



## **Hawaii Governor's Challenge (HI GC) to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF)**

**The Governor's Challenge initiative is a cross-agency collaboration between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to advance the strategic implementation of suicide prevention policies and practices for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF).**

**Hawaii accepted the Governor's Challenge in 2022, and formed our interagency, multidisciplinary, military, and civilian team. HI GC team was tasked with 1) define the problem: collecting data to determine the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how" of suicide death. 2) Identify risk and protective factors. 3) Develop and test prevention strategies rooted in comprehensive public health principles. 4) Run pilots, define, and measure success. 5) Report outcome of pilots. The goal of HI GC team is to assure successful strategies are broadly disseminated and implemented by a variety of traditional and nontraditional stakeholders who play a role in preventing SMVF suicide.**

### **Key meetings:**

- Quarterly Team Meetings
- Monthly Priority Group Meetings:

### **Appointed Team Lead:**

- Colonel (Ret.) Robert Swanson, USAF, Fight For Each Other suicide prevention program  
[rob.swanson.808@gmail.com](mailto:rob.swanson.808@gmail.com)

### **Priority Group and Group Leaders:**

- Priority Group 1: Identify and Screen  
Janet Covington (2023), Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic  
[jcovington@cfs-hawaii.org](mailto:jcovington@cfs-hawaii.org)
- Priority Group 2: Connectedness & Care Transition  
Melody Bell (2024), Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic  
[mbell@cfs-hawaii.org](mailto:mbell@cfs-hawaii.org)
- Priority Group 3: Access to Lethal Means & Safety Planning  
Wendy Schwartz (2024), VA Pacific Islands Health Care System

[Wendy.Schwartz@va.gov](mailto:Wendy.Schwartz@va.gov)

- Marketing Group  
Colonel (Ret.) Robert Swanson, United States Air Force  
[rob.swanson.808@gmail.com](mailto:rob.swanson.808@gmail.com)
- Suicide Mortality Review:  
Stefany Garcia (2024), Hawaii Air National Guard  
[stefany.m.garcia.civ@army.mil](mailto:stefany.m.garcia.civ@army.mil)