



SUICIDE PREVENTION

A Countywide Effort

Suicide is a major national health concern. The suicide rate has increased to its highest level in more than three decades.¹ It's the tenth leading cause of death for all Americans,² and the second leading cause for those aged 15-34.³ In Ohio, suicide claims a life *every seven hours*.⁴

Since 2010, Stark County has had a suicide rate higher than the national average. In 2016, at least 74 Stark County residents completed suicide, which is the highest number on record and a sharp increase from 59 the year

before. Mental health organizations have mobilized to take decisive action.

The Sisters of Charity Foundation is one of many local funders supporting a comprehensive suicide prevention effort. Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery is collaborating with the Stark County Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Crisis Intervention and Recovery Center to raise awareness, reduce stigma, provide more effective treatment and support, and ultimately reduce the number of suicides.

This project will especially target those most at risk for suicide: men ages 45-59, individuals 75 years and older, youth and young adults up to age 24, and veterans. Efforts will include:

- A community assessment to identify service gaps and determine the best ways to reach the community. Information gathered during the assessment will then be used to devise a concrete plan of action.
- Training in consistent, best-practice methods of screening and treatment, and universal implementation of suicide probability assessments. Particular attention will be paid to individuals released from the hospital after a suicide attempt, when their chance of another attempt is at its highest.
- Expansion of community partnerships and implementation of mass marketing and social media campaigns to educate and reduce stigma. This will include efforts to increase awareness of the Stark County Crisis Text Line to appeal to younger populations.

- Renovation of the Crisis Center's stabilization unit to ensure that it meets evidence-based environments of care recommendations. Studies show that the care environment is a critical part of recovery.
- Establishment of a fatality review board to aid in future prevention efforts.

As serious as this is, there is hope. A countywide effort using evidence-based practices can—and we pray will—decrease the number of suicide deaths in Stark County.

1. nytimes.com/2016/04/22/health/us-suicide-rate-surges-to-a-30-year-high.html
2. www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.pdf
3. www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/pdf/leading_causes_of_death_by_age_group_2013-a.pdf
4. <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/public/2015/suicide/suicide-the-stigma.html>

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