

William J. Streur
Commissioner
P.O. Box 110601
Juneau, AK 99811-0601
www.hss.state.ak.us



Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 17, 2012

Contact: Sarana Schell, 907-269-8041, Cell 907-398-1480, sarana.schell@alaska.gov

Catherine Stadem, 907-269-3495, Cell 907-529-1520, catherine.stadem@alaska.gov

Alaska receives additional suicide prevention funding

\$1.4 million federal grant provides training statewide

ANCHORAGE — Alaska's Division of Behavioral Health recently received a \$1.44 million grant to strengthen the state's youth suicide prevention program.

The Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant, from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will help groups statewide offer suicide prevention training and develop prevention resources for their communities.

Alaska youth have a suicide rate far higher than their peers Outside. The rate for Alaskans age 15–24 was 46/100,000 in 2010, compared to national rates of 7.8/100,000 for 15–19-year-olds and 12.5/100,000 for 20–24-year-olds.

“Teaching Alaskans that suicide is preventable and giving them the tools to help be part of the solution is crucial to preventing suicide among youth in Alaska,” said Behavioral Health Division Director Melissa Stone.

The grant will allow the division's Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project to educate people about suicide; train personnel to make referrals for those at risk; link youth with community mental health systems, and promote Alaska's suicide prevention line, Careline, 1-877-266-HELP (4357), and other local, regional and statewide resources.

This is the second Garrett Lee Smith three-year grant awarded to the division. In 2009, the division awarded sub-grants to three regional suicide prevention teams in the Interior, Southeast and Southwest that created a variety of prevention resources and services for local communities. The current grant will continue to support these teams as well as other interested groups.

Combined with the recent legislative award of \$450,000 for school-based suicide prevention training resources, the state's suicide prevention efforts have received a roughly \$2-million boost. The school training includes an online resource for high school personnel, Kognito At-Risk. That project is led by one of the division's primary partners, the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, along with the Alaska Association of Student Governments and the state Department of Education & Early Development.

For more information on Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project activities and services, visit <http://hss.state.ak.us/dbh/prevention> or contact James Gallanos, project coordinator: 907-465-8536, 1-877-393-2287 toll free, james.gallanos@alaska.gov.

###