



Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy 2011 – 2015

Executive Summary

The mission of the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention is to reduce the suicide rate and improve quality of life in the State of Florida. This involves reducing suicidality – a condition that includes suicidal ideation, desire, planning, behaviors and attempts. Together with the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council, the Office guides Florida's suicide prevention efforts by developing mechanisms for implementing the Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy, providing oversight, building capacity, creating policy, and mobilizing communities.

Entering 2011 provides a natural segue into a re-examination and revision of the Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy. A close review of the goals and objectives showed the need to more closely align Florida's Strategy with the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Florida's updated goals and objectives provide a framework for helping to identify priorities and organize efforts to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior across the lifespan. The ultimate goal of suicide prevention is to reduce rates of suicide attempts and deaths, and the goals outlined in this strategy are focused on actions that can be done to achieve this imperative. As more agencies and communities become involved in prevention, more lives will be saved.

From 2005 to 2009, the rate of suicides (per 100,000) in Florida increased from 12.8 to 14.7 (according to preliminary data for 2009). The 2011-2015 Florida Suicide Prevention Strategy is designed to halt the increase and reverse the trend in order to achieve a 5% reduction by the end of 2014.

Drastic financial loss, home foreclosures, rising unemployment rates, extended and repeated military deployment, increases in prescription drug abuse, and other factors have contributed to higher suicide rates both statewide and nationally over the past few years. Studies show that there is a strong connection between joblessness and suicide. As the latest available national data is for 2007, before the unemployment rate reached its peak, it is likely that these rates will climb higher before declining.

Despite these challenges, Florida has made significant advancements in improving quality of life for Floridians and setting a strong foundation where suicide prevention has more visibility and support. Every day people working at the state and community levels are making progress toward the ten objectives in 2005-2010 strategy. Florida is constantly increasing its capacity to help those in need through prevention, intervention, and postvention services.

Although there are data to show how many people were lost to suicide, it's far more difficult, if not impossible, to collect accurate data on how many people considered or attempted suicide but were saved due to services and efforts of individuals and organizations dedicated to this cause. One can only imagine how many more would be lost in the absence of life-saving measures such as those presented in this Strategy.

This menu of actions will be used to guide Florida's suicide prevention efforts and the development of community-based plans. No one agency or organization has the capacity to address all of these goals, hence the menu of options is broad in scope to provide the opportunity for agencies, organizations, coalitions, and individuals to contribute to the progress of the overall goals, objectives and action ideas.

Measuring progress and outcomes are key to evaluating implementation. It is expected that as the State and individual communities identify priority goals and objectives, measureable outcomes will be developed in order to monitor progress.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

1. According to 2009 preliminary data, from 2005 – 2009 the Florida suicide rate increased from 12.8 to 14.7. The 2011 – 2015 Suicide Prevention Strategy is designed to stop the increase and reverse the trend in order to achieve a 5% reduction (14.0 per 100,000) by the end of 2014.
2. To decrease the suicide rate among youth aged 10 to 24 in Florida by 5% by the end of 2014 from approximately 6.5 per 100,000 (according to 2009 preliminary data) to approximately 6.3 per 100,000.
3. To decrease the percentage of Florida middle and high school students who self-report on the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance “attempting suicide one or more times in the past year” by 5% (from 6.5 to 6.3) by the end of 2015.