



## **THE NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION RESPONDS TO YOUTH SUICIDE DATA PUBLISHED IN THE *MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT*.**

A statement prepared by The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance)  
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Washington, D.C. (November 4, 2016)—Data published in the November 4th edition of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) describe death rates for motor vehicle traffic injury, suicide, and homicide among children and adolescents aged 10–14 years old. The data shows suicide death data for 2009 through 2014 increasing for youth ages 10–14 and surpassing motor vehicle deaths in 2014. The number of motor vehicle deaths within this age group has declined dramatically from more than 4 deaths per 100,000 people to less than 2 deaths per 100,000. It is important to note that the data still show that suicide is a relatively rare event, but that additional youth suicide prevention efforts are needed.

These data underscore the need for a robust approach to youth suicide prevention that is similar to the comprehensive approach that effectively decreased motor vehicle traffic fatalities over the last decade.

The significant reduction in motor vehicle fatalities is documented as a [“20th Century Public Health Achievement”](#)<sup>i</sup>. This achievement required a comprehensive approach including infrastructure improvements, policy and system change, partnerships, education and awareness<sup>ii</sup>. Efforts included leadership at the national level, significant federal investments—in 2015, the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration funded over \$576m in grants to promote motor vehicle safety and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded approximately \$60m in grants for suicide prevention programming<sup>iii,iv</sup>—cross-sector collaboration, citizen and community-based advocacy, and public-private partnerships<sup>v</sup>. If implemented and brought to scale, a similar comprehensive, multifaceted approach, as outlined in the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#), has the potential to reverse the trend in suicide mortality.

Implementation of a comprehensive approach to youth suicide prevention (including, but not limited to identifying youth at risk, building connectedness and resiliency, and connecting youth to evidence-based follow-up care services) has shown promise in reducing youth suicidal behavior. Counties that received a SAMHSA youth suicide prevention grant and implemented youth suicide prevention programming were found to have reduced youth suicide rates and attempt rates when compared to counties without funded youth suicide prevention programming. However, efforts must be maintained to sustain the progress.<sup>viii</sup> Several National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded prevention programs aimed at reducing risk factors (e.g., aggression, family conflict) for suicide also reported preventing suicidal thoughts and behaviors for as long as a decade.<sup>viii</sup> This evidence indicates that a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention has the potential to reduce the number of suicide deaths among youth when broadly implemented, scaled up, and sustained.

The Action Alliance encourages widespread awareness and understanding of the youth suicide warning signs as well as resources for youth who are in crisis.

#### Youth Suicide Warning Signs:

Recently released consensus guidelines identified the following [youth suicide warning signs](#):

- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above<sup>x</sup>

If a youth is in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day.

These data provide a renewed call to action to address suicide in our nation. For every person who dies by suicide, there are 278 who think seriously about suicide annually but do not die<sup>x</sup>. These untold stories of hope and recovery are the stories of suicide prevention, stories that are informing the Action Alliance's efforts to prevent suicide every day.

The [Action Alliance](#) is the public-private partnership that collaborates with more than 250 public and private sector organizations to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. The Action Alliance works diligently with national partners to promote a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention.

#### Key Youth Suicide Prevention Resources:

- [Youth Suicide Warning Signs](#)<sup>xi</sup>- Consensus guidelines on youth suicide warning signs.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - Youth Resources](#)<sup>xii</sup>- Resources for youth, including how to access the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and other resources for youth in crisis.
- [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#)<sup>xiii</sup>- Resources for youth who may be having suicidal thoughts. You can also find information on how to cope if a friend dies by suicide.
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center- Resources for Parents/Guardians/Families](#)<sup>xiv</sup>- Resources for parents, guardians, and other family members.
- [The Trevor Project](#)<sup>xv</sup>- Provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 13–24. The Trevor Helpline is a 24-hour toll-free suicide hotline at 1-866-488-7386. [TrevorChat](#) is available 7 days a week between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. ET. Trevor Text is available on Thursdays and Fridays between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. ET. Text "Trevor" to 202-304-1200.
- [Youth Suicide Prevention Program](#)<sup>xvi</sup>- Information for teens about suicide and suicide prevention, depression, how to help, and where to get help.

#### Media Partners:

Research shows that the media may influence suicide rates by the way they report on suicide. Evidence suggests that when the media tells stories of people positively coping in suicidal moments, more suicides can be prevented. We urge all members of the media working on these stories to refer to the [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#)<sup>xvii</sup> for best practices for safely and accurately reporting on suicide. For stories of persons with lived experience of suicidality and finding hope, refer to [www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org](http://www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org).<sup>xviii</sup>

Other resources for suicide prevention information:

- [American Association of Suicidology](#)<sup>xix</sup>
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)<sup>xx</sup>
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)<sup>xxi</sup>
- [Suicide Awareness and Voices of Education \(SAVE\)](#)<sup>xxii</sup>
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)<sup>xxiii</sup>
- [The Trevor Project](#)<sup>xxiv</sup>

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION:

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention 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 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. For more information, contact Colleen Carr, [ccarr@edc.org](mailto:ccarr@edc.org).

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4818a1.htm>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db81.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.nhtsa.gov/About-NHTSA/Highway-Safety-Grant-Programs>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsa-fy-2017-congressional-justification.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4818a1.htm>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26465226>

<sup>vii</sup> [http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302496?url\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr\\_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr\\_dat=cr\\_pub%3Dpubmed&](http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302496?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&)

<sup>viii</sup> <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sltb.2016.46.issue-S1/issuetoc>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org>

<sup>x</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from:

[www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html). Source for attempts and serious ideation from (combining adult and youth data): CDC YRBS, 2013. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, NSDUH Series H-42, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-4667. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012. And CDC YRBS, 2013.

<sup>xi</sup> <http://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org>

<sup>xii</sup> <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/youth/>

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://www.sptsusa.org/teens/>

<sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/suicide-prevention-resources-parentsguardiansfamilies>

<sup>xv</sup> <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>

<sup>xvi</sup> <http://www.yspp.org/>

<sup>xvii</sup> <http://reportingonsuicide.org/>

<sup>xviii</sup> <http://lifelineforattemptsurvivors.org/>

<sup>xix</sup> <http://www.suicidology.org/>

<sup>xx</sup> <http://afsp.org/>

<sup>xxi</sup> <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

<sup>xxii</sup> <http://www.save.org/>

<sup>xxiii</sup> <http://www.sprc.org/>

<sup>xxiv</sup> <http://www.thetrevorproject.org>