



## Warrior Resilience and Fitness Division

### Suicide Prevention and Readiness Initiative for the National Guard

Suicide devastates our fighting forces, our military families, and our nation's communities. It is the second leading cause of death for our military Service members. In response, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) established the Warrior Resilience & Fitness (WR&F) Division to synchronize well-being, resilience, and suicide prevention efforts across the National Guard. The goal is to align and promote best practices across the 54 states and territories and to oversee strategy, outreach, innovation, and data collection with respect to resilience and suicide prevention.

#### THE CHALLENGE

The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provides funding and charges the NGB with implementing a unified psychological health initiative to reduce suicide. Suicide is often underreported, and many are unaware of the various rules and methods of reporting. In addition, the many risk factors for NG Service members are not well understood and the strategies and programs for intervention vary widely across the nation.

#### OUR RESPONSE

The NGB strategy to meet the 2019 NDAA mandates is the implementation of the Suicide Prevention and Readiness Initiative for the National Guard (SPRING). SPRING is a multiphase approach that will identify risk factors, proven effective interventions, and systematic data collection best practices. SPRING will provide an evidence-based and data-driven foundation upon which NG-resilience and holistic wellness resources are developed, scaled, and evaluated for impact.

SPRING is using three simultaneous and complementary approaches to build our knowledgebase, which will result in an analytic data driven solution to suicide prevention throughout the NG and an improved understanding of our total force readiness.



**Program Assessment:** Understand programs at the federal, state, and territory level.

**Why do this?** Discovering and understanding promising and best practices could allow the WR&F Division to promote interventions to the NG across the nation.



**Evidence Assessment:** Examine evidence from literature related to suicide risk factors, protective factors, and potential predictive factors in the NG Service member population.

**Why do this?** Understanding current research will inform analytic methods to help predict NG Service members at risk of suicide and measure the effectiveness of resilience and readiness programs.



**Analytics:** Learn what data is available, where it is, and how it is stored and collected. We are building a comprehensive database of NG personnel data at every level, developing a dashboard and data visualizations to help NG leaders respond to suicide risks and improve force readiness with reliable data.

**Why do this?** Improving data quality and fidelity through alignment of data collection and reporting protocols will allow the NGB to pioneer a unified approach to data driven decision making and suicide prevention.