



# How you can prevent suicide

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Mark Hurst, M.D., Director

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## **TO: Medical Providers**

**FROM: Justin Trevino, MD, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS)**

Youth represent Ohio's future. While school age children and young adults are learning about and experiencing life, various factors, such as, mental health conditions, environmental stress, substance misuse and a history of trauma, may lead them to lose hope and take actions to end their lives.

By taking the time to review this important information, you can help save a young life and reverse the troubling trend we are seeing with youth suicide in Ohio. Awareness is key.

- Nationally, suicide is the second leading cause of death for those ages 10-24.
- In Ohio, rates of suicide have climbed 36% from 1999-2016.
- In a year's time, approximately one in 15 high school students reports attempting suicide; one in 53 reports making a suicide attempt serious enough to require medical treatment.
- Suicide completion is more common among white males and those living in urban areas.
- The most common method of completion for males is firearms and for females is hanging/suffocation.
- The majority of those in this age group who complete suicide have identified mental health issues, though most are not in active treatment.

Please take a moment to learn the warning signs of suicide.

- A significant change in mood or behavior - appearing consistently unhappy/depressed, irritable, with withdrawn from family/friends/activities.
- Poor performance in school or other important extra-curricular activities.
- Involvement in high-risk behaviors, including use of alcohol or other substances.
- Problems with concentration, and changes in energy level, appetite or sleep schedule.
- Direct statements about feeling hopeless, not wanting to live anymore.
- Self-injurious actions (e.g., wrist-cutting, burning self).
- History of depression or family history of depression.

However, suicide is preventable! Your actions can save the lives of a young person showing these warning signs.

- Ask directly about thoughts of suicide. (Asking about suicide does not increase the risk of suicide but does open up conversation.)
- Listen to what they need.
- Keep them safe. Reduce access to lethal means (e.g., firearms, pills). Call 911 if necessary.
- Help them connect with ongoing support, such as a local crisis line, the National Suicide Prevention Life line (1-800-273-8255) or the Crisis Text Line (text "4hope" to 741 741).
- Check back the next day to see how they're doing.
- Encourage the young person to engage with a counselor to assist with the development of coping skills, problem solving and conflict resolution.

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OhioMHAS, in partnership with agencies and organizations throughout the state, has developed a comprehensive plan to prevent suicide in Ohio. This can be viewed at:

<http://mha.ohio.gov/Prevention/Suicide-Prevention/Ohios-Suicide-Prevention-Plan>.

Feel free to display materials or connect the young people you serve to Ohio's youth-focused suicide prevention campaign - Be Present. For more information visit: <https://bepresentohio.org/>.

Questions? Contact Dr. Justin Trevino, OhioMHAS Medical Director, at [Justin.trevino@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:Justin.trevino@mha.ohio.gov) or Kathy Coate-Ortiz, Chief of Mental Health Services, at [Kathleen.coate-ortiz@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:Kathleen.coate-ortiz@mha.ohio.gov).