



Kate Sullivan: (203) 569 - 0293

kate.sullivan@cohenveteransnetwork.org

New Research from Cohen Veterans Network Aims to Identify Optimal Messaging for Lethal Means Safety Among Veterans

Supported by Face the Fight®, the research will shape a new toolkit to help improve firearm safety conversations and prevent veteran suicide

STAMFORD, Conn., January 22, 2026 – Cohen Veterans Network (CVN), a global not-for-profit integrated network of mental health clinics for post-9/11 veterans, service members, and their families, announced that it has been awarded a grant from Face the Fight to conduct a study aimed at reducing veteran suicide. The research will focus on identifying the most effective ways to communicate with veterans and service members about lethal means safety (LMS), a suicide prevention strategy that promotes the safe storage of firearms and other lethal means during times of crisis. Based on the findings, CVN will develop a toolkit featuring practical, evidence-based strategies on how to best approach LMS conversations, which will be made available to the suicide prevention field at no cost.

Firearms are the leading means of suicide among veterans, accounting for over 70% of veteran suicide deaths, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Studies have shown that safe firearm storage, such as keeping firearms unloaded and locked, can reduce the risk of suicide by up to four times. However, many veterans are hesitant to discuss firearm safety due to concerns over privacy, access restriction, and stigma.

“With support from Face the Fight, this project will help save lives by addressing one of the most critical challenges in veteran suicide prevention, engaging veterans in effective, collaborative conversations about lethal means safety,” said Dr. Anthony Hassan, President and CEO of Cohen Veterans Network. “By turning our research into actionable tools, we can empower veterans and service members to foster safer environments for themselves and their families.”

The study will rigorously evaluate how different firearm safety messages resonate with military-affiliated individuals. By surveying 500 participants, CVN aims to identify the most effective approaches to engaging veterans and service members in these critical conversations. The findings will inform the development of a toolkit featuring adaptable, evidence-based strategies for clinicians and others to facilitate culturally responsive lethal means safety conversations. This effort is being spearheaded by the Cohen Veterans Network Institute for Quality (CVN-IQ), the network’s dedicated research institute focused on building knowledge, driving innovation, and advancing the field of mental health.

“Face the Fight is proud to support Cohen Veterans Network on this project, which tackles a significant gap in suicide prevention by enhancing messaging around lethal means safety,” said Chris Ford, Corporate Impact Principal for Face the Fight at USAA, which established Face the Fight alongside founding partners Reach Resilience and the Humana Foundation. “Together, we are advancing innovative solutions that support the well-being of service members, veterans, and their families.”



CVN is among 27 organizations selected in late 2025 to receive funding from Face the Fight's continued investment in community-driven suicide prevention. Since its inception in 2023, Face the Fight has invested more than \$42M into community organizations focused on identifying and supporting veterans at risk, strengthening access to clinical care, and creating protective environments.

"Advancing our effectiveness at promoting lethal means safety is central to suicide prevention," said Dr. David Linkh, Director of CVN-IQ. "This work will contribute to the broader body of suicide prevention research. By identifying messages that resonate with veterans, we can turn insights into practical, scalable tools that increase safety and save lives."

This new research builds on other impactful CVN Face the Fight-funded initiatives, such as the 2025 training, "From Hesitation to Help: A Collaborative Approach to Lethal Means Safety Conversations in Clinical Practice," which was provided to more than 1,000 mental health professionals. In 2024, the network also introduced the Suicide Risk Stratification Toolkit, a critical resource that has been downloaded more than 500 times.

Since its inception in 2016, CVN has treated over 94,000 clients and provided nearly 856,000 clinical sessions. The network treats a wide variety of mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, military transition challenges, anger, PTSD, grief and loss, family issues, relationship problems, and children's behavioral problems. Care is available through the network's 22 [Cohen Clinics](#) serving 20 states in-person and via CVN Telehealth, face-to-face video therapy.

ABOUT COHEN VETERANS NETWORK

Cohen Veterans Network (CVN) is a 501(c)(3) global not-for-profit philanthropic organization for post-9/11 veterans, active duty service members and their families. CVN focuses on improving mental health outcomes, operating a network of outpatient mental health clinics in high-need communities, in which trained clinicians deliver holistic evidence-based care to treat mental health conditions. It was established in 2016 by philanthropist Steven A. Cohen with a commitment of \$275 million to build the network. Learn more about CVN at cohenveteransnetwork.org.

ABOUT FACE THE FIGHT®

Face the Fight® is a life-saving initiative uniting more than 250 cross-sector partners to dramatically reduce veteran suicide by 2032. Founded by USAA, Reach Resilience, and the Humana Foundation, the movement breaks stigma, expands access to proven solutions, and builds a culture where seeking help is a sign of strength, ensuring every veteran and their loved ones are supported and never left to fight alone. Learn more at WeFaceTheFight.org.

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