Mandated Reporting of Suicide Attempts:
The Who, What, When, Why, and How of Fulfilling Your Duty

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ The Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER) is an internet-based data system used to collect a standardized set of data elements for suicide deaths and attempts that occur during military service
- ❖ From 2010-2017, only suicide attempts that resulted in evacuation from theater or hospitalization required reporting via the DoDSER system
- ❖ Beginning in 2018, the Services must submit DoDSER reports for all suicide attempts, regardless of medical or readiness consequence
- ❖ Public Law 113-291 mandated this change in suicide attempt reporting

WHO?

Individuals Responsible for Completing Suicide Attempt DoDSERs

- ❖ Behavioral Health Providers
- ❖ Health Care Providers
- ❖ A command appointed representative
- ❖ Technicians under the supervision of any aforementioned professional
- ❖ All new users complete a standardized 15-minute online training prior to gaining access to the system
- ❖ All active users complete an annual, standardized 15-minute refresher training online

WHAT?

Suicide Attempt Definitions

- ❖ Suicide Attempt (aka, "actual" attempt): "A self-inflicted, potentially injurious behavior with a non-fatal outcome for which there is evidence (either explicit or implicit) of intent to die" [1]
- ❖ Interrupted Suicide Attempt: "When the person is interrupted (by an outside circumstance) from starting the potentially self-injurious act (if not for that, actual attempt would have occurred)" [2]
- ❖ Aborted Suicide Attempt: "When person begins to take steps toward making a suicide attempt, but stops themselves before they actually have engaged in any self-destructive behavior" [2]

Tips on Responding to DoDSER Items

- ❖ For the narrative, or text, boxes in the DoDSER survey, we recommend typing in an account of the suicide attempt with as many details included as possible
  - ❖ While copying/pasting a portion of the medical record into the box is better than leaving the boxes empty, the medical record information can be difficult for the DoDSER team to decipher given that contextual information is often missing or incomplete
- ❖ We recommend verifying information via multiple sources (e.g., medical record and interview) to increase the reliability of the data
- ❖ Users are able to print a blank copy of the survey to use during an interview and then enter the data through the web portal at a later time

REGULATIONS FOR MANDATED REPORTING

- ❖ Department of Defense (DoD)
  - ❖ Section 567 of Public Law 113-291
  - ❖ System of Records Notice EDHA-20 DoD
  - ❖ Department of Defense Instruction 6490.16
- ❖ Air Force
  - ❖ 10 U.S.C. 8013, Secretary of the Air Force
  - ❖ Air Force Instruction 90-505
- ❖ Army
  - ❖ 10 U.S.C. 3013, Secretary of the Army
  - ❖ Army Regulation 600-63
  - ❖ MEDCOM policy 17-016
- ❖ Navy & Marine Corps
  - ❖ 10 U.S.C. 5013, Secretary of the Navy
  - ❖ OPNAV Instruction 1720.4A
- ❖ National Guard - Falls under Reserve Component
- ❖ Reserves - Follow Service requirements

WHEN?

ASAP - Within 30 Days of Identification or Report

- ❖ Submit a report as soon as possible, while your memory is fresh
- ❖ If delayed, record brief details of the event in a de-identified manner to aid your memory and store your records in a secure location
- ❖ Ideal is 30 days, preferred is as soon as complete information can be obtained
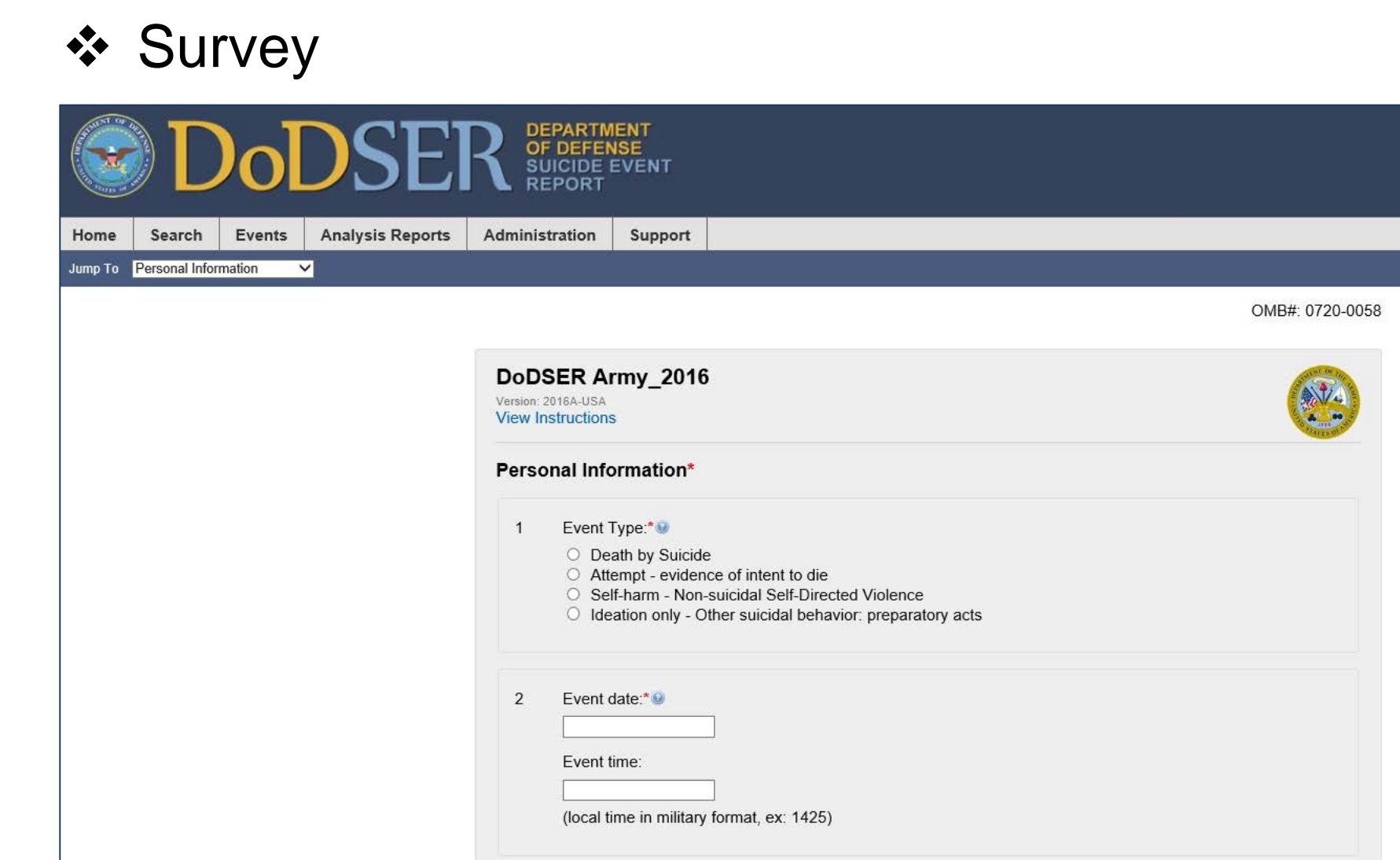
WHY?

Uses of the DoDSER Data

- ❖ Surveillance
  - ❖ Track occurrence of attempts and deaths
  - ❖ Evaluate trends in risk factors and event-related details (e.g., method, location)
- ❖ Prevention
  - ❖ Evaluate impact of suicide prevention programs
- ❖ Intervention
  - ❖ Estimate resources needed for suicide-related healthcare
- ❖ Predictive modeling
  - ❖ Provide more than five million pieces of linked data on suicidal behavior
- ❖ DoD policy decisions
  - ❖ Evaluate effectiveness of suicide prevention policies
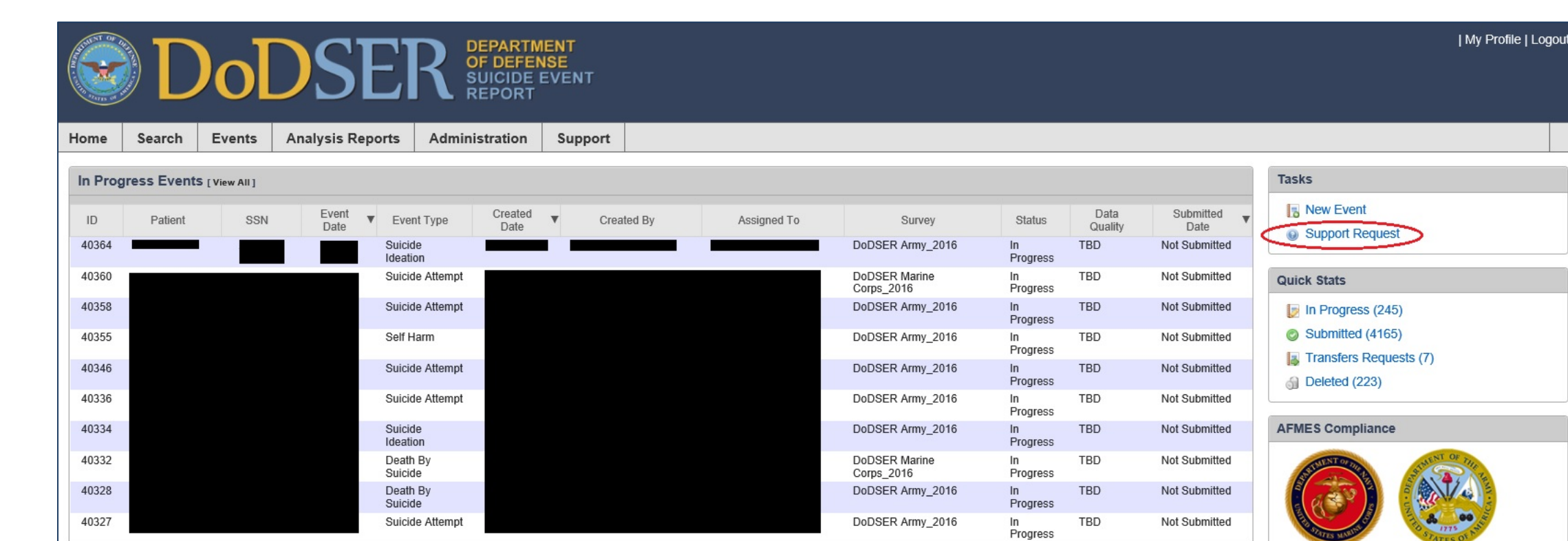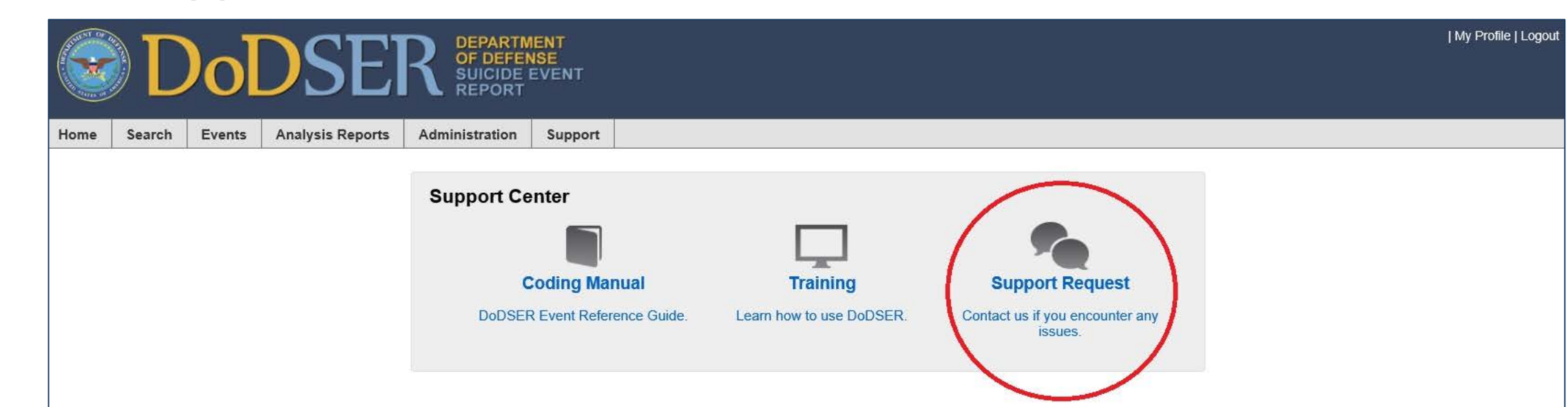 - ❖ Provide leaders with high quality data for decision making

HOW?

DoDSER Web Portal

- ❖ Website: https://dodser.t2.health.mil/
  - ❖ Must be accessed from a computer connected to the DoD network (.mil)
  - ❖ Must be accessed with a Common Access Card

- ❖ Survey

- ❖ Support links

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

Reach Out with Questions!

- ❖ In the DoDSER web portal, click on the support icons in the screenshots above
- ❖ Email: dha.jblm.j-9.mbx.phcoe-dodser@mail.mil
- ❖ Phone: (253) 968-2946

If you are unsure whether the event was a suicide attempt, call us!

REFERENCES

[1] Pruitt, L.D., Smolenski, D.J., Bush, N., & Hoyt, T. (2018). Department of defense suicide event report - calendar year 2016.

[2] Oquendo, M. A., Halberstam, B., & Mann, J. J. (2003). Risk factors for suicidal behavior. *Standardized evaluation in clinical practice, 22*, 103-129.