

Suicide Prevention Task Force Public Listening Sessions

Background:

In May, the Wolf Administration announced the formation of a statewide suicide prevention task force, made up of representatives from various state agencies, including the Department of Human Services, members of the General Assembly, and Prevent Suicide PA. The task force will develop Pennsylvania's statewide suicide prevention plan, which is a four-year strategy to reduce suicide in Pennsylvania and fight stigma associated with suicide, suicide attempts, and mental health services.

Historically, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has worked with stakeholders to develop separate suicide prevention plans related to youth, adults, and older adults. These plans have set the stage for prevention efforts in Pennsylvania. By bringing together leaders from a variety of state agencies – human services, health, the state police, corrections, aging, education, commission on crime and delinquency, military and veterans affairs, PennDOT, elected officials, and Prevent Suicide PA – we will learn about how suicide impacts the lives of Pennsylvanians across the board and develop prevention efforts that reflect the diverse needs of individuals and families across the state.

Many Pennsylvanians expressed interest in contributing to the work of the task force—whether they are family or friend loss survivors, attempt survivors, health providers, or community members—to raise awareness and help suicide prevention in any way possible. Through listening sessions being held across the Commonwealth, the public's voice will help task force members shape the statewide suicide prevention plans, which will include recommendations for state government, stakeholders and communities to carry forward and implement.

Listening Session Guidelines:

Listening sessions are an opportunity for stakeholders to share ideas for suicide prevention, addressing stigma, intervention, and healing and recovery. Discussing these topics can bring up complicated feelings, and you may not agree with everything that is said here. We want these listening sessions to be as open a forum as possible while remaining safe for everyone. In order to achieve that goal, we ask that everyone keep the following norms and guiding principles in mind:

- Please keep comments and sharing limited to 3-5 minutes and try to be mindful of how others might feel in response to your questions or comments.
- You are not required to share personal stories or information in order to contribute to the discussion. We are interested in all recommendations for suicide prevention and education, and look forward to hearing ideas from stakeholders in the community.
- We realize that talking about an important and emotional topic like suicide can be difficult, and if you need to say or describe something that you realize may be upsetting to yourself or to others, please consider writing your comment on the feedback form rather than describing it aloud and/or in detail.

If you need or would like support as a result of what is being shared, there are mental health professionals and peers located outside of this meeting room who are available to talk with you and provide additional resources.

Suicide Facts & Figures: Pennsylvania 2019 *



On average, one person dies by suicide every four hours in the state.

More than six times as many people died by suicide in Pennsylvania in 2017 than in alcohol related motor vehicle accidents.

The total deaths to suicide reflect a total of 38,241 years of potential life lost (YPLL) before age 65.



Suicide cost Pennsylvania a total of **\$1,857,068,000** combined lifetime medical and work loss cost in 2010, or an average of **\$1,178,343 per suicide death.**

*Based on most recent 2017 data from CDC. Learn more at afsp.org/statistics.



11th leading cause of death in Pennsylvania

2nd leading
cause of death for ages 15-34

4th leading
cause of death for ages 35-54

8th leading
cause of death for ages 55-64

17th leading
cause of death for ages 65 & older

Suicide Death Rates

| | Number of Deaths by Suicide | Rate per 100,000 Population | State Rank |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Pennsylvania | 2,030 | 15.03 | 30 |
| Nationally | 47,173 | 14.00 | |