



SUICIDE IN COLORADO

- Colorado suicide rates have exceeded the national average by almost 40% since suicide data were first collected in 1910.
- Colorado is consistently ranked among the top ten states for suicide death rates. In 2005 Colorado ranked 6th nationally.
- Older adults, ages 65 and older, have the highest suicide rates in Colorado.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for Coloradans ages 10-34.
- In Colorado, more people die by suicide than die by homicide or in motor vehicle crashes.
- Many of those most at risk for suicide suffer from depression, other types of mental illnesses and substance abuse.

HISTORY OF SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS IN COLORADO

In March 1998, the Suicide Prevention Advisory Commission was established by Governor Romer's office as a result of growing concern over the high rate of suicide in Colorado. The commission reviewed trends, risk factors, methods, and demographics; reviewed and analyzed suicide prevention plans in other states; and looked at existing strategies that recognize and respond to people who are at risk. The commission finished its work in 1998 and Governor Owens directed the Department of Public Health and the Department of Human Services to put together a proposal to address this ever-increasing tragedy. It was determined that the Office of Suicide Prevention be created in the Department of Public Health and Environment by legislative action during the 2000 legislative session. Representative Gayle Berry and Senator Elsie Lacy sponsored a bill. This bill directed the Office of Suicide Prevention to act as the state coordinator for suicide prevention programs throughout Colorado. The office was funded and authorized to accept gifts, grants, and donations. The Office of Suicide Prevention was also made responsible for training, assessments, administering local grants, and conducting a public awareness campaign.

OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION – CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- **Statewide training and awareness** in suicide intervention and prevention skills.
- **Informational materials** - presentations, posters, bookmarks, brochures, other outreach, public service announcements.
- **Community grants** – Currently ten community grants awarded through June 2009. Grantees are targeting working-aged men, older adults, American Indian youth, GLBTQ youth, and rural populations.
- **Evaluation** – Partnering with the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program and the University of Denver to evaluate behavior change as it relates to the Yellow Ribbon Program.
- **Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado** – Partner with the Coalition in suicide prevention efforts statewide through regional town hall meetings, a quarterly newsletter, speaker's bureau, and public advocacy.
- **Youth Suicide Prevention** – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grant funded through the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act to target suicide prevention among children and youth in the juvenile justice and child and family welfare systems.
- **Colorado Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention and Intervention** – Partnership between The Colorado Trust (funder), Mental Health America of Colorado, the Office of Suicide Prevention, the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado, and statewide suicide prevention partners and stakeholders to update the Colorado strategic plan for suicide prevention. The plan will build upon and expand the original plan created in 1998.
- **1-800-273-TALK** – 24-hour crisis line available to all Coloradans. The Office of Suicide Prevention provides funding to the Pueblo Suicide Prevention Center to run the crisis line, collect data on callers, and report to the Office of Suicide Prevention.

Office of Suicide Prevention

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