



05-01

STATEMENT OF POLICY

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) recognizes the considerable burden and impact of suicide as a national public health problem. NACCHO supports the development and expansion of systems, such as the National Violent Death Reporting System, to provide data that support an enhanced understanding of suicide and its causes.

NACCHO encourages local health officials to support and promote the Department of Health and Human Services' National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (NSSP). The NSSP represents a collaborative effort of several national organizations, advocates, clinicians, researchers and survivors around the nation. It lays out a framework for action to prevent suicide and guides development of an array of services and programs that must be developed. It is designed to be a catalyst for social change with the power to transform attitudes, policies, and services.¹ NACCHO encourages collaboration between local, federal, state, and tribal public health agencies, and appropriate community partners to prevent suicide.

Justification

Suicide is an important cause of serious injury and death as addressed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication, *Healthy People 2010*². In 2004, 32,439 deaths were attributed to suicide³ and approximately 195, 134 individuals were hospitalized following a suicide attempt⁴.

Specific population sub-groups are disproportionately affected by suicide (e.g., youth, adults over the age of 55, Native Americans, and individuals living in rural communities)⁵. Suicide is a complex behavior and requires a multifaceted approach to prevention, including addressing problems of mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, and access to lethal means⁶.

¹ National Strategy for Suicide Prevention <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/suicideprevention/strategy.asp>

² www.healthypeople.gov

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WISQARS Fatal Injury Report. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>

⁴ Suicide Prevention Resource Center, United States Suicide Fact Sheet.

http://www.sprc.org/stateinformation/PDF/statedatasheets/sprc_national_data.pdf

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Suicide Fact Sheet.

⁶ Moscicki EK. Epidemiology of completed and attempted suicide: toward a framework for prevention. *Clinical Neuroscience Research*, 2001; 1: 310-23.

Record of Action

*Proposed by Injury Prevention Subcommittee and
Community Health and Prevention Committee
Adopted by NACCHO Board of Directors
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