



"Saving Lives in Tennessee"

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TSPN Responds to CDC Trends in State Suicide Rates Report

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) wishes to respond to the recent report through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on “Trends in State Suicide Rates – United States, 1999-2016 and Circumstances Contributing to Suicide”

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6722a1.htm?s_cid=mm6722a1_w

In any given day, three people in Tennessee die by suicide. In 2016, the number of suicides increased in young people (ages 10-18) in Tennessee, with one person in this age group lost to suicide every week. We lose one person between the ages of 10-24 every four days, and every day we lose at least one person over the age of 45, with adults in midlife and older adults remaining at higher risk. While suicide rates in Tennessee went up only slightly in 2016 from 2015, the new figures are the highest recorded in Tennessee in more than 35 years of record-keeping. However, with all of this information, TSPN wishes to praise efforts happening in Tennessee toward suicide prevention.

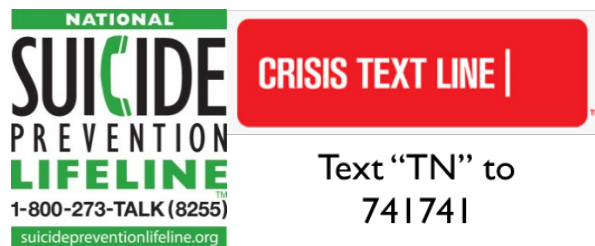
Suicide is a complex concern that is determined by multiple factors, including mental illness and prior suicide attempts, access to lethal means, poor coping and problem-solving skills, as well as social and economic problems. TSPN’s Executive Director, Scott Ridgway, MS, highlights that “the number one risk factor for suicide is undiagnosed depression.” During Governor Haslam’s Administration, he and his team dedicated funding to the Office of the Deputy Medical Examiner to enable Medical Examiners Tennessee to utilize updated reporting technologies as well as receive more information of suicide and training, leading to better reporting. TSPN works tirelessly with this office for continued support to

provide resources, trainings, and information to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide prevention in Tennessee.

While more than 50 percent of suicides are firearm related, TSPN is impacting this demographic and continues to expand these efforts through the Gun Safety Project. This project provides suicide prevention information to gun shops, gun owners, etc. with the goal of education towards safe storage and local resources for suicide prevention (<http://tspn.org/gun-safety-project>).

With the recent press surrounding celebrity deaths by suicide, all must take this opportunity to talk openly and safely about suicide and suicide prevention resources. TSPN recommends that all familiarize themselves with the warning signs of suicide (listed at <http://tspn.org/warning-signs>) so they can get help for themselves and those around them as needed. TSPN is also available to provide a free suicide prevention or awareness trainings across the state; to request a training visit our website (<http://tspn.org/request-training-now>).

TSPN and all Tennesseans must recognize that we have our work cut out for us moving forward to better prevent suicide. Ridgway notes that "if we are really going to address the issue of suicide in Tennessee, we need additional funding in our state devoted specifically to suicide prevention efforts."



TTY line: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

For non-emergency information on suicide prevention, contact the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at (615) 297-1077 or tspn@tspn.org. More information about TSPN is available at the agency website (www.tspn.org).

TSPN is the statewide public-private organization responsible for implementing the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention. TSPN and its volunteers work across the state to organize activities & projects promoting suicide prevention awareness, providing suicide prevention & crisis intervention training to community organizations, and conducting postvention sessions for schools & organizations after suicides occur.

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