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American Samoa Strengthens Commitment to Suicide Prevention with Federal Partnership



On Wednesday, July 10th, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hosted a meeting at the American Samoa Government Veterans and Military Affairs Office in Tafuna. This meeting followed a courtesy visit to the Office of the Governor.

Attended by key stakeholders from the government and non-profit sectors, a full-day agenda on Wednesday included an overview of the Suicide Mortality Review (SMR) process and collaborative discussions on implementation strategies and action plans.

American Samoa has been actively engaged as one of the 55 state or territorial teams in the "Governors Challenge to Prevent Suicides for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF)" since 2022. These teams were later offered an opportunity to participate in a technical

assistance process aimed at supporting the planning and development of Suicide Mortality Review (SMR).

The SMR aims to establish a Suicide Mortality Review Committee (SMRC) tasked with evaluating suicide deaths to identify both risk factors for and protective factors against such deaths. Key goals of an SMRC include:

- Conduct analyses of identified deaths within a state, territory or community
- Collect data that can help identify common trends among cases
- Report findings in a clear, accessible and consistent manner
- Make recommendations to key decision makers that will inform specific interventions intended to reduce the number of suicide deaths

The ASG Veterans and Military Affairs Office appreciates our Federal partners and local stakeholders for contributing to the success of the site visit. Let's maintain our collaborative efforts in addressing the behavioral health needs of SMVF in our territory.

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