

# YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION— THE TIME IS NOW

Youth suicide is a tragedy that can impact any family, school, and community. In 2017 suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth age 10 to 24. (*Oregon Violent Death Reporting System, 2018*) At an even higher risk of suicide due to stigma and discrimination, a startling one-half of Oregon's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender 8th graders reported considering suicide in 2017. (*2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey*).

We are part of a movement that is galvanized to help all young people embrace life by:

- Promoting a sense of **hope** and strategies to build resilience
- Supporting young people to reach out for **help** and making help available at the right time
- Bringing communities together to **heal** after a tragedy occurs and to prevent contagion

## Hope and Help

From an early age we must work with schools and families to support children's social/emotional development. Instead of waiting to react to acute and crisis episodes that cost the public millions of dollars and incalculable pain and suffering for youth and families, a public health approach is needed. We must move upstream by:

- Decreasing bullying and harassment (#1 problem reported to Safe Oregon tip line)
- Reducing exclusionary practices like suspension and expulsion
- Increasing availability of counselors and social workers in schools
- Cultivating supportive relationships between adults and youth and promoting social emotional competence through programs like Sources of Strength

- Funding family support strategies that strengthen family acceptance, build protective factors and link families to resources
- Connecting schools to community resources to support healthy environments and relationships among youth

We commit to dedicating serious effort and resources toward ending youth suicide by supporting suicide prevention and mental health promotion legislation and policy option packages that:

- Implement the objectives of the Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan (YSIPP)
- Focus special attention on populations with higher suicide completion and attempt rates
- Empower and equip schools to cultivate healthy environments and prevent crises
- Provide youth with training to build help-seeking skills and resilience

## Making a Difference in 2019

To decrease suicide and help Oregon youth and young adults to thrive, we need to take bold action this session. We support Governor Kate Brown's calls for an increase in funding for early education, K-12 schools and behavioral health. To move forward in addressing youth suicide, we must ensure the passage of:

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**Oregon Health Authority's POP** to expand behavioral health services, including suicide intervention and prevention, in schools for children and youth; develop adult suicide prevention, intervention and postvention plan—\$13.1 M investment

**Basic Rights Oregon's SB 52** to provide all Oregon school districts with a model suicide prevention policy based on national best practices and require school districts to implement suicide prevention policies and procedures, addressing high risk populations.

**Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide's** concepts to 1) promote healing and prevent contagion by requiring schools to participate in the planning process for youth suicide postvention reporting required through SB 485; 2) strengthen SB 48 to require behavioral health professionals to take continuing education units on suicide assessment, treatment and management and 3) enact legislation to require that the Alliance serve as an advisory committee to OHA on implementation of the YSIPP.

**School Safety Task Force's HB 2327** to enhance youth suicide prevention efforts, decrease bullying and enhance student wellness by hiring four Youth Suicide Prevention Specialists assigned to Education Service Districts; promoting the tip line and working to build protective factors through upstream prevention programs.

**Confederation of Oregon School Administrators' HB 2224** to provide grants for improving student outcomes by supporting social, emotional, mental and physical health needs of students; to provide recommended curricula and training; and to create a statewide data-sharing team to eliminate barriers between health care and education service providers.

**Oregon Department of Education's POPs** for Safe and Effective Schools for All Students (focusing on upstream prevention, like Sources of Strength, and early intervention initiatives) Improved Levels of Service for Students with Special Needs – Strategy 1 investment of \$75.8 M for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education and Strategy 6 investment of \$1.2 M for SEL in Kindergarten.



**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**



**Oregon Council of  
Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry**



**Oregon  
Family Support  
Network**



**ASSOCIATION OF OREGON  
COMMUNITY MENTAL  
HEALTH PROGRAMS**

For further information call the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide/AOCMHP at 503-399-7201  
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