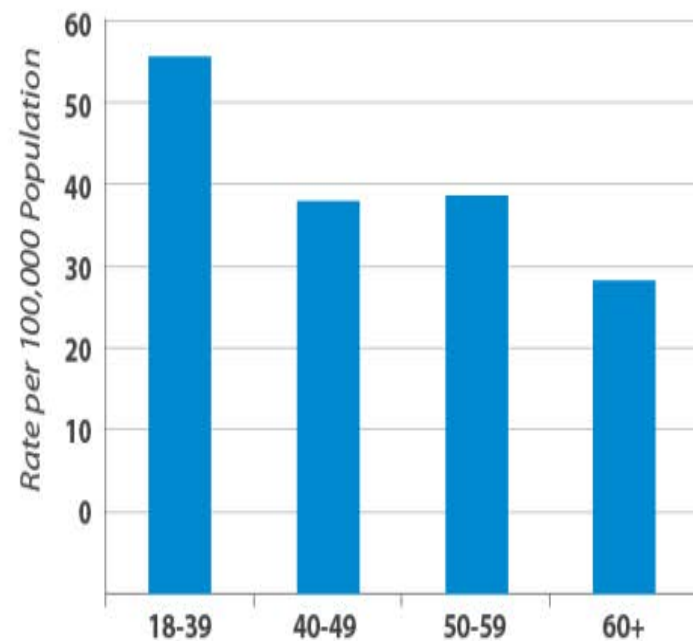
Source: National Strategy for Preventing Veterans Suicide: 2018-2028

Veteran Suicide Deaths

Figure 3: Veteran Suicide Deaths: Count vs. Rate



Older Veteran population accounts for the bulk of suicide deaths. This is because of the population's size.



Younger Veteran population includes more recently transitioned Veterans and has a higher rate of suicide.

Source: National Strategy for Preventing Veterans Suicide: 2018-2028

Recent Data Suggests:

- **An average of 20 Veterans die by suicide each day.**⁶ About six of the 20 are recent users of Veterans Health Administration services. On average, there are 93 suicides among the general U.S. non-Veteran adult population per day.⁷
- **Overall, the trend among rates of Veteran suicide mirrors those of the general population across geographic regions,** with the highest rates in western states. While rates of suicide are higher in some states with smaller populations, the largest numbers of Veteran suicides are in the heaviest populated areas of the nation.
- **The burden of suicide resulting from firearm injuries is high.** About 67 percent of all Veteran deaths by suicide were the result of firearm injuries.
- **Rates of suicide are highest among younger Veterans** (ages 18–29) and lowest among older Veterans (ages 60 and older).
- **Despite comparatively lower rates, the largest number of deaths by suicide is among middle-age and older adult Veterans.** Approximately 65 percent of all Veterans who died by suicide were age 50 or older.

Source: National Strategy for Preventing Veterans Suicide: 2018-2028

Suicide Statistics

United States, 2017

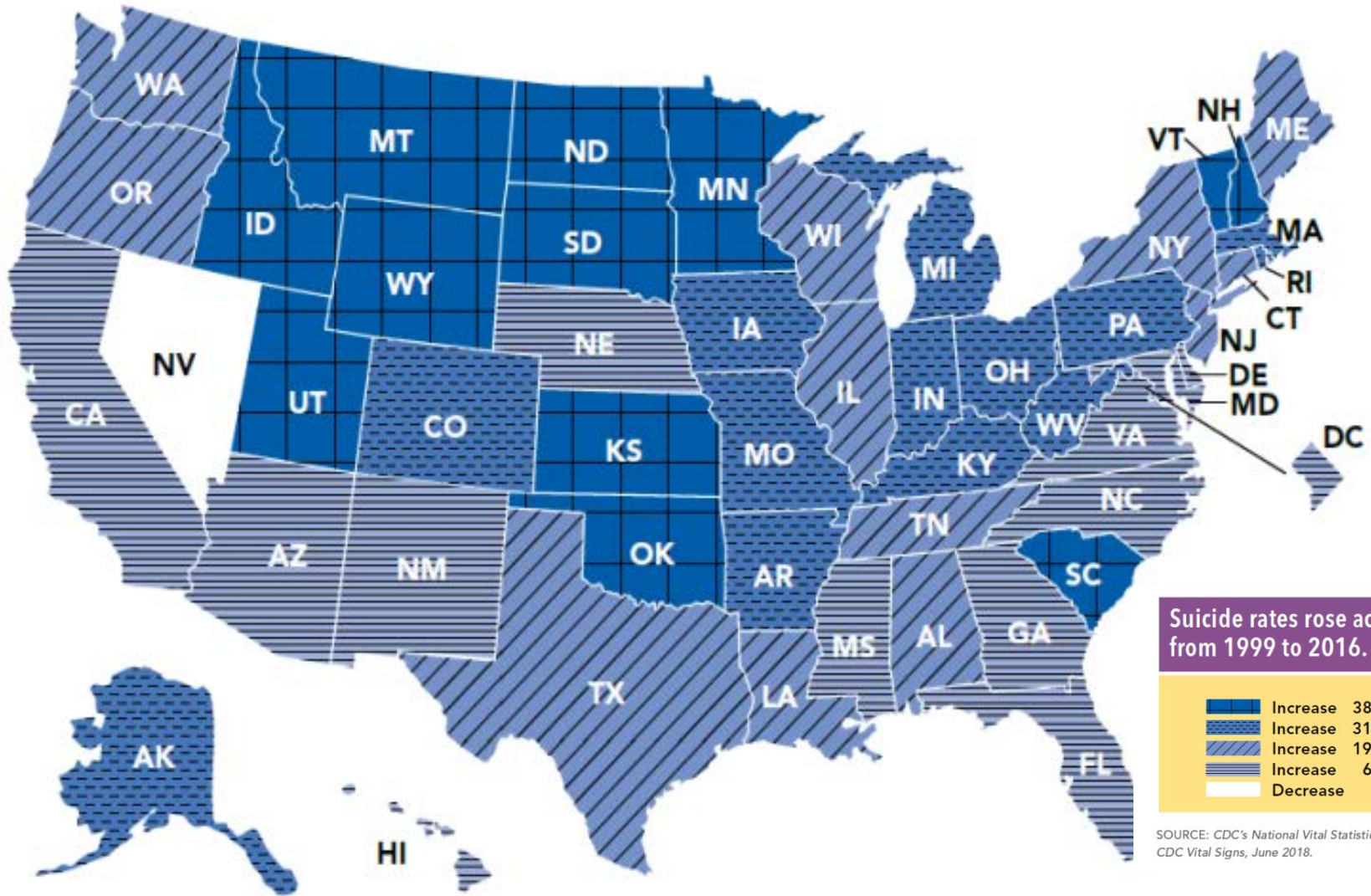
- Over 47,173 deaths
- Firearms used in over 51.6% of suicides (NV 52.5%)
- 3.5 male deaths to every female death
- A suicide every 11.1 minutes
- 129 Suicides a day

Nevada, 2017

- 11th highest rate
- 2nd leading cause of death 20-46, 1st for youth 12-19 years of age
- Nevada's Elderly have highest rates 65+
- More suicides than homicides (221) and motor vehicle accidents (357)

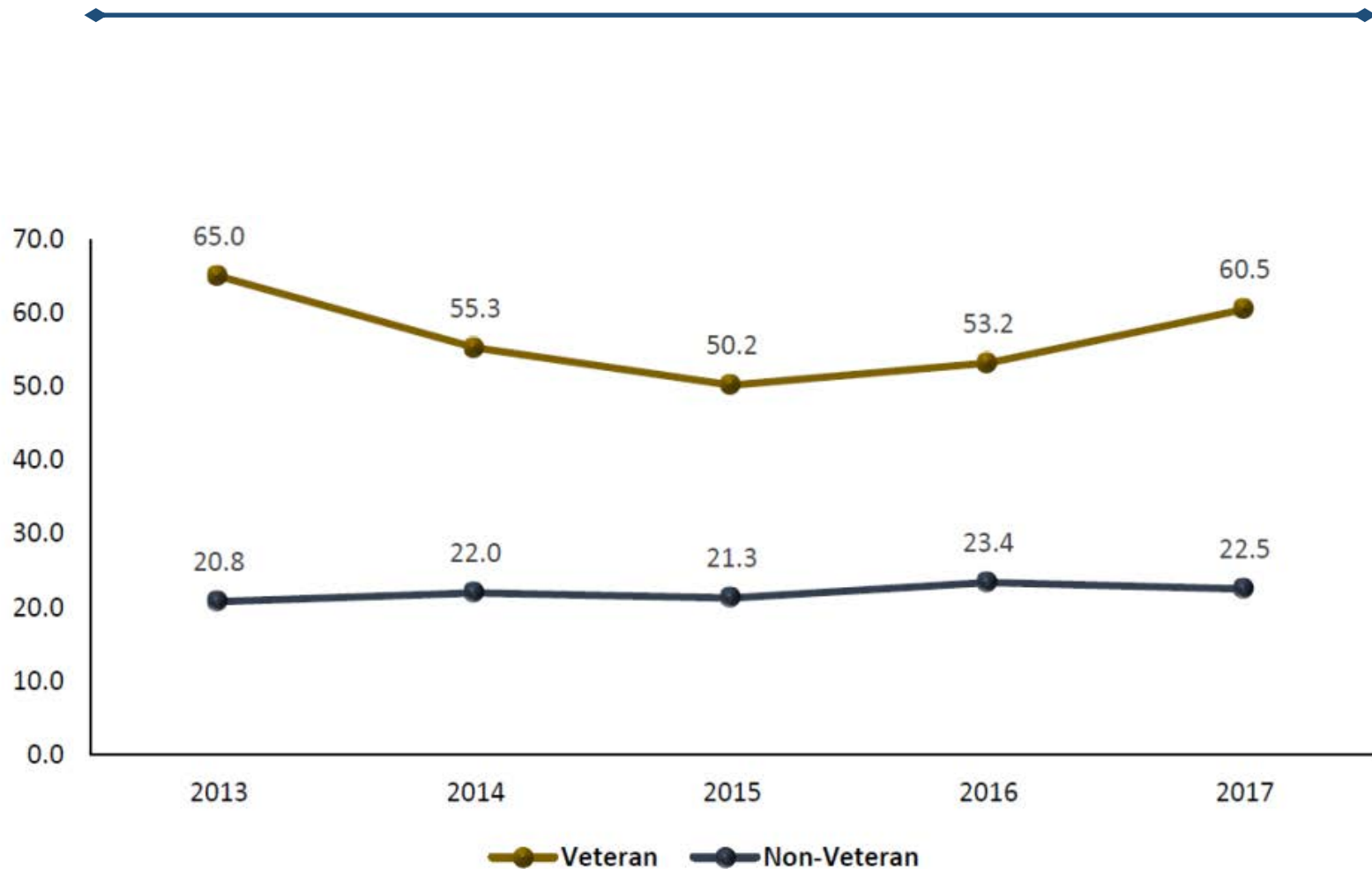
Source: CDC WISQARS: 2017 Final Data

Vital Signs Report, 2018



SOURCE: CDC's National Vital Statistics System;
CDC Vital Signs, June 2018.

Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000 Population 2013-2017



Suicide Mortality of Nevada Veterans, 2008-2010



NEVADA ACTION PLAN FOR PREVENTION



Luana J. Ritch, PhD
Mental Health Services

Summary

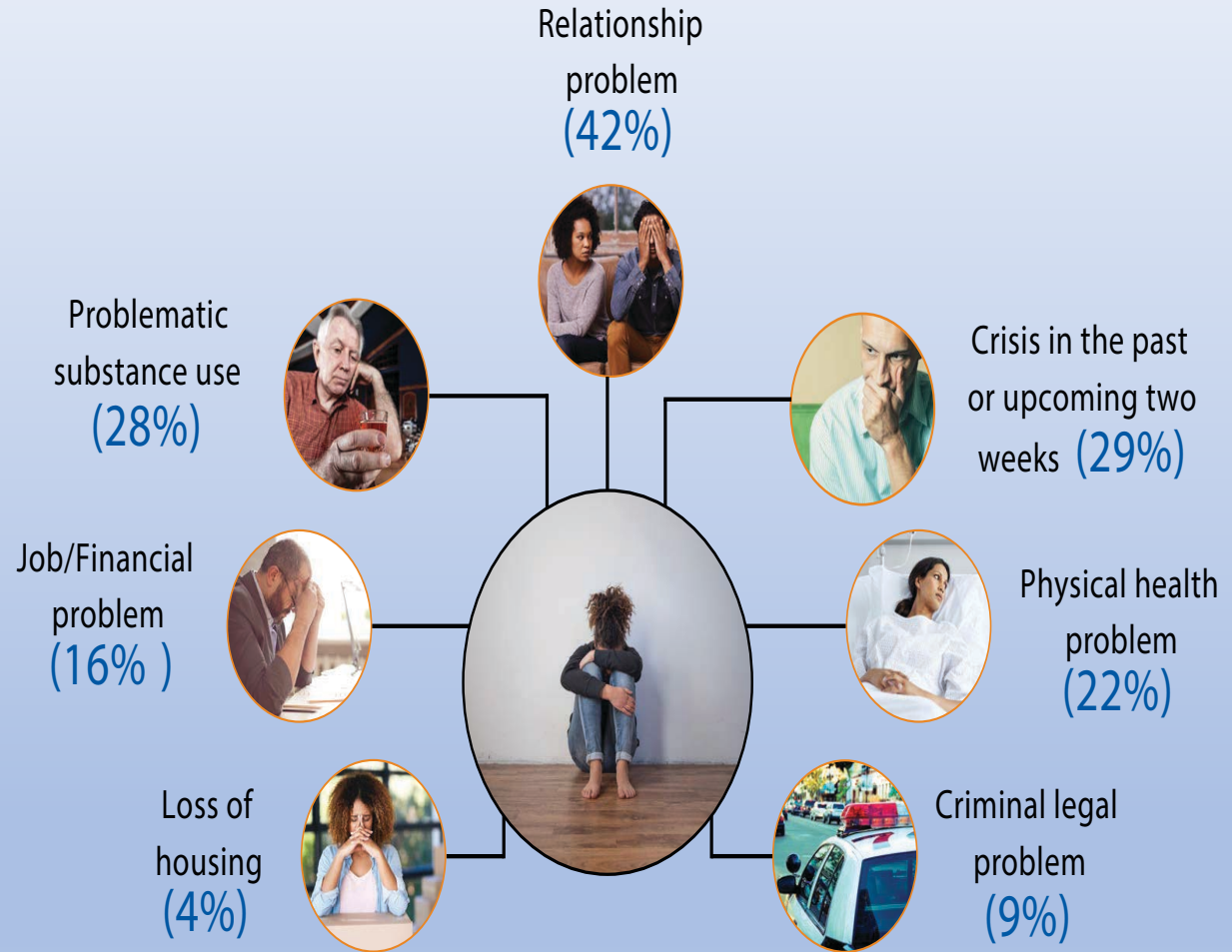
- Suicide prevention is a **priority**.
- Facilitating lethal means safety among at-risk patients is an **essential**, evidence-based component of effective prevention programs.
- Use the **data** to inform your efforts.
- Don't be afraid to **innovate** and think outside the box, both in one-on-one conversations and in programming/policy interventions.
- The conversation requires **practice**—resources and training materials are available to help.



CDC 2018 report "Vital Signs"

54%
who died by
suicide had no
prior reported
mental health
diagnoses!

**Does this mean
the rest do not
have mental
health issues?**



Center for Disease Control, 2018

Risk factors



A highly stressful life event such as losing someone close, financial loss, or trouble with the law



Prolonged stress due to adversities such as unemployment, serious relationship conflict, harassment or bullying



Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide (contagion)



Access to lethal methods of suicide during a time of increased risk

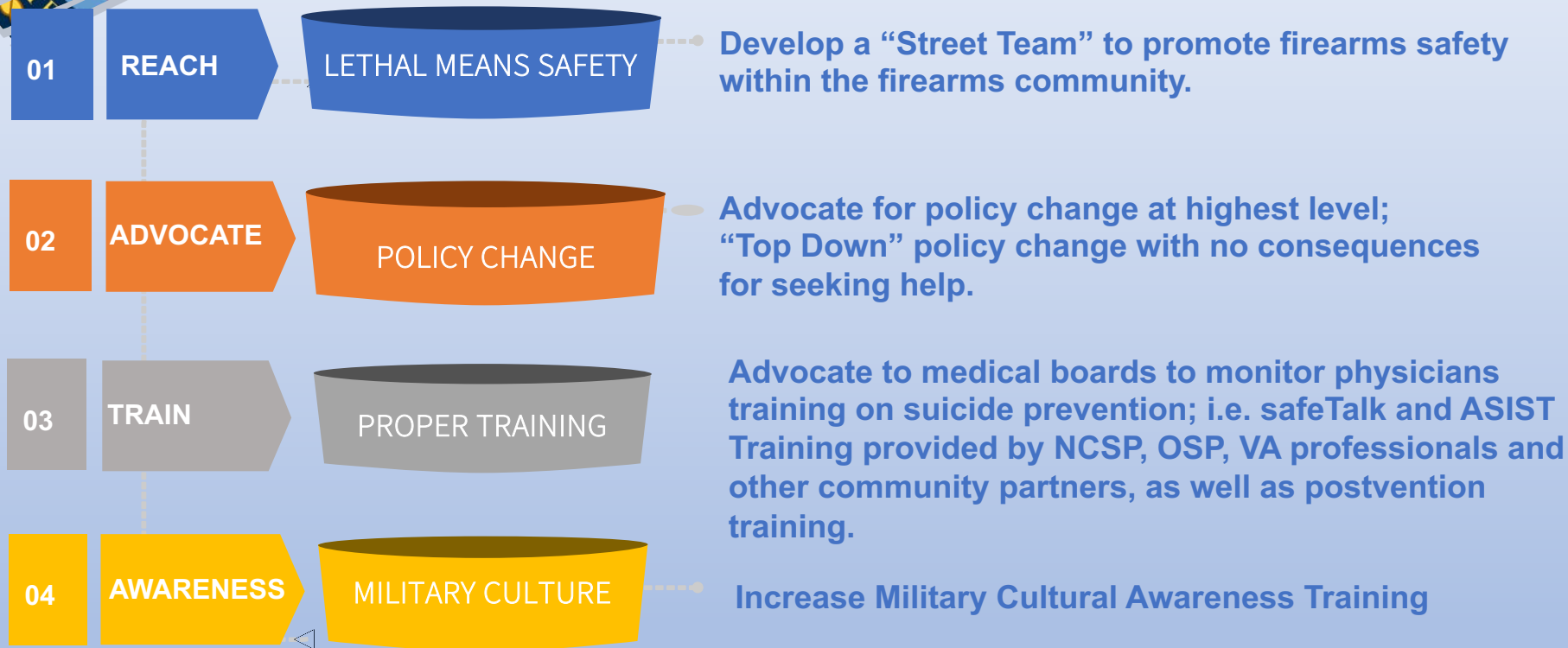
Protective factors

- Receiving effective mental health care
- The skills and abilities to solve problems
- Connectedness – positive connections with family, peers, community and social institutions that foster resilience
- Reduced access to lethal means



Mayors' Challenge Teams

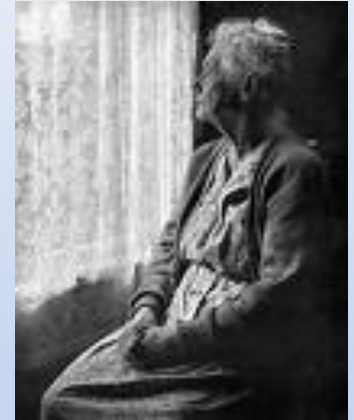
Long Term Action Items



Prevention Steps....

SHOW
YOU CARE!

Listen Carefully
Be Genuine



RESPONDING TO SUICIDE RISK *SHOW YOU CARE.....* →

Listen Carefully



Kevin Berthia, was perched on the iconic bridge ready to take a fatal leap on March 11, 2005, when California Highway Patrol officer Kevin Briggs, left, talked him off the ledge and back to safety.

Over 60 life-changing minutes, Briggs managed to convince Berthia, as he has done with hundreds of suicidal men and women, to climb back over the rail and give life another shot. Since that significant day Berthia hasn't looked back and is now happily married with two children.

Story by Helen Pow, 12 May 2013

Past, Alone, Death

Uncertainty, Present, Engaged

Life, Future, Supported

Prevention Steps....

ASK

ABOUT SUICIDE!

Be direct, but

Non-Confrontational