



Department of Health & Social Services  
Statewide Suicide Prevention Council  
**JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Iron Dog racers partner with state to promote suicide prevention**

*Team 12 encourages Alaskans to share the Careline number, get help if they need it, support others*

ANCHORAGE — 2015 Iron Dog racers Robert Strick and Steffen Strick Jr. have added their names to the list of Iron Dog riders who race to raise awareness of suicide prevention.

The brothers from McGrath, Team 12, are sharing a message of hope and purpose:

1. Suicide is preventable. People who are considering suicide usually give warning signs, and we can learn to recognize them. We can also do things to build our resilience as individuals and communities, such as exercising, which is good for both mental and physical health, and organizing community activities like the Iron Dog halfway banquet in Nome today.
2. We can all help. Alaska's [statewide suicide prevention action plan](#) on page 36 lists action steps that individuals, communities and organizations can take. For example, Alaskans can take a class on how to identify warning signs, how to reach out and how to connect people with help. For information on classes and training, visit [stopsuicidealaska.org](http://stopsuicidealaska.org). Worried about someone and don't have time to take a class? Call Careline, Alaska's toll-free statewide suicide prevention line, for advice on how to reach out: 1-877-266-HELP (4357).
3. Need help? Get help. Team 12 sports cards and posters share the message "Life is a team effort!" and contact information for Careline. Iron Dog racers ride as teams because it makes sense to use the buddy system when covering 2,000 rough, remote miles. If Alaskans hit a rough patch in life, they can call Careline 24/7, 365 days a year, or text 4help to 839863 most evenings. The trained Alaskans there welcome calls and texts from people who are in crisis, concerned about someone else, grieving or just really need to talk.

The Stricks invite all Alaskans to join them in taking a step to help prevent suicide.

The plan, posters and cards are posted on [dhss.alaska.gov/suicideprevention](http://dhss.alaska.gov/suicideprevention), the website for the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council. The Council thanks the Strick brothers, the state Division of Behavioral Health for printing the Iron Dog Team 12 sports cards and posters, and Iron Dog organizers for their support distributing the materials to towns and villages along the race route.

To track the teams along the race, visit [www.irondog.org/gps-tracking](http://www.irondog.org/gps-tracking).

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