It goes without saying that veteran suicide prevention efforts cannot be accomplished without involvement from those who are impacted most—veterans, and the CSOs in their lives.

**WHY IS THIS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?**

- The All Hands on Deck: Community Convening to Improve Research on Veteran Suicide Prevention (AHOD) project was designed to create opportunities for concerned significant others (CSOs) to share their voices and lived experiences related to veteran suicide prevention.
- CSOs are a consistent presence in veterans' lives who provide ongoing emotional and physical support in daily life and in times of crisis.
- When CSOs are able to engage with and support veterans’ health care, they can create a bridge across military and civilian healthcare cultures and help increase understanding between the veteran and the provider.
- CSOs are an underutilized resource for identifying high risk behaviors and supporting veterans who are at risk for suicide.

**WHO WAS INVOLVED AND HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?**

- Three main strategies were used to engage CSOs, researchers, and providers throughout this project:
  1. Formation of an advisory group
  2. Hosting a virtual two-day Community Convening
  3. Hosting three monthly work groups with Convening participants.
- Each step of the process was informed by CSO feedback; including development of convening topics, participating in working group discussions, and providing guidance on the creation of the CSO Engagement Guide.
- The advisory board included 16 members.
- The two-day virtual convening welcomed 78 participants from across the country, including researchers, providers, and CSOs (veteran family members, spouses, and caregivers).
- The three work groups addressed the main themes from the Convening discussion with 7-14 participants in each meeting meeting. Groups met once a month from December through March.
- All data was collected and transcribed either through recording or through notes from researchers.

**WHAT DID WE FIND?**

- System and provider limitations are a barrier to engaging/empowering CSOs in veteran suicide prevention research and practice.
- Promising engagement/prevention strategies included the need to ensure accessible, collaborative engagement from providers through transparent, person-centered care.
- Researchers must involve veterans and CSOs in co-creating research questions while ensuring there is a streamlined way to disseminate information that is gathered.

**ACTION STEPS**

- Be strategic with outreach by building on partnerships and existing services.
- Establish and apply collaborative approaches to conducting research.
- Build cultural competency on military informed care for providers and researchers to honor the veterans' sense of identity.
- Improve systems of care, crisis management and safety planning by identifying high risk behaviors and lethal means risk management.