



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TSPN PUBLISHES STATUS OF SUICIDE IN TENNESSEE 2015
Report Details Suicide Trends Across State; TSPN Response**

The latest edition of the *Status of Suicide in Tennessee* report, published annually by the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN), highlights major innovations within the Network's outreach and awareness efforts during the past year. These new approaches will prove especially vital given the recent increase in Tennessee's suicide rate.

In 2013, the latest year for which state-specific figures are available, Tennessee's age-adjusted suicide rate was at its highest point in five years, with a rate of 15.7 suicide deaths per 100,000 people and 1,017 deaths reported. This increase continues a trend of elevated and rising rates that has been in effect for Tennessee since the start of the Great Recession. As usual, Tennessee's suicide rate exceeds that of the nation at large (13.0 per 100,000 in 2013).

At particularly high risk for suicide are people in midlife, especially white males. Non-Hispanic whites made up 78% of Tennessee's population in 2013 but accounted for 93% of all reported suicide deaths in the state that year (950 out of 1,017). Over the course of the lifespan, white males in Tennessee experience suicide rates several times higher than any other race-sex subgroup, and this distinction is especially pronounced in midlife and old age.

Suicide among teens is also an ongoing concern. According to the Tennessee Youth Risk Behavior Survey published in 2013 by the Tennessee Department of Education, 1 in 11 high school students surveyed attempted suicide sometime within the previous year. This figure is up considerably from the 2011 survey (9.0 % versus 6.2%). Of those who attempted suicide, approximately 48% of them required medical

attention for injuries related to their attempt—up from 35% in the 2011 survey.

Attention is also given to the nature of non-fatal versus fatal attempts and common suicide methods—almost two-thirds of all suicides in Tennessee involve a firearm.

The *Status of Suicide in Tennessee* report also summarizes TSPN’s outreach and awareness efforts over the last year, with special attention given to the Network’s involvement in two emerging movements within the national suicide prevention movement. Through the Zero Suicide Initiative, TSPN and its community partners seek to eliminate (not merely reduce) suicide within the state’s behavioral health inpatient and outpatient programs. The Network is also increasingly involved in the lived experience movement, which focuses on engaging survivors of suicide attempts in suicide prevention policy and messaging.

“Suicide remains a major public health threat in the state of Tennessee,” explains TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway in the report’s introduction. “As such, TSPN remains at the ready to educate the people and dispel the stigma attached to suicide and mental health issues. We will be there to comfort those in pain, encourage them to tell their stories, and empower them to take action... We hope this report will inspire you to join us in merging hard-won experience with proven strategy to create life-changing, life-saving change for the people of Tennessee.”

Status of Suicide in Tennessee 2015 is available online via the TSPN website (www.tspn.org/sost).



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.