

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

CONTACT: ERIN MACINNES
(850) 488-9557

EIGHTH ANNUAL SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AT THE CAPITAL

~ Promoting awareness about this devastating public health problem ~

TALLAHASSEE- According to the Florida Department of Health, 2,723 Floridians lost their lives to suicide in 2008 at a rate of 7 people per day. Of those, 231 were between the ages of 10 and 24. Tragically, many Florida families and communities have been affected by the suicide deaths of their loved ones, friends, classmates, co-workers and neighbors. The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is holding an awareness day to address this silent epidemic.

Suicide Prevention Day at the Capital is a statewide event in which the Office of Suicide Prevention and Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition are joined in Tallahassee by advocates, survivors, grassroots organizations, other state agencies, and youth to bring suicide to the forefront as a public health issue. This year Suicide Prevention Day falls on Wednesday, March 24th, 2010. Beginning at 8:00 AM, multiple advocacy and human service organizations will be hosting educational display tables in the Capitol Plaza Rotunda. A press conference will begin at 11:00 AM in 22nd floor observatory featuring Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon, Director of the Office of Drug Control Colonel Bruce Grant, Senator Evelyn Lynn, and former Department of Corrections Secretary, Colonel Jim McDonough.

The 2007 Florida Legislature passed a bill which was signed into law by Governor Crist that created the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention within the Office of Drug Control to coordinate and provide oversight to statewide efforts. This law also established the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council to advise and make recommendations to the statewide office.

The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is charged with coordinating Florida's suicide prevention efforts by developing mechanisms for implementing the *Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy*, providing oversight, building capacity, creating policy, and mobilizing communities, with the overall goal of lowering suicidality and improving quality of life for Floridians.

To learn more about Suicide Prevention Day and other suicide prevention initiatives, please visit the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention website at <http://www.HelpPromoteHope.com>.

###