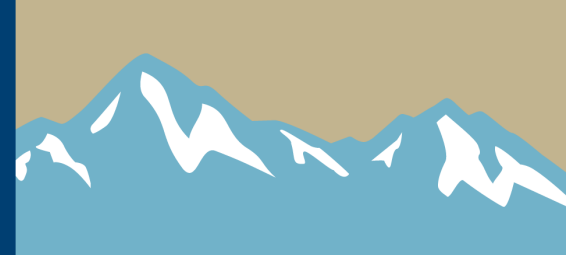




U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# ***Promoting lethal means safety among Veterans: Opportunities & challenges***

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# Disclosures & COI

- The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- No conflicts to disclose

# What is lethal means safety (LMS)?

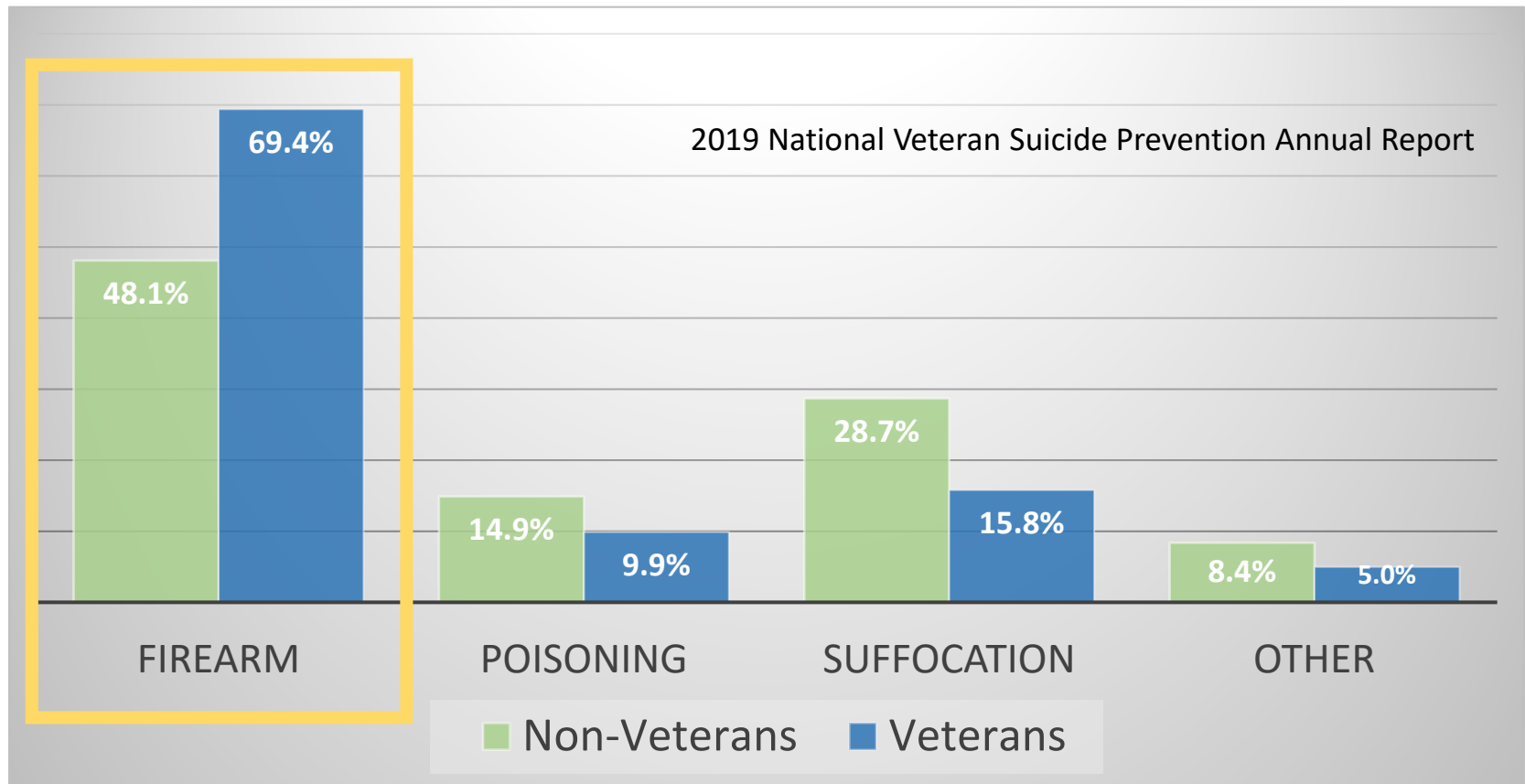
- LMS is an intentional voluntary practice to reduce access to lethal methods of suicide in order to reduce suicide risk



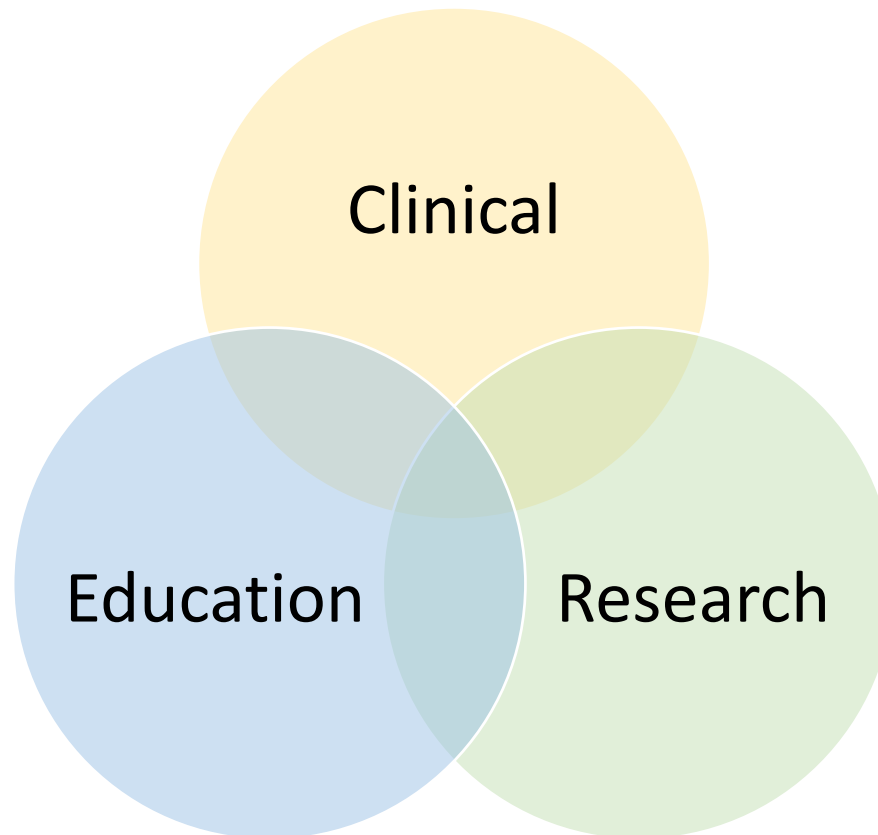


Lethal means safety counseling

# The role of firearms



# Veterans Health Administration



# A foundation to build on

- Pre-existing expertise and infrastructure in suicide prevention that is in part centrally coordinated
- Overlapping communities and familiarity with firearms
  - E.g., Veterans Crisis Line; Peer Support Outreach Center

# Acceptability

- 2019 National Firearm Survey
- Wide recognition of suicide risk within the Veteran community

*It doesn't bother me coming from them, because I trust them. It seems to me, it's nobody's business but mine. Then again, I also understand we're losing a bunch of guys every day to suicide...so I understand the question, beyond my personal feelings. – (Vietnam era)*



# LMSC is not a single intervention

- Lots of settings
- Lots of potential messengers & messages
- We don't know enough about effectiveness yet
- Lots of different risk populations
- It's critical to avoid monolithic thinking about (any community) the firearm community

# Moving upstream

- Will require a shift in clinical practice and perhaps culture
- Unclear impact on acceptability of our interventions, and almost certainly their effectiveness

# Context matters

*"I think that explaining why you're talking to the person about (firearm safety) is a good thing because if you don't...they're going to be like, 'Where is this coming from?"*

*-Veteran*

## 2020 & onwards...



# Thank you

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