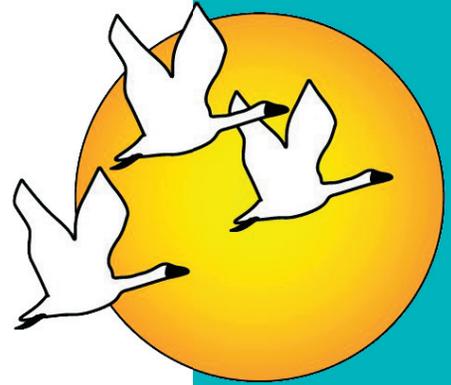


Statewide Suicide Prevention Council

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE 2004



By statute, the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council consists of 15 members, 11 appointed by the Governor and 4 by the Legislature.

The Governor appoints: two executive branch State employees; one member of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; one member of the Alaska Mental Health Board; a designee from the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc.; a counselor in a secondary school; an adult active in a statewide youth organization; a person who has experienced a family member's death by suicide; one person who resides in a rural community that is not connected by road or Alaska marine highway to the state's main road system; a member of the clergy; and a youth under eighteen. The senate president appoints one majority and one minority member of the Senate; the speaker of the house appoints one majority and one minority of the House.

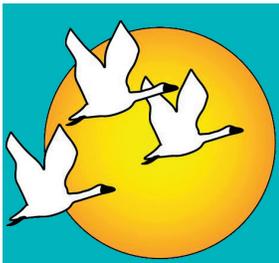
The Council shall serve in an advisory capacity to the legislature and governor with respect to what actions can and should be taken to:

- ◆ Improve health and wellness throughout the state by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals, families, and communities;
- ◆ Broaden the public's awareness of suicide and the risk factors related to suicide;
- ◆ Enhance suicide prevention services and programs throughout the state;
- ◆ Develop healthy communities through comprehensive, collaborative, community-based approaches;
- ◆ Develop and implement a statewide suicide prevention plan; and
- ◆ Strengthen existing and build new partnerships between public and private entities that will advance suicide prevention efforts in the state.

2003 Highlights

Alaska Suicide Prevention Follow-Back Study

The Alaska Injury Prevention Center (AIPC) and its partners are conducting a psychological autopsy study which entails gathering extensive data for all suicide in Alaska over a 12 month period. Attempts will be made to conduct a comprehensive interview of at least two survivors for every suicide over the twelve month period (6 month extension is pending approval). Data are being collected from the Alaska Medical Examiners office and law enforcement records, as well as medical and school records.



Suicide Prevention Council

AIPC has obtained IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval from the University of Alaska Anchorage and from the Alaska Native Medical Center to work with human subjects for this research project. AIPC has written approval from half of the regional Native Health Corporations and is pursuing approval from the remaining half. AIPC is pursuing agreements for data sharing with Providence and other hospitals; train more interviewers in various locations (18 already trained); and continue to build a database.

As a result of the research on this project, an application was also submitted in mid-February to the Centers for Disease Control for a new grant to study protective factors in communities that have had no suicides or attempts from 1994-2000.

Targeted Gatekeeper Training

The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) was awarded a SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] Targeted Gatekeeper Training grant to develop an Alaska-specific curriculum to train a broad range of providers to better understand and identify signs of suicidal behaviors and to intervene appropriately. The curriculum will be designed in a way that allows the training to be easily adjusted to fit different learning styles across a wide variety of professions from community health aides, to divorce attorneys, to basketball coaches and clergy. These trained “gatekeepers” will be able to assist with earlier identification and intervention, key strategies for preventing suicide. Once the curriculum is developed, a plan will be implemented for statewide training and evaluating the effectiveness of this approach. Currently, DBH is working with procurement to finalize the contracting process for the curriculum development and evaluation.

Clergy-Clinician Initiative

A Clergy/Clinician Conference was held in Fairbanks during October 2003 allowing clergy, clinicians and remote health aides the opportunity to share information, discuss suicide prevention concerns and ways in which they could support one another and become better resources when working with an individual in crisis. An additional conference is tentatively scheduled for late spring in Point Hope.

Trust and Planning Board Relationship

Staff from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority continue to facilitate discussions with the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), the Governor’s Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) and the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council on a restructuring effort that would merge the boards to reduce duplication and unify efforts. Given that the Suicide Prevention Council is due to end in FY05, with one additional year to conclude business, the Trust will advocate that the Council receive adequate funding to continue its work in FY05 and FY06, with FY06 used to develop permanent Suicide Prevention representation and function as a part of the AMHB, ABADA or a merged Behavioral Health Board.

Statewide Suicide Council Plan

Dr. Margaret West, Region X, Maternal Child and Family Health and national suicide prevention expert worked on the draft Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan with staff from the Division of Behavioral Health in an effort to make the document more user friendly. The Council will assess the changes and decide if the new version allows for easier and more active use. The recommendation has been made that the Council continue to work on finalizing the draft and conduct a major release on Friday, September 10, 2004 – World Suicide Prevention Day coupled with a large public service announcement campaign.

Council Members

Jeanine Sparks

Acting Chair & School Counselor

Joel Gilbertson

Health and Social Services

Noelle Hardt

Youth Organization

Mike Irwin

Public

Representative Mary Kapsner

Alaska State Legislature

Representative Pete Kott

Alaska State Legislature

Judith Lethin

Alaska Board of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Senator Georgianna Lincoln

Alaska State Legislature

Karen Perdue

Public

Susan Soule

Health and Social Services

Senator Ben Stevens

Alaska State Legislature

Vacant

Youth under 18

Vacant

Alaska Mental Health Board

Vacant

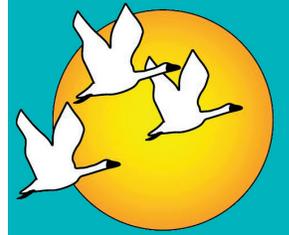
Alaska Federation of Natives

Vacant

Clergy

Kathy Craft

Interim Coordinator
Kathryn_Craft@health.state.ak.us
1-800-770-1672



Report to the Legislature

2004 Central Priorities for the Council

- ◆ Complete and disseminate the Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan, Fall 2004
- ◆ Commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day; September 10, 2004
- ◆ Orient new Council Members

The Council would like to thank and extend their appreciation to Mark McDonald, Agnes Sweetsir and Carol Seppilu for their dedication and support during 2003.

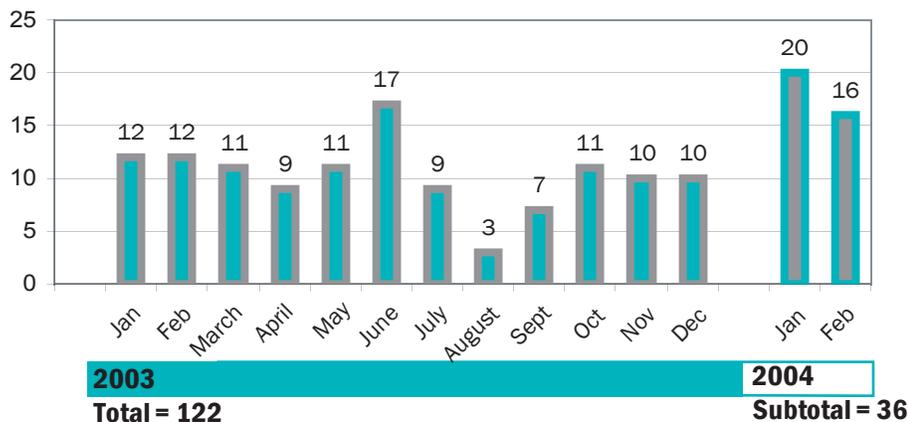
- ◆ For additional Alaska Suicide Prevention Council information, please visit: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/default.htm>
- ◆ Division of Public Health
- ◆ Injury Disparities in Alaska – Alaska Injury Resources
- ◆ Fact Sheets & Printable Resources:
<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/profiles/injuries/default.htm>

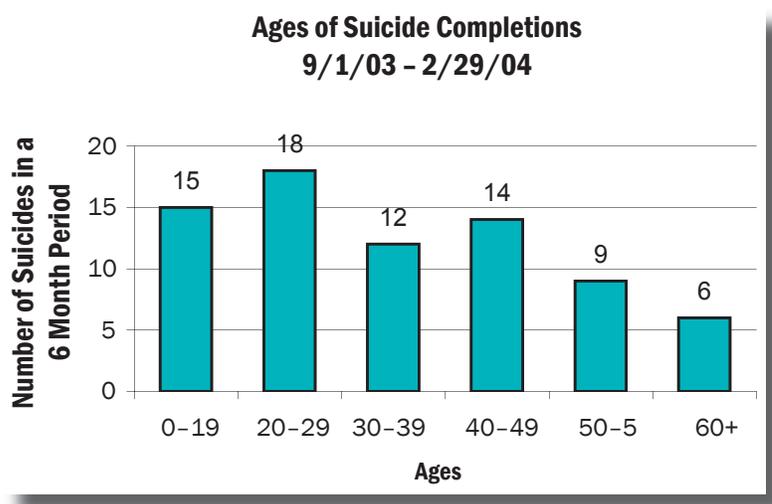
Additional Suicide Prevention Facts

- ◆ www.nimh.nih.gov/research/suifact.htm
- ◆ www.psych.org/public_info/teen.cfm
- ◆ www.acap.org/publications/factsfam/suicide.htm
- ◆ www.childrensdatabank.org

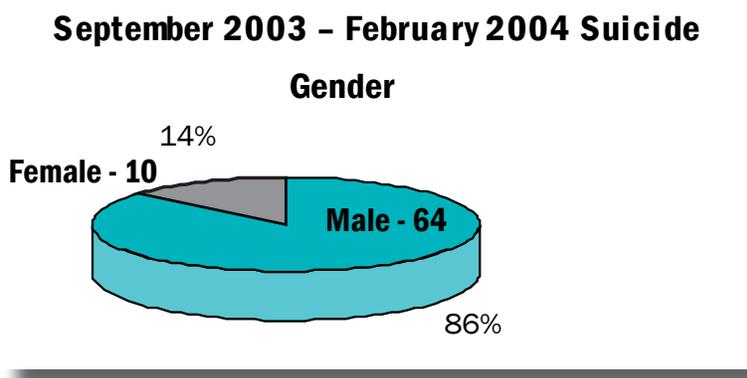
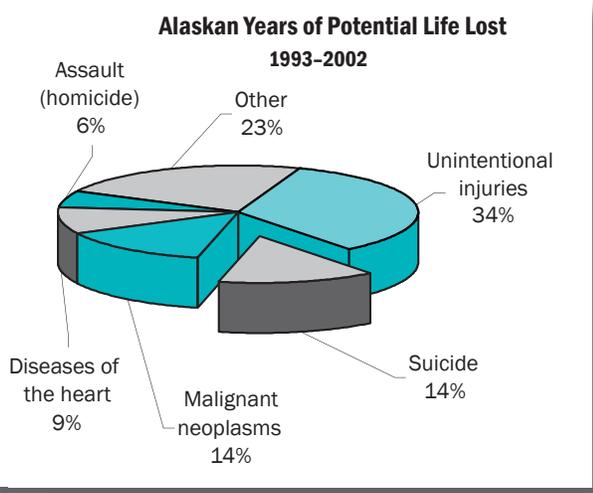
Frank H. Murkowski, Governor

Alaska Suicides 2003/2004 Month to Date



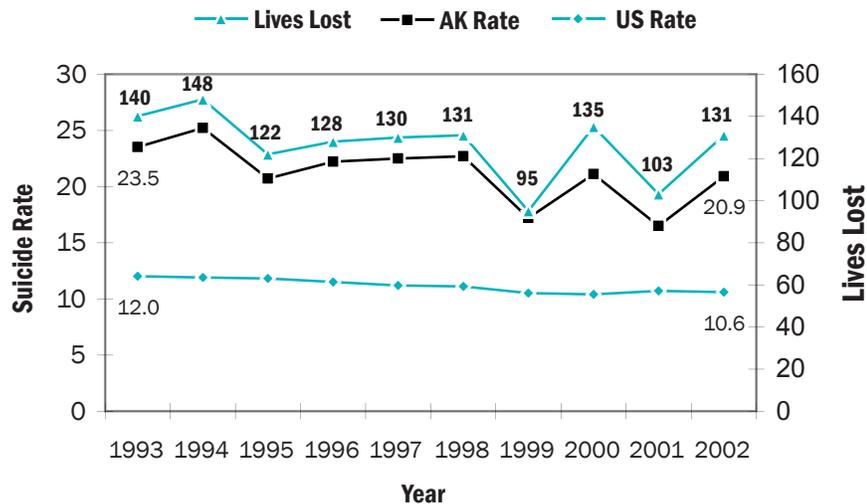


Source: Alaska Injury Prevention Center Follow Back Study. September 2003 - February 2004

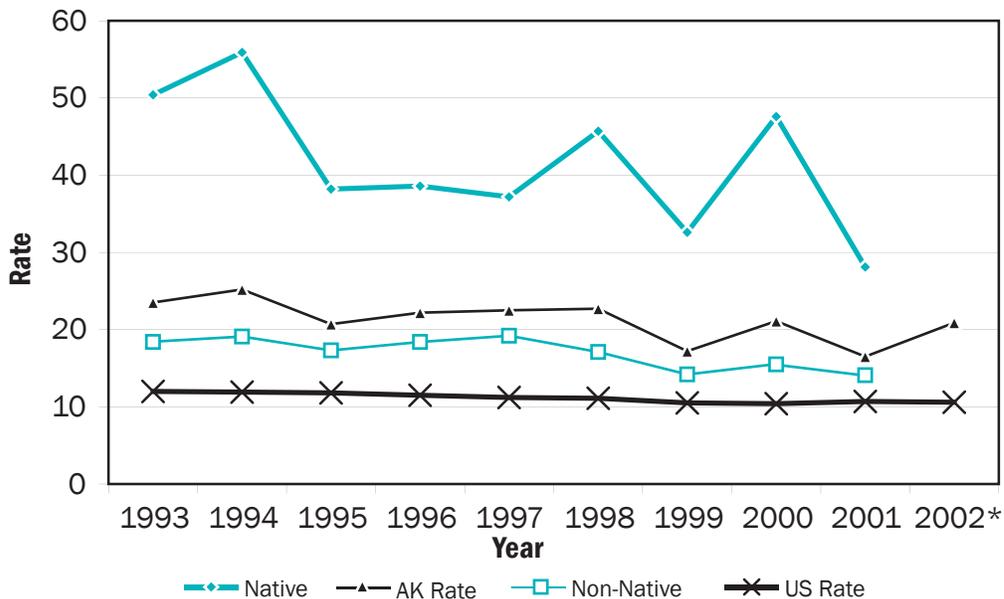


Source: Alaska Injury Prevention Center Follow Back Study. September 2003 - February 2004

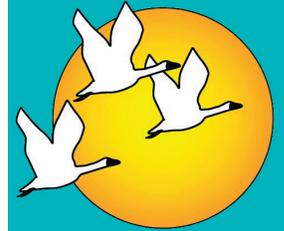
**Alaska Suicide Rates
1993-2002**



**Alaska, Alaska Native, and National Suicide Rates
1993-2002**

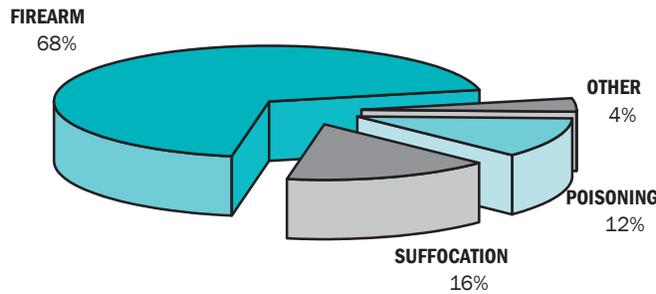


*Population estimates by race are unavailable for 2002. Therefore rates can not be calculated

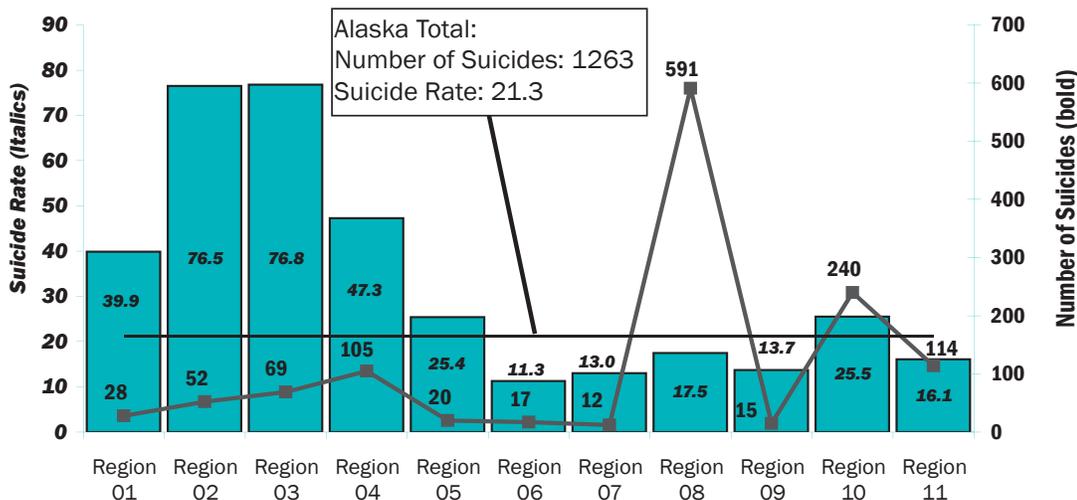


Report to the Legislature

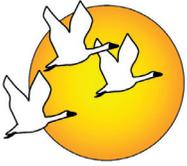
**Suicide Methods in Alaska
1993-2002**



**Alaska Suicide Rates and Numbers by Region
1993-2002**



- Region 01: North Slope Borough
- Region 02: Northwest Arctic Borough
- Region 03: Nome census area
- Region 04: Wade Hampton census area, Bethel census area
- Region 05: Dillingham census area, Bristol Bay Borough, Lake and Peninsula Borough
- Region 06: Kodiak Island Borough
- Region 07: Aleutians East Borough, Aleutian West census Area
- Region 08: Mat-Su Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Region 09: Valdez-Cordova census area
- Region 10: Yukon-Koyukuk census area, Fairbanks/North Star Borough, Southeast Fairbanks census area, Denali Borough
- Region 11: Haines Borough, Juneau Borough, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Sitka Borough, Wrangell-Petersburg census area, Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan census area, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon census area



Suicide Prevention Council
Departmental Coordination Manager &
Suicide Prevention Council Staff
Department of Health and Social Services
Commissioner's Office
Office of Program Review
751 Old Richardson Hwy., Suite 100-A
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-7802



Suicide Prevention Council Annual Report to the Legislature: 2004

Alaska Age-Specific Suicide Rates and Number
1993-2002

