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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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# Researchers receive \$2.9 million grant to advance screening capabilities for suicide risk

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A multidisciplinary team from Care New England's Butler Hospital, Brown University and the University of Michigan has come together to advance screening capabilities for suicide risk. The group received a \$2.9 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct a five-year research study utilizing innovative smartphone technology. Using the smartphone app PRIORI (Predicting Individual Outcomes for Rapid Intervention) designed by the team at the University of Michigan, researchers will record and analyze changes in speech patterns to identify how they relate to changes in suicide risk.

The tenth leading cause of death in the United States, suicide is responsible for 42,000 deaths in the country each year. Although there are many known risk factors for suicide, the majority of individuals who have these risk factors do not go on to attempt suicide - pointing to the importance of identifying new strategic risk factors for suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

"It is our hope that results of this study will have implications for both prevention and early intervention of suicide, and that the smartphone technology will provide methods for monitoring patients' suicide risk over time," said Heather Schatten, PhD, a research psychologist at Butler Hospital and assistant professor of research at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. One of three principal investigators for the study, Dr. Schatten is joined by a multidisciplinary team that includes research psychologists, psychiatrists, computer scientists and engineers, and a quantitative scientist.

"We are very pleased to welcome this first test of our app outside of Michigan and in a patient population with diverse diagnoses," says Melvin McInnis, MD, a U-M Health System psychiatrist who leads the U-M team that developed the program with funding from the Heinz C. Prechter Bipolar Research Fund. Dr. McInnis collaborates on the PRIORI project with Emily Mower Provost, PhD, a U-M assistant professor of electrical engineering and computer science who is the principal investigator for the Michigan site. "Our initial testing with people who have bipolar disorder continues, and we look forward to the results of

both studies," says Dr. Mower Provost.

Participants in the study will be recruited in a psychiatric inpatient setting, an important population given the elevated suicide rates in the weeks and months following hospital discharge. The study begins recruitment this month.

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**Source:**

Care New England

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