

Worried About a Veteran

A New York State Governor's Challenge Project



Website

WorriedAboutaVeteran.org

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Presented by

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The problem- Firearms & Suicide

- Sixty-nine percent of Veterans' suicides are by firearm.^[1]
- Veterans are more likely to own firearms than their non-Veteran demographic peers.^[2]
- People with firearms at home have elevated risk of suicide, not because they are more likely to be suicidal but because their attempts are more likely to involve a firearm and therefore prove fatal.^[3, 4, 5, 6]
- As a result, groups as diverse as the American Psychiatric Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (a firearm trade association) recommend storing guns away from home when someone at home is at risk for suicide or making them inaccessible in some other way.



A solution

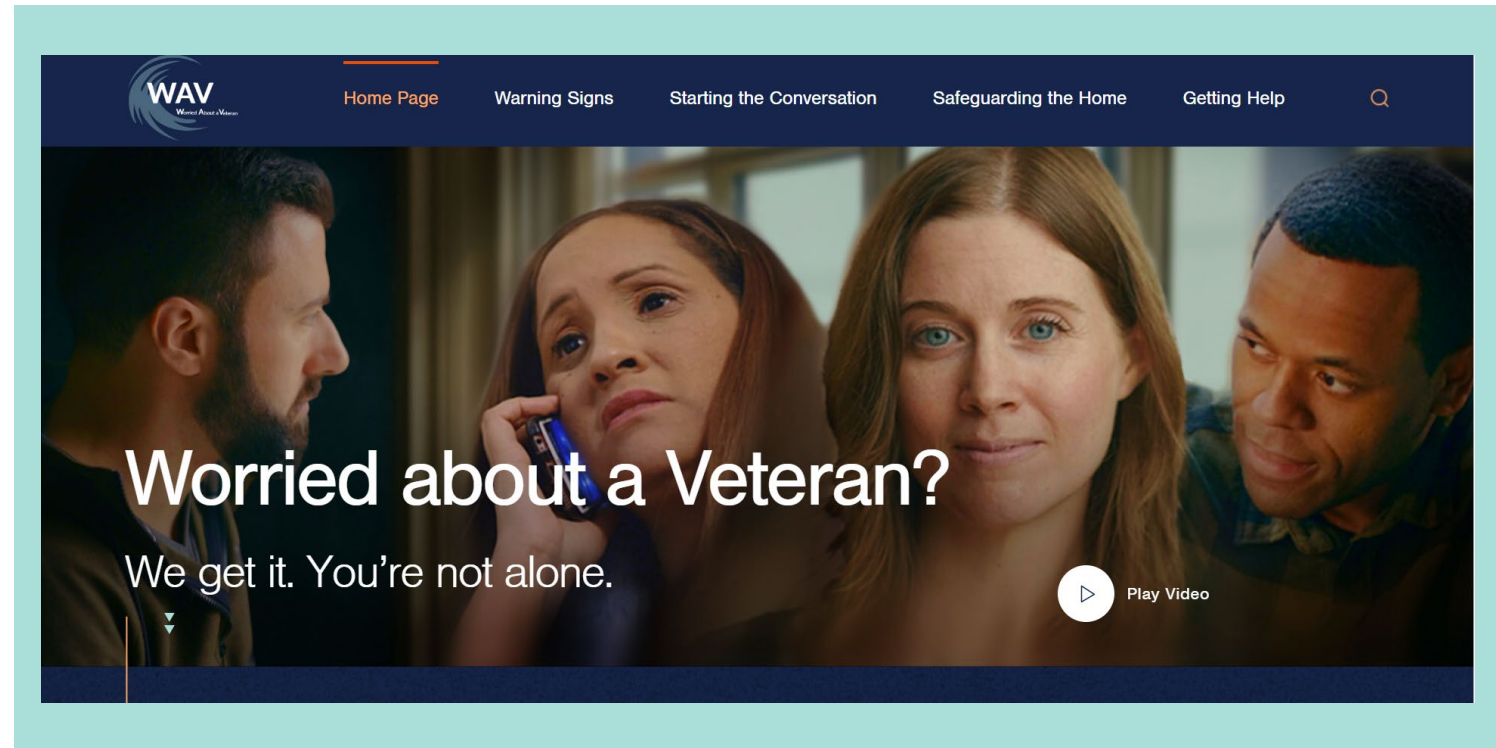
- Reducing access to, or the lethality of, a highly-lethal suicide method is one of a relatively small number of interventions with good evidence of effectiveness at the population level
- Veterans are open to discussing firearm safety in the context of suicide risk.^[7,8]
- Both male and female Veterans have expressed particular openness to having family members raise the issue, and some have had experience themselves keeping firearms from a person they deemed at risk.^[9,10]
- Suicide decedents who disclose to someone their intent to die are far more likely to have disclosed to an intimate partner, family member, or friend than to a mental health or primary care provider, according to data from the National Violent Death Reporting System.
- Veterans and gun owners have indicated that conversations that stress the temporary nature of the storage change, ensure the owner retains decisional autonomy, and respect the owner's reasons and values around gun ownership are more likely to be successful.^[11-13]



Website Topics

- Should You Be Concerned for your Veteran?
- Checking in with Others
- Why Focus on Firearms?
- Starting the Conversation about Firearms
- Safe Storage Options
- When is it Safe to Return the Firearms toward a New Normal?
- Information on Other Methods of Suicide
- Getting Help
- New York State Resources/Legal Information

Website also includes three short Veteran/Clinician/Firearm Owner clips



<https://vimeo.com/668732051>

<https://vimeo.com/668733014>



Where do we go from here?

- The workgroup is seeking opportunities to expand to become a national resource that would include state-specific safe storage options and laws
- The VA's '[coaching into care](#)' is developing a small pilot study to use the website as a targeted intervention
- The lethal means workgroup received additional funding from the original funder to develop a pilot workshop based on the information on the website. Content would be co-facilitated by a local suicide prevention coalition member and firearm expert

Thank you



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