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NIMH, U.S. Army Sign MOA to Conduct Groundbreaking Suicide Research

NIMH and the U.S. Army have entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to conduct research that will help the Army reduce the rate of suicides. NIMH Director Thomas R. Insel, M.D., Army Secretary Pete Geren, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. signed the MOA on October 23, 2008.

The MOA allows for a \$50-million, multi-year study on suicide and suicidal behavior among soldiers, across all phases of Army service. It will be the largest single study on the subject of suicide that NIMH has ever undertaken.

The joint project will strengthen the Army's efforts to reduce suicide among its soldiers by identifying risk and protective factors for suicidal thinking and behavior. It will help the Army develop more effective intervention programs and target them where they are most needed.

Benefits of the study will go beyond the Army. The study's findings will also inform our understanding of suicide in the U.S. population overall, and may lead to more effective interventions for both soldiers and civilians. Every year, an average of 30,000 Americans die by suicide.

Specific details are still being worked out in the NIMH Division of Services and Intervention Research.