

Montana Warriors Forward (MWF) Stakeholder Coalition Meeting June 17, 2025



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES**

Agenda

- Introductions (In the chat)
- Program Overview
- Governor's Challenge Team Partner Updates
 - VA (Federal and State)
 - MTNG
 - VNN
 - Safer Communities Montana
- Stakeholder Highlight – Veteran Victory Alliance, Tori Miralda

Montana Warriors Forward Mission

- **Task** – Implement a suicide prevention program for Montana’s Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) that addresses the root causes of suicide through identification and screening for risk, building protective factors and facilitating care transitions for those determined to be at risk and by providing safe storage and/or disposal of lethal means for individuals in crisis.
- **Purpose** – To reduce the number of suicides among the SMVF community in Montana and to build a network of protective factors to reduce suicide risk.
- **Endstate** – The suicide rate for SMVF in Montana lowered to below the state rate and a statewide network of providers and protectors established to keep it that way.

Goals of the Stakeholder's Coalition



BUILD A COALITION OF
INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES
INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING SMVF
IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.



SOLICIT IDEAS FOR EXPANDING
THE PROGRAM'S REACH AND
IMPACT.



ASSIST PEER COACHES WITH
BUILDING SMVF SUPPORT UNITS
IN UNDERSERVED COUNTIES
AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

Governor's Challenge Priority Areas

Priority Area 1 –
Identification and
Screening

Priority Area 2 –
Promote
Connectedness and
Improve Care
Transitions

Priority Area 3 –
Lethal Means Safety
and Safety Planning

Current Montana Warriors Forward Partners

Montana DPHHS

Montana Veteran's Affairs Division (MVAD)

Montana National Guard

Fort Harrison VA (VISN 19)

Lewis and Clark Public Health (Helena)

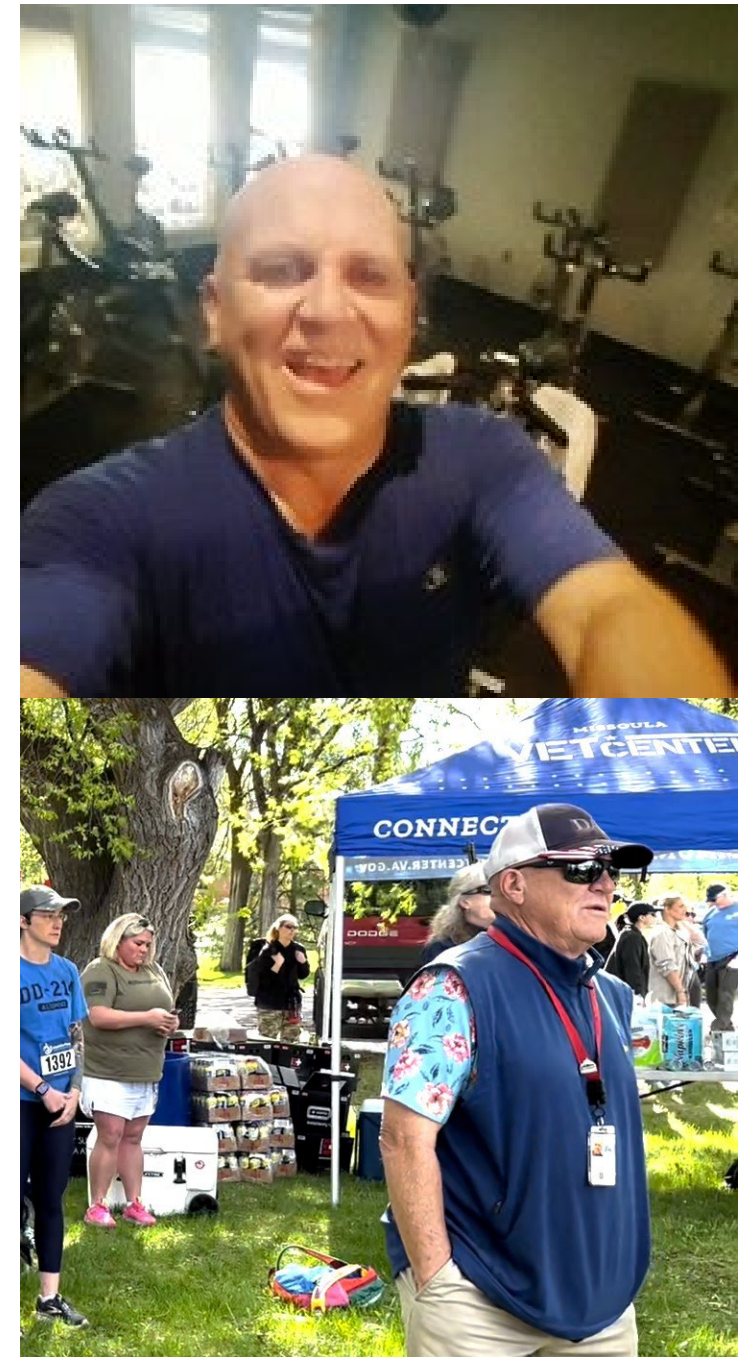
Riverstone Health (Billings)

Veteran's Navigation Network (VNN)

American Legion

Bob McCabe – In memorium

- Recovery Coordinator for Montana VA
- Original member of Governor's Challenge Team
- Peer Support Lead and Mentor
- 31 years of Recovery
- Devoted father
- Avid golfer



Current Project Status

First Protectors Summit held on February 14, 2025 in Billings.

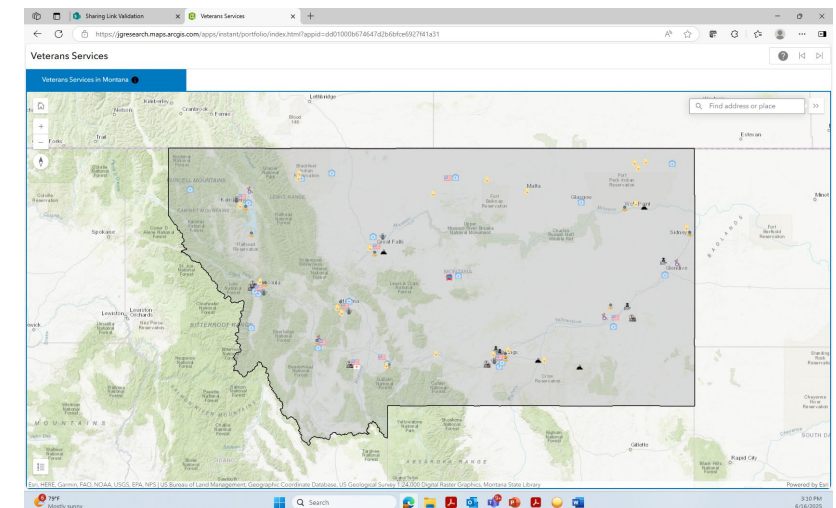
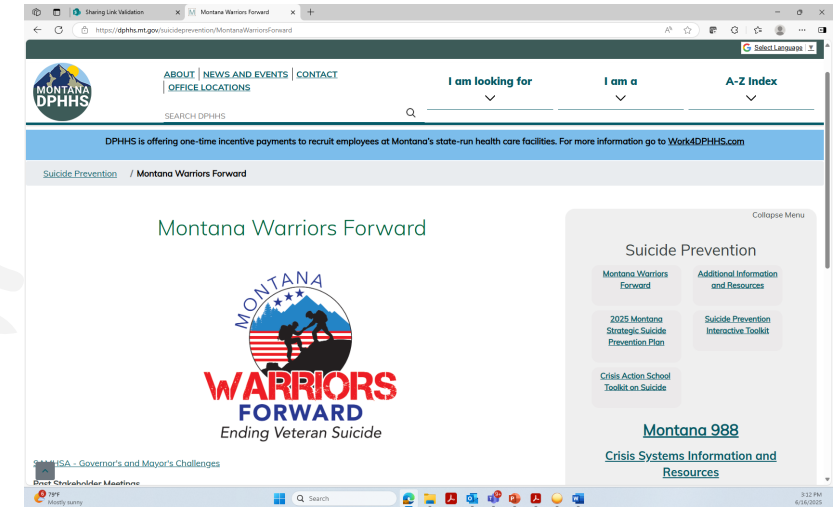
Name change from Governor's Challenge to Montana Warriors Forward (April 2025).

Passage of SB 95

National Innovations Conference in Austin, TX (May 20-22, 2025)

Montana Governor's Challenge Webpage and Map

- Links to partners and stakeholders
- Resources and toolkits for VSOs and peers
- Slides from previous stakeholder meetings
- Interactive map of SMVF resources at: <https://jgresearch.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/portfolio/index.html?appid=dd01000b674647d2b6bfce6927f41a31>



Way Forward

Montana Warriors Forward Landing Page
(DPHHS Suicide Prevention Site.)

RFP for HB118 initiatives (Listed on the State eMACS system.
Closes on June 20.)

P1 – RFP will include grants for work on identification and
screening initiatives.

P2 – Next Protector’s Summit (Date/Location TBD) ; “pop-up”
events; Adding more resources to the MWF map. MT988 veteran
outreach events planned.

P3 – Rocking Tree Farm (Helena) in the process of becoming a
safe storage facility; others are in discussion with SCM about
following suite.

What you can do



Attend coalition meetings and provide feedback from the field.



Invite other stakeholders in your area to participate. (Please send me their contact information.)



Connect with 211 to update SMVF serving resources in your area.



Encourage peers in under-served areas to establish SMVF support units.



Be on the lookout for the HB118 Grant RFP, if your organization is/or would like to be working on one of the three priority areas.

- You can attend in-person or virtually
- Registration opens in June
- If you'd like to be a speaker, let me know at Mike@VeteransNavigation.org



SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION
OF YELLOWSTONE VALLEY

SPCOALITIONYV.ORG

SAVE THE DATE

Join the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone Valley for our annual day-long conference focused on CONNECTIONS and suicide prevention.

Friday, September 26, 2025

Mansfield Center at Intermountain Health St. Vincent Hospital

- Learn about our work
- Apply to be a speaker
- Become an event sponsor
- Registration opens in June



SPCOALITIONYV.ORG • spcoalitionyv@gmail.com



VNN

Facilitating Veteran Success

Connecting you to a better life®

- Pilot program with VNN and RiverStone Health to implement ID/screening and referral of SMVF.
- “Thank You for Your Service” reusable nylon bag with information on RSH and VNN programs, welcome letter from Blake (VNN Founder and ED), crisis number and 988 materials, two gun locks and a of couple person care items.
- The goal is to connect SMVF with VNN and thus the broader SMVF and service provider communities.

Behavioral Health Advisory Council Veterans Subcommittee

- **The Veteran's Subcommittee was stood up in August 2024**
- **Dedicated to addressing the unique mental health and support needs of veterans within the community.**
- **Recognizing the distinct challenges faced by those who have served in the military, this subcommittee aims to advocate for, develop, and implement tailored services and policies that enhance the mental health and overall well-being of veterans.**
- **Reps in Billings, Bozeman, Box Elder, Butte, Fort Peck, Glendive, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Missoula, and Sidney**
- **Working on proposal to the BHAC requesting funding from the Mental Health Block Grant – [Heroes Transport Access Network](#)**

Caring Contacts

- **Sending veterans who are in crisis brief, non demanding expressions of care and concern at specified intervals over a year**
- **The theory is that the contacts serve to make people feel connected to others (and therefore reduce suicide)**
- **VNN staff will send postcards Week 1 after contact, then Month 1, Month 2, Month 3, Month 6, Month 9, Month 12, on the veteran's birthday and on Veterans Day**


Veterans Navigation Network
7 N 31st St
Billings, MT 59101

Hi X,

I hope today is a wonderful day for you. Your birthday is coming up, and we're wishing you a great year. If you ever need us, we're here for you.

Best Regards,

Contact Information:
Email:
info@veteransnavigation.org
Phone:
406.435.9308 or 406.698.5448
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/VetNavNet



Made possible with support from RiverStone Health and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Comment Ctrl+Alt+N

To:

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

CRISIS TEXT LINE |
Text HELLO to 741741
Free, 24/7, Confidential

The front of the postcard is usually a patriotic theme.

Other News and Notes



- VNN is purchasing a 50-gun, gun safe as part of our lethal means safety program
- Exploring formation of an Executive Team to make policy and funding decisions for Montana Warriors Forward (MWF)
- 6 members of the MWF team attended the VA/SAMHSA Innovation Conference in Austin, TX, May 20-22
 - States who dedicate resources to fighting veteran suicide make progress
 - Using a public health strategy with cross-sector collaboration
 - Focus on Social Determinants of Health
 - Focus on outcomes, not output
 - Include SMVF with “lived experience” in the discussions