

December 11, 2019

Governor Douglas A. Ducey
Office of the Governor
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

Pursuant to Laws 2018, Second Regular Session, Chapter 276, Section 10 please find the following fiscal year 2018-2019 summary of accomplishments in suicide prevention by AHCCCS staff.

AHCCCS reconvened a Suicide Prevention Stakeholder meeting to update the Arizona Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. Arizona Community partners at these meetings included representatives from the following organizations:

Area Agencies on Aging	Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs
Arizona Coalition for Military Families	Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family
Arizona Coalition for Suicide Prevention	Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence	Maricopa County Public Health Department
Arizona Department of Health Services	Health and Hope for Youth
Arizona Department of Veteran Services	NARBHA Foundation
Arizona State Parks	Native Americans for Community Action
Arizona State University - Center for Applied Behavioral Health Policy	Pima County Public Health Department
Arizona State University - Kids at Hope	Stronger as One Coalition
Be Connected - Veteran Outreach	Teen Lifeline
Department of Economic Services	University of Arizona College of Public Health
Department of Education	Veterans Administration-Phoenix Hospital
Department of Health Services	West Yavapai Guidance Center/Verde Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition
Department of Veteran Services	Yavapai County Public Health Department

The Arizona Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan was finalized in March 2019, with the following Goals:

1. Reduce the number of suicides in Arizona through coordinated prevention activities, including developing broad-base support for the Zero Suicide model
2. Reduce stigma related to suicide, including promoting responsible media reporting of suicide
3. Promote efforts to reduce access to lethal means of suicide
4. Promote suicide prevention as a core component of health care services
5. Provide care and support to individuals affected by suicide deaths or suicide attempts, and implement community best practice-based prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies
6. Increase the timeliness and usefulness of national, state, tribal, and local surveillance systems relevant to suicide prevention and improve the ability to collect, analyze, and use this information for action
7. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of suicide prevention interventions and systems and disseminate findings

Objectives in each of these seven goal areas were accomplished during 2018-2019, with one of the most impactful being building relationships with Arizonans statewide who are working on suicide prevention.

Suicide prevention is community-based; the effort to reduce stigma associated with suicide, and/or asking for help to address mental illness is communal. In the last year, new relationships were created with multiple state agencies, county health departments, community coalitions, schools, and interfaith groups. The AHCCCS suicide prevention coordinator serves on the following:

1. Arizona Coalition for Suicide Prevention
2. Be Connected – the statewide initiative to end Veteran suicides,
3. Stronger as One Coalition – a community coalition in northern Arizona
4. Health and Hope for Youth – a community coalition in southern Arizona
5. The Board of Directors for the Arizona Public Health Association to ensure suicide prevention messaging is included, and
6. Board of Directors for United Food Bank, which outreaches homebound seniors across four counties.

AHCCCS updated the Suicide Prevention website and listed community resources for each priority population and resources by county. The AHCCCS Suicide Prevention website also lists best practice tools including information about the Zero Suicide model, postvention care, the Gun Shop Project, Rx Matters for means reduction, suicide prevention tools specific to faith leaders, and best practices for the media on reporting suicide. These tools and the dissemination of this information meet several of the State goals aforementioned.

AHCCCS provided training to community groups in the prevention of suicide and related behaviors. The suicide prevention coordinator provided more than 100 trainings in 2018-2019, reaching more than 4,000 Arizonans with a message of prevention and recovery.

Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) is critical to preventing suicide contagion. First responders in Maricopa and Pima Counties leave packets of information with the family of someone who died from suicide. This material includes a list of local behavioral health resources the

individuals can immediately access. The AHCCCS suicide prevention coordinator helped secure an additional \$10,000 toward printing these LOSS materials; expansion to all of Arizona's counties with these materials is underway.

The suicide prevention coordinator also serves as the AHCCCS representative for Project AWARE. This five-year grant funded project is led by colleagues at the Arizona Department of Education provides behavioral health training and resources to three school districts, and funds community-based suicide prevention trainings. In coordination with the Project AWARE team, the suicide prevention coordinator selected evidence-based best practice suicide prevention trainings for schools to select from, meeting the requirements of SB 1486, which goes into effect in 2020.

Through the State Opioid Response (SOR) federal grant, AHCCCS funded the PAX Good Behavior Game (GBG) in FFY20. In collaboration with the Department of Education and County Superintendents, the PAX GBG will be rolled out Statewide, with a focus on rural Arizona given their identified need of additional resources. The PAX GBG is a social emotional "immunization" which has demonstrated statistically significant reductions in suicide in longitudinal studies.

AHCCCS staff are greatly appreciative of suicide prevention being added as a breakthrough project by Governor Ducey's office. We welcome the opportunity to work alongside our colleagues at the Arizona Department of Health Services to provide accurate data and program efforts to state leadership. AHCCCS staff worked alongside the Arizona Department of Health Services during the August suicide prevention stakeholder meeting.

During suicide prevention month in September, AHCCCS directly outreached more than 1,500 Arizonans with suicide prevention messaging. This included multiple state agencies participating in World Suicide Prevention Day, and more than 300 educators attending behavioral health in school forums held statewide.

In October 2019, the suicide prevention team includes an epidemiologist. This team member will work closely with colleagues at the ADHS and county health departments to improve and disseminate death certificate data related to suicide. Moving forward to 2020, the AHCCCS suicide prevention team will continue to work closely with the ADHS on the joint Arizona Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan.

Please feel free to contact Kelli Donley Williams (kelli.williams@azahcccs.gov, 602-417-4493) if you have any questions about this report.

Sincerely,



Jami Snyder
Director

cc: The Honorable Karen Fann, President Arizona State Senate
The Honorable Russell Bowers, Speaker, Arizona House of Representatives
Richard Stavneak, Director, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Matt Gress, Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting
Christina Corieri, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor