



Mending The Net

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Alaska hosts postvention conference

Nearly 130 people from across Alaska gathered June 9 and 10 for the Alaska Suicide Postvention Training and Healing Conference. It was the first statewide conference focusing on training and procedures to deal with the aftermath of a suicide.

The conference was a project carried out by the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health with the assistance of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council. Barbara Franks, the SSPC Vice Chair who lost her son to suicide, described the conference as "a dream come true."

The conference included the unveiling of the new publication by the Council and Division, "Helping our Communities Heal: The Alaska Post-

vention Resource Guide." It provides information, resources and suggested guidelines for individuals and communities dealing with the aftermath of a suicide. It is a first edition guide of suicide prevention best practices and will be revised in the future as new best practices emerge to make it more comprehensive over time. It covers the broad subject of postvention, including information for schools, behavioral health providers, members of the media, faith based communities and more.

The postvention conference was designed around the resource guide, bringing together experts on the different topics to help provide 130 participants with a better understanding of postvention. A

copy of the resource guide was provided to each of the registered participants. Suicide survivor kits were also distributed during registration. The kits include a variety of information for friends or families that have experienced a suicide. These are available from the Division for free.

If interested in the resource guide or a suicide survivor kit contact James Gallanos with the Division at (907) 465-8536 or Eric Morrison with the Council at (907)465-6518.

A PDF copy of the resource guide is available online at www.stopsuicidealaska.org.

Teck donates \$1 million for prevention

The operator of Red Dog Mine announced it is donating over a million dollars to the Northwest Arctic Borough School District for a suicide prevention program.

Representatives from Teck, Inc. announced in July the company would donate

\$1,250,000 over five years to the Youth Leaders Program. School Superintendent Norm Eck says Teck's donation will ensure the program continues to run.

It will also give the program a new name: it's now the "Teck - John Baker Youth

Leaders Program" in honor of the Kotzebue musher who won this year's Iditarod.

Eck says since the program started in 2008, the district has gone from having one of the highest suicide rates in Alaska to none in the last school year.

State Suicide Prevention Council meets in Barrow

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council held its latest quarterly meeting Oct. 5 and 6 at the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow. The Council worked on the new Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan, met with local agencies and gave reports on past and upcoming suicide prevention efforts.

The Council was also invited to Barrow High School, where youth representative Teressa Baldwin spoke with the student body about her passion for suicide prevention in Alaska. The students were also shown the winning video from the Alaska Association of Student Governments suicide prevention media contest from fellow high school student Jaden Nethercott of Barrow.

Much of the first day of the meeting focused on revising the draft of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan. The draft



will go out for public comment during the month of November. The 5-year plan will be unveiled in January.

A highlight of the meeting was a presentation on the 5th annual North Slope Summer Leadership Camp held in July. One of the camp's founders, Brian Houston, said the camp is designed to inspire

and challenge students in sports, arts and leadership classes that focus on real life issues. This year suicide prevention was an underlying theme of the camp.

Christian Stettler of the Arctic Slope Native Association spoke to the Council about suicide prevention efforts in the region.

The Council also elected its executive committee while in Barrow. William Martin was reelected Chair, Meghan Crow was elected Vice-Chair, Melissa Stone was reelected as Recorder/Treasurer and Christine Moses was elected Officer-at-Large. The Council members will hold these positions for one year.

The Council will hold its next quarterly meeting in conjunction with the biannual Alaska Suicide Prevention Summit in Anchorage January 9 to 11.

TCC releases new resource guide

Tanana Chiefs Conference has released a new Suicide Prevention Resources book. The 50-page book was compiled by its Health Services and Behavioral Health Department Prevention Team.

The intent of the book is to gather examples of suicide prevention resources and resource websites that are accessible and relevant for the TCC villages. The book covers a wide variety of suicide prevention topics, including facts, myths, signs and symptoms of suicide ideation and protective factors. The resource guide includes information about suicide prevention topics, including facts, myths,

signs of suicide ideation and protective factors, crisis response, coalition building and traditional values. The guide includes regional, statewide and national suicide prevention resources.

The book is available online in PDF format at http://www.tananachiefs.org/suicide_prevention.shtm.

Tanana Chiefs Conference is a traditional tribal consortium of 42 villages in Interior Alaska. It services the health and social service needs of more than 10,000 Alaska Natives across a region or 235,000 square miles.

Chalk project comes to Alaska

Identity, Inc., helped organize a You-Are-Loved Chalk Message Project event in Alaska on October 10.

The project began in 2005 at Drew University in New Jersey and has grown into a national event held each year on October 10 that focuses on suicide prevention in the gay and lesbian community. Identity helped organize the event along with the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the Alaska Pacific University campuses. The event is as simple as writing and drawing empowering messages and symbols with colorful sidewalk chalk.

For more information on the project visit www.chalkmessages.org.

Suicide warning signs

Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself.

Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means.

Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.

Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities—seemingly without thinking.

Experiencing dramatic mood changes.

Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

If you or someone you know is experiencing these signs call Careline at 1-877-266-4357.

Alaska Community-Based Suicide Prevention Grantees FY 2012

“Juneau Suicide Prevention Task Force” Juneau Youth Services

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$286,512
Total Grant Awards: \$286,512

The grantee organized a task force and subcommittees, including media and public awareness, training and education, youth, and mental health and high risk groups. The task force developed two websites, www.juneausuicideprevention.org and www.juneaumentalhealth.org, under a previous grant. They implemented Signs of Suicide (SOS) in two high schools and the alternative school, using the SOS booster curriculum in order to serve all high school and middle school students. With this new grant, the task force will develop a community-wide postvention plan.

“Alaska Careline” Fairbanks

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$144,057
Total Grant Award: \$144,057

Careline operates the statewide 24/7 suicide and mental health crisis hotline, 1-877-266-HELP (4357) with a supporting website, www.carelinealaska.com. Careline provides public education and assessment training to other health providers and community mental health centers.

“Youth Advisory Group” Asa’carsarmuit Tribal Council, City of Mountain Village

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$65,000
Total Grant Award: \$65,000

This is a capacity building grant to identify suicide prevention needs, resources, capacity and community planning development. The grantee will soon implement youth services, job skill training, after school programming, Elders programs and other cultural activities that support Alaska Native values.

“Nulato Life Project” City of Nulato

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$33,158
Total Grant Award: \$55,263

This grant includes youth mentoring, traditional Athabascan culture, community involvement, subsistence life skills and outdoor and other recreational activities. It promotes life and healthy choices for youth and prevents self-destructive behaviors including suicide. Go to <http://nulatolife.blogspot.com/>.

“Petersburg Mental Health Services” Petersburg

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$36,505
Total Grant Award: \$73,011

This grant funds Prime for Life, a drug and alcohol prevention program for middle school students and parents and adults in the community. The grantee will implement Alaska Gatekeeper Training and conduct screening, identification and referral for suicide. The grantee participates in the Community Action Planning team to provide postvention resources for both survivors of suicide loss and the community as a whole including schools, local churches, clergy, police, emergency first responders, local media and radio and other groups.

“We Are All In This Together Sub Regional Community Prevention Project” Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks

Suicide Prevention Funds: \$37,500
Total Grant Funds: \$150,000

This project will work primarily with the region’s Alaska Native villages and communities. It will implement suicide prevention and postvention protocols and provide training to leaders, health aids and in schools to include adult advisors and peer leaders. It will also implement Sources of Strength, which uses peer leaders to encourage help seeking and break the silence, and develop and implement media/awareness campaign “Hope, Help and Strength.”

“Southeast Suicide Prevention Task Force” SEARHC, Sitka

Total Grant Award: \$113,000

The grantee developed a regional suicide prevention team including representatives of key health, Tribal and youth organizations throughout southeast Alaska. It implemented a SEARHC Helpline, social marketing campaign “*I is 2 Many*”, Alaska Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training, cultural activities, and community and village outreach.

“Northstar Borough Regional Prevention Team” Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption, Fairbanks

Total Grant Award: \$113,333

The coalition focus is high risk youth (homeless, Alaska Native, LGBT, military). It also hosts monthly suicide survivors group.



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The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council advises the Governor and Legislature on issues relating to suicide. In collaboration with communities, faith-based organizations, and public-private entities, the Council works to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals and communities.

William Martin, Chair, Juneau
Meghan Crow, Vice-Chair, Bethel

Barbara Jean Franks, Anchorage
Melissa Stone, Anchorage

Brenda Moore, Anchorage

Christine Moses, Bethel.

Phyllis Carlson, Juneau

Teresa Baldwin, Sitka

Alana Humphrey, Anchorage

Sharon Norton, Homer

Pastor Lowell W. Sage Jr., Kivalina

Senator Johnny Ellis, Anchorage

Senator Fred Dyson, Eagle River.

Representative Anna Fairclough, Eagle River.

Representative Berta Gardner, Anchorage

IHS Summit Planned, Oct. 25-27

Help prevent suicide in Alaska by joining the web portal team

An Alaska Area Action Summit for Suicide Prevention will be held October 25-27 in Anchorage at the Hilton Hotel. The event is sponsored by the Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The event is free to the public. It will provide attendees with up-to-date research, best practices and promising practices to address suicide and substance abuse prevention, intervention and aftercare in Alaska.

"We are committed to using a collaborative approach to this serious, heart-breaking problem in our communities. Not one agency can solve this alone, and we have reached out ... to try a more coordinated approach in partnership with Tribes," said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, director of IHS.

The theme of the summit is

"Partnering with Alaska Natives to protect the circle of life." Organizers say the theme emphasizes the importance of collaboration with tribal, federal, state and community leadership, programs and resources for the advancement of Alaska Native behavioral health.

The first day of the summit will focus on suicide prevention. The focus of the second day will be intervention and postvention. Day three will have a youth focus.

The summit will also include multiple trainings on a wide variety of topics related to suicide prevention on Oct. 27, including survivor support, strengthening families, assessing and managing suicide risk, and more.

The summit is a follow-up event to one held by IHS, BIA, BIE and SAMSHA held Aug. 1-5 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

For more information on the summit contact Paula Arevalo at (240) 863-0352 or Raven Murray at (301) 443-2417.

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council encourages all Alaskans to get involved in local, regional and statewide suicide prevention efforts by joining the www.stopsuicidealaska.org web portal community. The web portal provides numerous opportunities to learn about and engage in suicide prevention in Alaska.

The main feature of the web portal is to provide a space to communicate about suicide prevention efforts across the state. It allows users to create personal web pages related to suicide prevention events, groups and coalitions. With the help of SSPC staff, users can design their own pages that can include pictures, video feeds, document sharing, calendars, web links and more. The portal also has an accompanying Facebook page with several hundred followers.

For more information and ways to get involved in suicide prevention efforts in your community, contact SSPC assistant Eric Morrison at eric.morrison@alaska.gov or 465-6518.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts call Careline Alaska for help at 1-877-266-4357 or text 907-2-LISTEN. Or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).