

‘There Is Hope’: Second Lady Karen Pence Rallies Faith Community to Help Reverse Military Suicide Epidemic

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It's a tragedy that seemingly just won't go away. Each day roughly 20 military veterans take their lives—a staggering number that's remained consistent for years. The Trump administration hopes a new pro-active approach will help prevent suicide.

In 2019, the president signed an executive order offering a road map of sorts to help stop the heartbreak. Second lady Karen Pence serves as the lead ambassador for the effort, known as “PREVENTS,” which stands for the “President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide.”

I saw my role as a way to say, let's end the stigma and let's start the conversation,” Pence tells CBN News. “Everybody has risk factors for suicide, every single one of us.”

The numbers are hard to fathom: Each year, there are more than 47,000 suicides across America; more than 6,000 of them are veterans. That translates to a rate that is double that of the general population.

“There's help for our veterans, there's help for Americans,” Pence says. “We actually have things we're putting into place. We want people to talk to each other and part of talking to each other and reaching out is sharing your faith.”

This weekend, the administration is looking to the faith

community because believers are of vital importance.

“The research supports that there is a connection between people having an involvement in their faith community and having less opportunity or less desire to commit suicide,” Pence says.

In that spirit, an effort called “REACH,” is going out this weekend for houses of worship to directly address suicide. The administration hopes it will be the subject of sermons, feature information about prevention in bulletins and encourage those in attendance to take a written pledge, committing to change the national conversation around mental health and suicide.

“One of the main points involved in the REACH campaign is letting people know their risk factors and one of the risk factors right now is isolation,” Pence says.

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