Suicide has been a major public health issue in Colorado for years, devastating families and tearing at the fabric of our communities. But it can be prevented by improving access to integrated behavioral and primary health care, encouraging those at risk to seek help with community networks, and exploring safe storage options for firearms and lethal medications during periods of crisis.

The legislature designated the Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP) to lead statewide suicide prevention and intervention efforts. The Office is committed to reducing the number of suicides in Colorado through data-driven, research-based suicide prevention initiatives implemented with an expanding network of statewide partners. The Office prioritizes state funding to create the most meaningful impact through strategic priorities, including:

- Funding local initiatives.
- Focusing on high-risk populations and highly impacted parts of the state.
- Implementing primary prevention strategies to reach individuals prior to the escalation of a crisis.
- Training individuals to recognize and respond to suicidal crisis.
- Leading collaborative partnerships.

The Suicide Prevention Commission of Colorado (Senate Bill 14-088) provides public and private leadership for suicide prevention efforts and advises the Office of Suicide Prevention on data-driven, evidence-based interventions.

### IMPACT REPORT: SUICIDE IN COLORADO

Colorado consistently ranks in the top 10 nationwide for suicide deaths. In 2016, Colorado saw 1,156 suicide deaths - the highest number ever recorded. More Coloradans died from suicide than homicide, motor vehicle crashes, breast cancer, flu or pneumonia, or diabetes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-18</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-34</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>19-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-64</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>35-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>65+</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY*</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, Hispanic</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

77.9% Male 22.1% Female

9th highest suicide rate in the nation (2015)

7th leading cause of death in Colorado for all ages

2nd leading cause of death for Coloradans ages 10 - 24

45-64 Adults ages 45 - 64 have the highest suicide rate

**LEARN MORE:**
Data and legislative report: www.colorado.gov/cdphe/injury-data-and-epidemiology
## Suicide Prevention Programs and Priorities

### Man Therapy.
This website (www.mantherapy.org) is designed to reach working-age men to change the way they think about mental health, provide them with the tools they need to take control of their overall wellness and reduce the number of suicides. Man Therapy uses humor to put men at ease as they find information on depression, substance abuse, anger, anxiety and the community resources available. Man Therapy includes resources specifically for first responders and active duty military and veterans.

- Working age men account for more than half of all suicides
- 700,000 website visits in 5 yrs

### Gun Shop Project.
OSP partners with firearm advocates, gun shops, firing ranges and safety instructors to promote firearm safety and suicide prevention messages through posters, brochures, fact sheets and wallet cards. The project is forging relationships with local firearms organizations and increasing awareness of the need for safe storage of firearms, especially during times of suicidal crisis.

- 4 out of 5 firearms deaths are suicide
- Partners in 21 counties

### Emergency Room Follow-up.
Patients discharged from emergency rooms after a suicide attempt are more likely to try again and less likely to access follow-up mental health care. A workgroup of the Colorado Suicide Commission developed a pilot protocol for the Colorado Crisis and Support Line to provide telephonic follow-up with suicidal patients for 30 days. In addition, the Colorado School of Public Health supports emergency departments in counseling suicidal patients on safe storage of firearms during crisis periods.

- 70% of suicidal patients released from ERs do not attend a follow-up appointment with a mental health provider
- 2,800 referrals to the Emergency Room Follow-up Project

### Zero Suicide.
In 2016, Gov. John Hickenlooper signed into law a bill that creates a state suicide prevention plan modeled on the Zero Suicide approach. This approach teaches seven elements of quality improvement that primary and behavioral health care systems can adopt to keep high-risk individuals from falling through the cracks. Evidence shows that practices adhering to the model can reduce patient suicide rates by as much as 80 percent. OSP supports communities implementing this approach with training and technical assistance.

- All 17 Colorado community mental health centers trained
- Grantees funded for 5 years to implement framework

### Community Initiatives.
OSP funds local efforts to implement strategies in Zero Suicide, Man Therapy, Sources of Strength and local initiatives. Previously, grantees trained clinical service providers in suicide assessment. Grantees include school districts, hospitals, community mental health agencies, nonprofit organizations and local public health agencies.

- Community grantees previously trained 400+ clinical service providers in suicide assessment

### Sources of Strength.
Sources of Strength is an evidence-based program designed to build emotional resiliency, increase school connectedness and prevent suicide by building protective factors for students, including communication, coping and school engagement. Initial results show improved student life skills, conflict resolution, understanding of consent for sexual activity and better attitudes about gender roles.

- CDPHE will evaluate multiple violence prevention strategies in 20 schools

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