



September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Since 2011, 23 Ohio National Guard members have ended their own lives. While every case is unique, most involved financial or relationship issues. These are our fellow Soldiers and Airmen who have decided suicide was the only answer.

I am asking today for your support to prevent the loss of another life.

As the men and women who protect our state and our nation, we tend to hide our feelings and are slow to admit we're having problems because it might show weakness. We must break down this and other barriers to getting help.

Warning signs according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs include:

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Feeling anxious, agitated or unable to sleep
- Neglecting personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance
- Withdrawing from friends, family and society

If you know someone who is showing any of those warning signs, please encourage them to get help. No one should go through a crisis like this alone. There is a director of psychological health for the Ohio Army National Guard and each Ohio Air National Guard base who can be of assistance.

Important numbers include:

- Veteran's Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647, www.militaryonesource.mil
- Ohio Cares: 1-800-761-0868, a non-emergency resource line available to Ohio National Guard personnel and their Families.

Additional resources, including a powerful video message from a military dad whose son recently took his own life, are available at <http://www.OhioVets.gov/HelpOhioHeroes>. The health and safety of our Guard members and their Families is a top priority. We will leave no one behind.

Maj. Gen. Mark E. Bartman
Adjutant General

