

2018-06-01

Preventing Veteran Suicide in Polk County, Oregon

Theresa Sterkel

Western Oregon University, tsterkel14@mail.wou.edu

Tim Terkildsen

Western Oregon University, tterkildsen@mail.wou.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/aes>



Part of the [Nursing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sterkel, Theresa and Terkildsen, Tim, "Preventing Veteran Suicide in Polk County, Oregon" (2018). *Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings*. 138.

<https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/aes/138>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Digital Commons@WOU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@WOU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@wou.edu, kundas@mail.wou.edu, bakersc@mail.wou.edu.



Preventing Veteran Suicide in Polk County, Oregon



Theresa Sterkel & Tim Terkildsen

Aim

- Improve knowledge and use of suicide prevention strategies and enhance access to community resources for veterans and their families in Polk County, Oregon

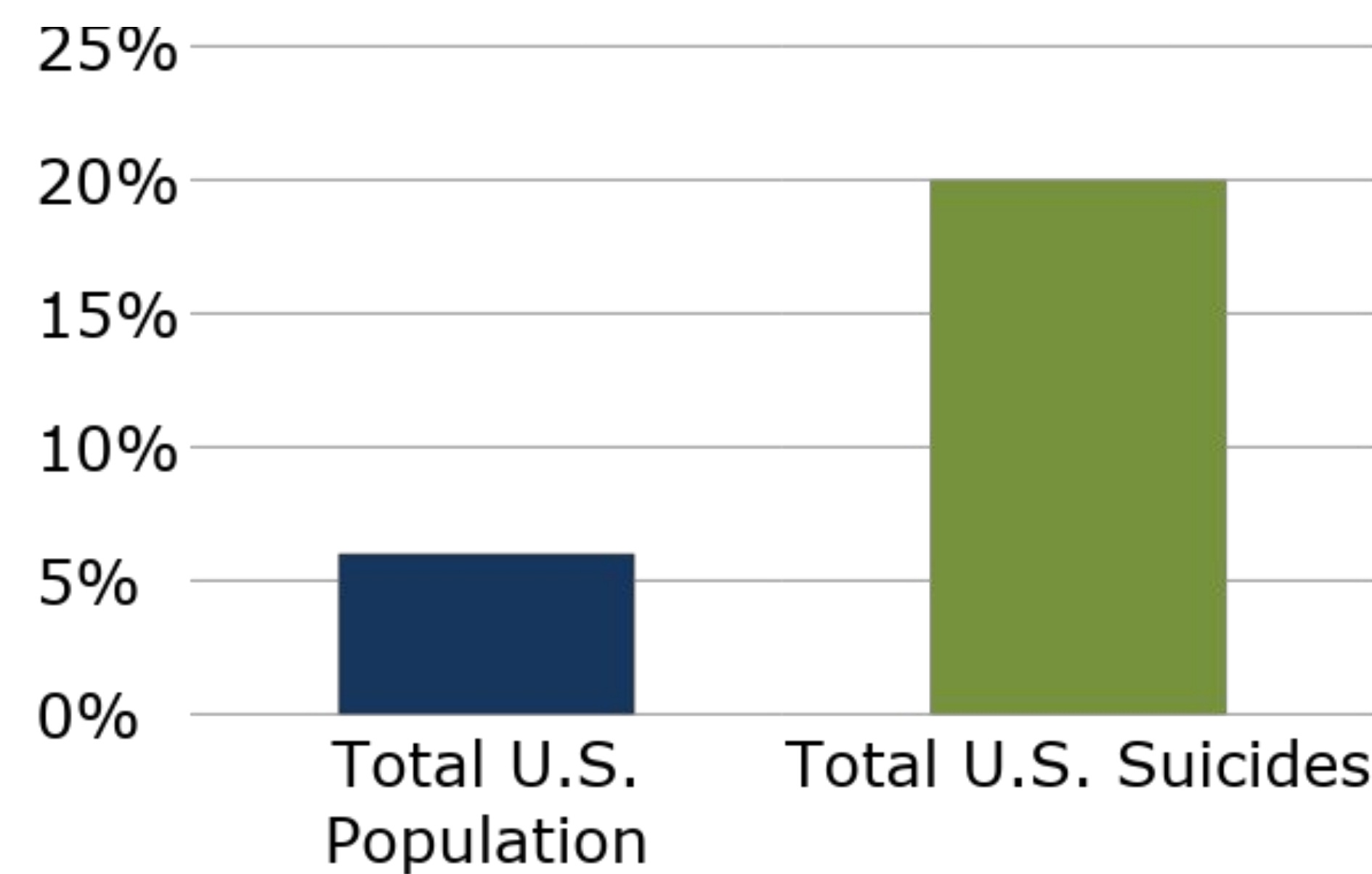
Background

- The Department of Veterans Affairs concluded that United States veterans continue to face an increase in risk for suicide when compared to their civilian counterparts (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016)
- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is considered best practice by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) promotes enhancing ease of accessibility to community resources for prevention of fatal and nonfatal suicides in the United States (Centers for Disease Control, 2017)

Methods

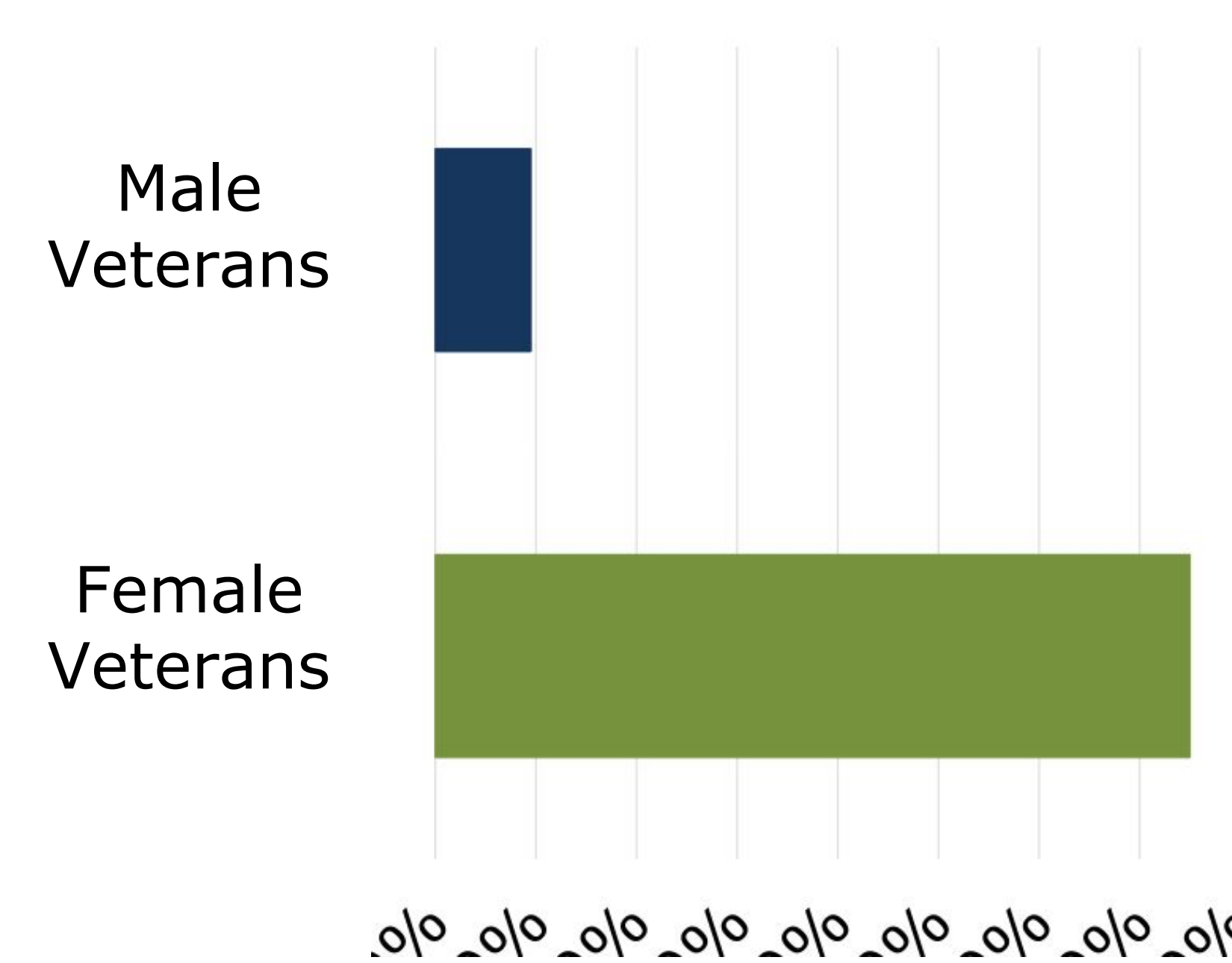
- Collaborated with local agencies to initiate a process improvement plan to enhance suicide prevention utilizing the logic model
- Used CINAHL and PubMed databases to research and create a veteran suicide fact sheet for use in QPR training sessions
- Designed and distributed informational flyers for local QPR training opportunities
- Organized and helped facilitate QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention
- Developed Polk County Veteran Resource Guide (PCVRG) pamphlets that identify local veteran support and medical services

In 2017, United States veterans accounted for:



Approximately
7,300
veterans
completed suicide
this year

Increase in Risk for Suicide:



(U.S. Census Bureau, 2016;
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016)

Results

- Educated 20 veteran leaders in Polk County using QPR Gatekeeper Training
- Veterans Affairs office in Polk County received positive feedback from veterans after QPR training
- 100% the veterans surveyed reported an increase in their level of knowledge of how to ask someone about suicidal ideation
- Increased access and knowledge of local resources by developing PCVRG pamphlets

Conclusion

- Through collaboration with Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition and other local agencies, Polk County veterans are greater prepared to question, persuade and refer those at risk for suicide in their community. Additionally, veterans have access to a veteran specific resource guide that assists in obtaining medical, financial and social support

Recommendations

- Continue QPR education for veterans and other community members in Polk County
- Increase number of instructors trained in QPR for Veterans
- Address disproportionate suicide risk for female veterans by establishing population specific support groups

