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**United States Department of Defense's Under Secretary of Defense,
Ms. Jessica L. Garfola Wright, to Lead National Effort to Prevent Suicide**

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention welcomes Secretary Wright and honors the contributions of outgoing co-chair, John M. McHugh, Secretary of the Army

Washington, DC – The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance), the national public-private partnership advancing suicide prevention, has named Jessica L. Garfola Wright, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the United States Department of Defense, as the new public sector co-chair.

“The Action Alliance is honored to welcome Secretary Wright as our new public sector leader. Ms. Wright brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Action Alliance especially in her role overseeing personnel and readiness for our Uniformed Services. We look forward to her leadership to advance national suicide prevention efforts,” said Dr. Doryn Chervin, Executive Secretary of the Action Alliance.

As the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Ms. Wright is the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense on recruitment, career development, pay and benefits for 1.4 million active duty military personnel, 1.1 million Guard and Reserve personnel, 748,000 Department of Defense civilians, and is responsible for overseeing the overall state of military readiness.

"I am honored to be part of the work that the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention is doing," said Sec. Wright. "We have a responsibility to make every effort possible to reduce suicides in both our military and our society. Suicide prevention is essential to the overall health of our nation; one loss of life to suicide is one too many."

In this leadership role, Secretary Wright joins Mr. Robert Turner, Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations, Union Pacific Corporation, and private sector co-chair of the Action Alliance.

Secretary Wright will succeed John M. McHugh, Secretary of the United States Army, as the Action Alliance's public sector leader. Secretary McHugh skillfully championed suicide prevention both within the U.S. Army and at the national level since 2010 when he was appointed by former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, as the Action Alliance's founding public sector co-chair.

“Secretary McHugh’s leadership of the Action Alliance has been invaluable. We commend his time and dedication to this important work,” said Action Alliance Executive Secretary Dr. Doryn Chervin.

Under Secretary McHugh’s leadership, the Action Alliance revised the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*, developed the first-ever *Prioritized Research Agenda for Suicide Prevention*, and helped to bring the issue of suicide prevention to the forefront of our national conversation.

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

(www.ActionAllianceforSuicidePrevention.org) is the public-private partnership working to advance the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and make suicide prevention a national priority. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, through the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) operates the Secretariat for the Action Alliance, which was launched in 2010 by former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates with the goal of saving 20,000 lives in five years.

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