



## Fact Sheet

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **Fact Sheet: Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project**

*Fiscal years 2009–2011*

#### **History**

In October 2008, the Division of Behavioral Health, Prevention and Early Intervention Services was awarded a \$1.5 million federal Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act youth suicide prevention grant — \$500,000 per year for three years — from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant is the basis for the Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project.

#### **Goals and outcomes**

The Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project will build or strengthen suicide prevention programs and services in three regions. The successful applicants, in the Fairbanks, Bethel and Southeast regions, are to:

- Increase Alaska residents' understanding that youth suicide is preventable.
- Increase promotion of healthy social and emotional growth and youth development.
- Increase access to and availability of behavioral health services.
- Increase use of suicide prevention research and evaluation methods.
- Decrease suicide and suicidal behavior among Alaska's youth.

#### **Target groups**

The project targets high risk youth populations, including Alaska Native male teens; military youth 18–24; early-teen girls who have high rates of depression onset; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, and youth in residential/institutional settings such as youth detention or foster care.

#### **Team approach**

Regional suicide prevention teams will develop strategic regional plans.

- Plans will be culturally responsive and sustainable. They will target youth and include early prevention, intervention and suicide-attempt follow-up strategies. The teams will include representation from school districts, community youth organizations, mental health providers, churches, parent groups, juvenile justice, children's protective services and other youth-related groups.
- The University of Alaska Anchorage, Behavioral Health Research Services will evaluate the project. Evaluation will include an ethnographic analysis for each region. Behavioral Health Research Services will also pilot a campus program at the university.

**Contact:** James Gallanos, project coordinator, (907) 465-8536, (877) 393-2287 toll-free  
[james.gallanos@alaska.gov](mailto:james.gallanos@alaska.gov)

Sarana Schell, public information officer, (907) 269-8041, Cell (907) 240-7462  
[sarana.schell@alaska.gov](mailto:sarana.schell@alaska.gov)