

NW PA Veteran Suicide Prevention Program

Monthly Report: May 2022

Program Overview

The **Northwest Pennsylvania Veteran Suicide Prevention Program (NWPVSP)** is a collaborative effort between federal and state-level entities, community-level service providers, and organizational experts in **suicide prevention** to create significant and lasting change in the **15-county NW PA region**. The program aims to **reduce Veteran suicide attempts and death** by an average of 10% over five years (2020-2025). Other program goals include increasing awareness of suicide risk, promoting community connection and resilience, and improving delivery of suicide care.

Report Overview



Key Updates

- Conducted **1 in-person** Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) in Erie County and **6 virtual** QPR (Question. Persuade. Refer.) Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings, with a total of **179 individuals** trained.
- The implementation team **presented about the NWPVSP at 2 local conferences:**
 - [Westmoreland County Veterans Conference](#) (Youngwood, PA)
 - [Higher Education Suicide Prevention Coalition/Prevent Suicide PA Conference](#) (Pittsburgh, PA)

Key Next Steps

- **Implement action plans** (*included below*) to address feedback from the Suicide Awareness and Perceptions Survey pilot, Key Informant Interviews, and virtual QPR training.
- Continue **onboarding activities and technical assistance efforts** for recruited primary care sites.

Meeting Outcomes

Key Points:

- The May **Advisory Group** meeting focused on: 1) implementation activities; 2) general project announcements including syndromic surveillance funding, provider incentive strategies, and psychological autopsies, and 3) facilitated breakout sessions to review the moral injury training and conduct a website and newsletter audit.
- The **Communication & Dissemination** and **Data & Evaluation Work Groups** were cancelled for the month of May since work group members utilized breakout rooms during the May Advisory Group meeting to review relevant updates.
- The May **Journal Club** discussion focused on connections between [traumatic brain injury \(TBI\) and Veteran suicide](#).

Meeting	Partner Attendance
Advisory Group Meeting	16
Communication & Dissemination Work Group	N/A
Data & Evaluation Work Group	N/A
Journal Club	3

Meeting Evaluations

Key Points:

- Beginning in April, real-time **meeting evaluation polls** were implemented to increase stakeholder feedback.
- The poll asked members to rate their agreement (Yes/No) on **two questions** about the content and relevance of the meeting. An open-ended comment space was also included.

Summary:

- There was **unanimous agreement** with both statements for the Advisory Group (AG) meeting this month.
- **Advisory Group:** Response rates remained consistent from last month, with 15 members participating (April & May). Qualitative comments were **positive** and remarked on the progress of the project and focus of the meeting.
- The project team will continue to review monthly meeting evaluation feedback and implement necessary changes to ensure project meetings are engaging and efficient.

Meeting	Responses
Advisory Group	15
Communication & Dissemination Work Group	N/A
Data & Evaluation Work Group	N/A

Suicide Awareness and Perceptions Survey Pilot – Next Steps

- In April 2022, the Suicide Awareness and Perceptions Survey was piloted with twenty members of the Erie County Suicide Prevention Advisory Board (ECSPAB). This survey will be used to track community attitudes and perceptions concerning suicide **to measure change in awareness of suicide over time**.
- The program’s implementation and evaluation teams reviewed results of the survey pilot in May. **The following steps will be taken over the next month:**
 - Update the survey language to incorporate feedback and suggestions from the pilot group, including adding more examples to the questions on suicide risk and protective factors.
 - Reduce the survey reading level to not exceed a sixth-grade reading level, if possible.
 - Pilot the survey with a larger, more diverse community group to collect additional feedback before widespread survey dissemination.

Key Informant Interviews – Action Plan

- The second round of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), which included seven interviews, was **completed at the end of March**.
- The program implementation team reviewed results of the second round of key informant interviews in May. Key areas of feedback included a need to **establish clear expectations** for Advisory Group members and **streamline communication pathways** across the various project meetings and stakeholder groups.
- Individual meetings with Advisory Group members will be held throughout July 2022 **to ascertain stakeholder strengths, interests, and motivations for collaborating with the NWPVSP**. Information collected from these conversations will be used to inform changes to stakeholder communication and meeting structure to ensure that all Advisory Group members feel engaged and valued.

Gatekeeper Training Evaluations – Action Plan

- Training evaluations were administered to stakeholders at the end of the virtual **Question Persuade Refer (QPR)** trainings conducted in March and April 2022.
- Responses showed **strong approval** of the training content and understanding of suicide prevention following the training.
- The program implementation team and external training partners reviewed the training evaluation results in May and **will take the following steps to improve future training delivery:**
 - Include time for completion of evaluation polls at the conclusion of training sessions to increase response rates.
 - Provide links to local resources following training sessions to increase the confidence level of the evaluation item related to “Identifying local crisis/mental health resources.”

Region 1 Summary: May 2022

PERU is working to enhance local suicide prevention, intervention, and response efforts and work to address gaps in efforts or services. Implementation is being phased across **three geographic regions** that were selected based on resource availability and existing healthcare and community partnerships. Currently, implementation efforts are focused in **Region 1: Erie, Crawford, Venango, Warren, McKean**.



Partner Engagement

The goal of the program's outreach and engagement strategy is to build and maintain positive relationships with community partners in each county to support implementation efforts. The table below represents the **number and types of meetings** held in May.

Entity Type	Meeting Purpose	# Meetings May 2022
County Coalitions/Task Forces	Continued Engagement	5
Dept. of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA)	Continued Engagement	1
Healthcare	Site Engagement	1
Hold My Guns & National Shooting Sports Foundation	Safe Storage Planning	2
Other Community Stakeholders	Continued Engagement	3
State-Level Agencies	Continued Engagement	2
UPMC Western Behavioral at Safe Harbor	Recruitment & Training Planning	3
Advisory Group and Work Groups	Project Planning	1
Totals		18