



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Hoeven Proclaims Suicide Prevention Month in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed September as Suicide Prevention Month in North Dakota.

According to the North Dakota Department of Health, suicide is the second leading cause of death among North Dakotans ages 15 to 34 and the ninth leading cause of death overall. North Dakota ranks 11th in the nation for its rate of suicide deaths. In 2009, 89 North Dakotans died as a result of suicide.

Suicide affects everyone, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Men are four times more likely than women to die from suicide, but women are three times more likely to attempt suicide. In North Dakota, people in the 25 to 34 age group and American Indians are also at higher risk.

“Knowing the risk factors and warning signs for suicide may save a life,” said Gail Erickson, Suicide Prevention director for the Department of Health. “It’s important to realize, however, that not everyone who displays these warning signs will attempt suicide.”

Risk factors for suicide include, but are not limited to:

- Previous suicide attempt(s).
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Physical illness.
- Feeling alone.

“Unfortunately, someone dies as a result of suicide every four days in North Dakota,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M. “That’s why it’s important for all of us to recognize the warning signs and reach out to people who are having difficulty coping.”

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The warning signs of suicide can include:

- Changes in a person's mood, diet or sleeping pattern.
- Increased alcohol or drug use.
- Withdrawal from friends, family and society.
- Rage or uncontrolled anger.
- Reckless behavior.

Some of the ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide include:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be nonjudgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove lethal means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from someone specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. Help is available by calling **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, a free and confidential 24/7 suicide prevention lifeline.

The North Dakota Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention raises funds for scientific research, education and treatment programs, as well as programs to support those who have lost loved ones to suicide. This year, six "Out of the Darkness" Community Walks are scheduled in North Dakota to raise funds for suicide prevention and awareness. The event will be held in Williston September 18, Minot September 18, Grand Forks September 19, Fargo September 26, Bismarck October 2, and Valley City October 3. For information about locations and starting times, contact Mary Weiler at afspnd@gmail.com or www.afsp.org.

The North Dakota Department of Health, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Mental Health America of North Dakota, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention are partnering with local organizations, tribal agencies, the Veterans Administration, and the North Dakota National Guard to address suicide prevention through the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Coalition. "Building a person's strengths and resiliency prevents suicide, and it takes collaboration in our communities and statewide organizations to do it," said Beth Huseth, Coalition chair. "That is the mission of our Coalition."

For information about developing local prevention programs or for more information about suicide prevention, contact Gail Erickson, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4580. For information about the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Coalition, contact Beth Huseth at 701.341.0756 or bethh@staloisius.com.

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Please note: Proclamation follows.

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Proclamation
SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
September 2010

WHEREAS, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States and the third leading cause of death among people ages 15 to 24; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, one person dies by suicide every 15 minutes; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in North Dakota and the second leading cause of death among North Dakotans ages 15 to 24 and ages 25 to 34; and

WHEREAS, agencies and individuals across North Dakota are working to prevent suicide; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans are encouraged to learn the warning signs of suicide and to get appropriate help for themselves and their family members who are at risk.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim September 2010, **SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.

John Hoeven
Governor

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