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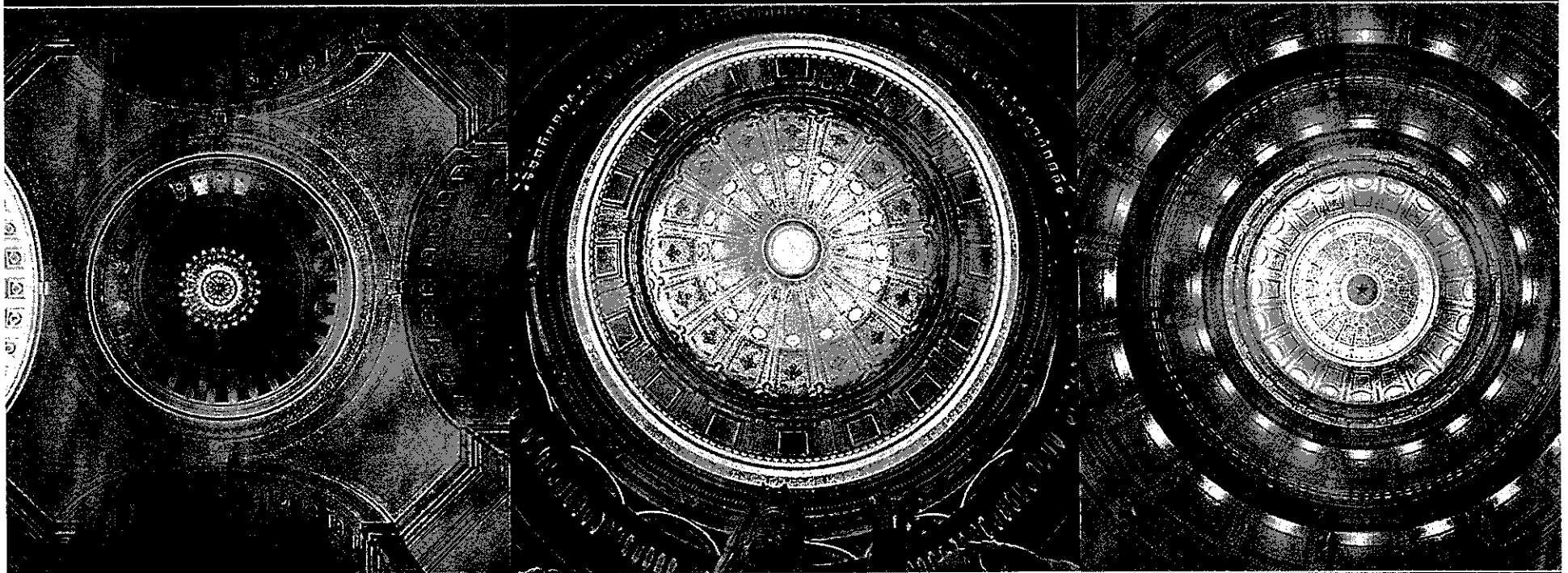
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# **Presentation to the Alaska State Legislature: Suicide Rates and Options for Prevention**

Hollie Hendrikson

National Conference of State Legislatures



# 10 Leading Causes of Fatal Injuries in Alaska, by Age Group (2005-2009)

Rank	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
1	Suffocation 41	MV Traffic 6	Drowning 8	MV Traffic 13	Suicide 179	Suicide 130	Suicide 132		Suicide 82	Suicide 26		
2	Assault 6			Suicide 7	MV Traffic 87			Suicide 136	MV Traffic 39	MV Traffic 25	Suicide 13	Suicide 10
3			MV Traffic 6			MV Traffic 57	MV Traffic 51	MV Traffic 56	Drowning 13		Suffocation 8	Suffocation 6
4					Assault 47	Assault 36	Assault 41	Assault 29	Assault 12		MV Traffic 7	
5					Drowning 27	Drowning 28	Drowning 39	Drowning 27	Aircraft 11		Hypothermia/ Frostbite 5	
6					Snow machine 19	Snow machine 17	Snow machine 14	Hypothermia/ Frostbite 22				
7					ATV 16		ATV 18		Hypothermia/ Frostbite 7			
8					Hypothermia/Frostbite 13		Hypothermia/ Frostbite 11					
9						Aircraft 6						
10					Aircraft 6		Aircraft 9	Aircraft 8				

Source: Division of Public Health, Dept. of Health & Social Services, Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, occurrences less than 5 not listed. \* ATV and snow machine deaths may be included in drowning death counts; pedestrian, bicycle, ATV, and snow machine deaths may be included in MV Traffic death counts. Poisonings include accidental poisoning by exposure to alcohol. Created January 4, 2011

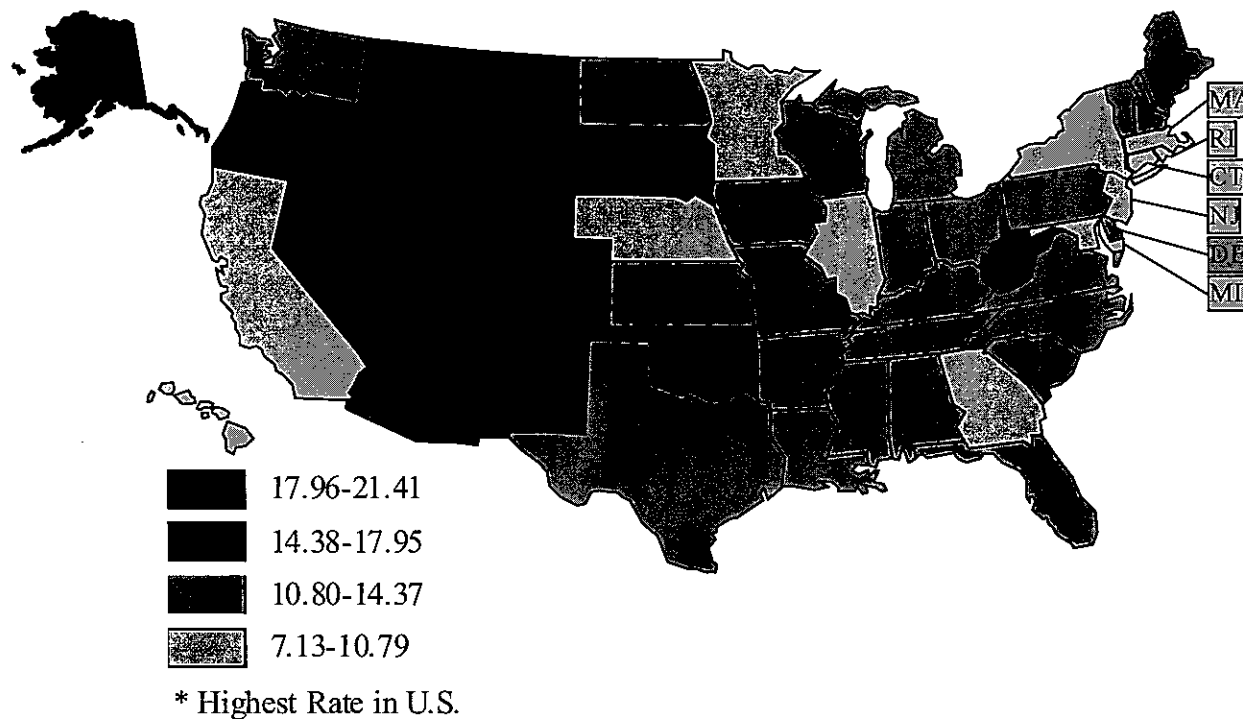


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## Suicide Rates, per 100,000 (2004-2009)



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

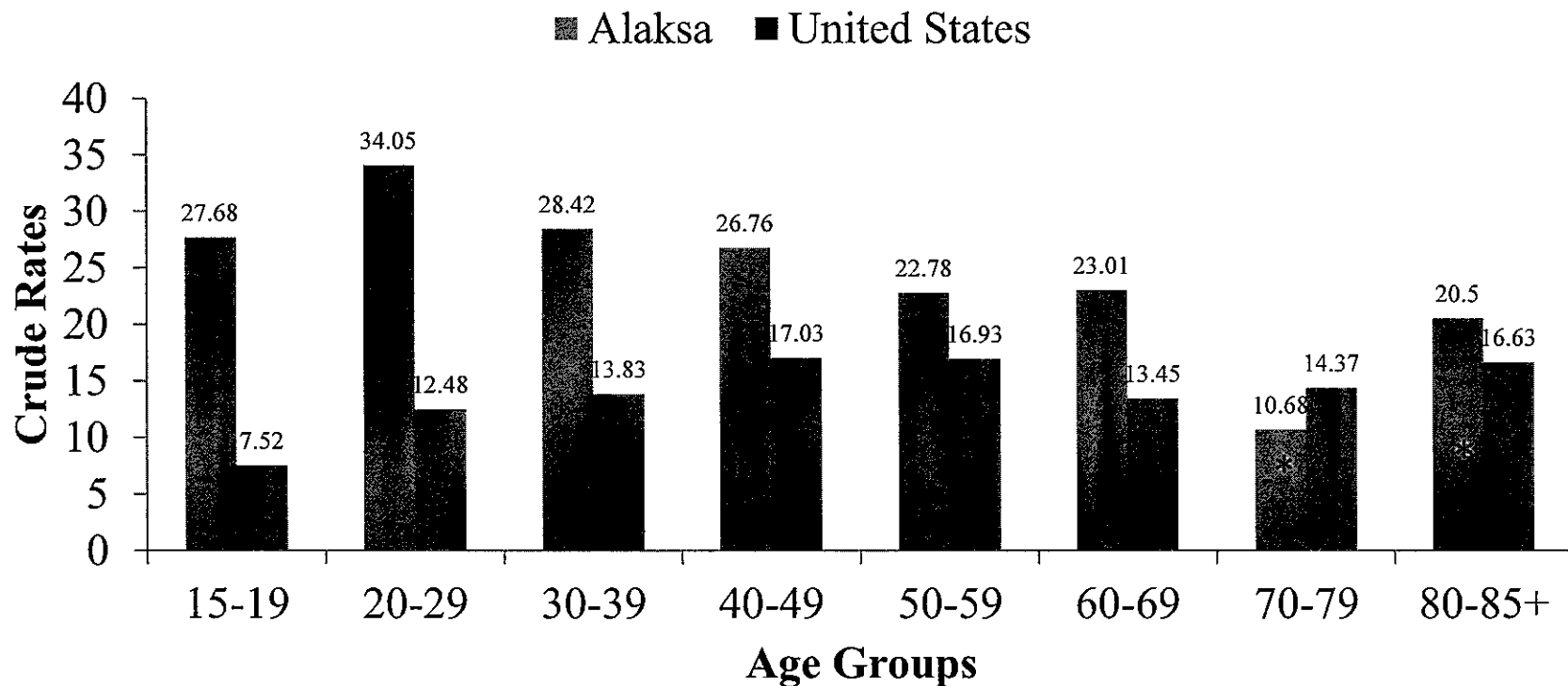


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## Suicide Rates, All Ages, by Age Group per 100,000 (2004-2009)



\*Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

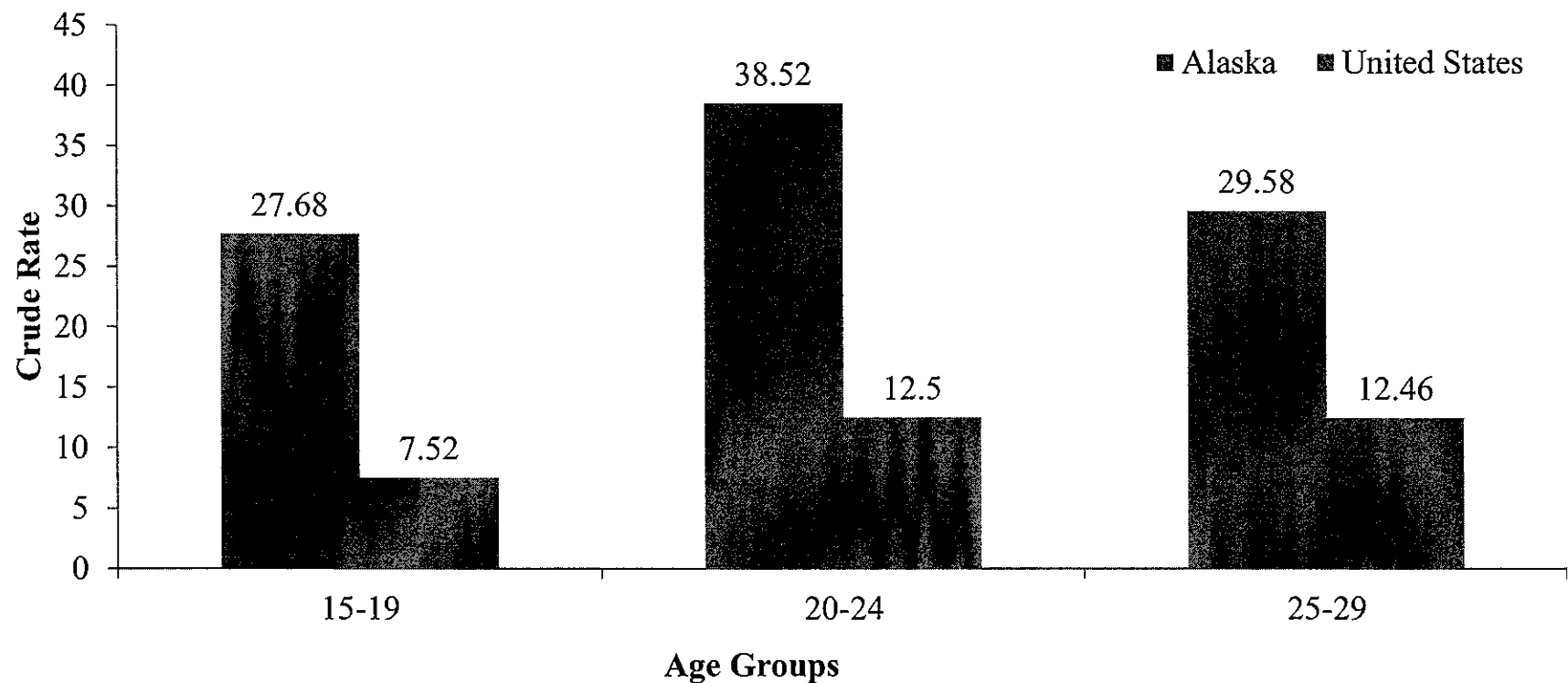


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## Suicide Rates, All Ages, by Age Group per 100,000 (2004-2009)



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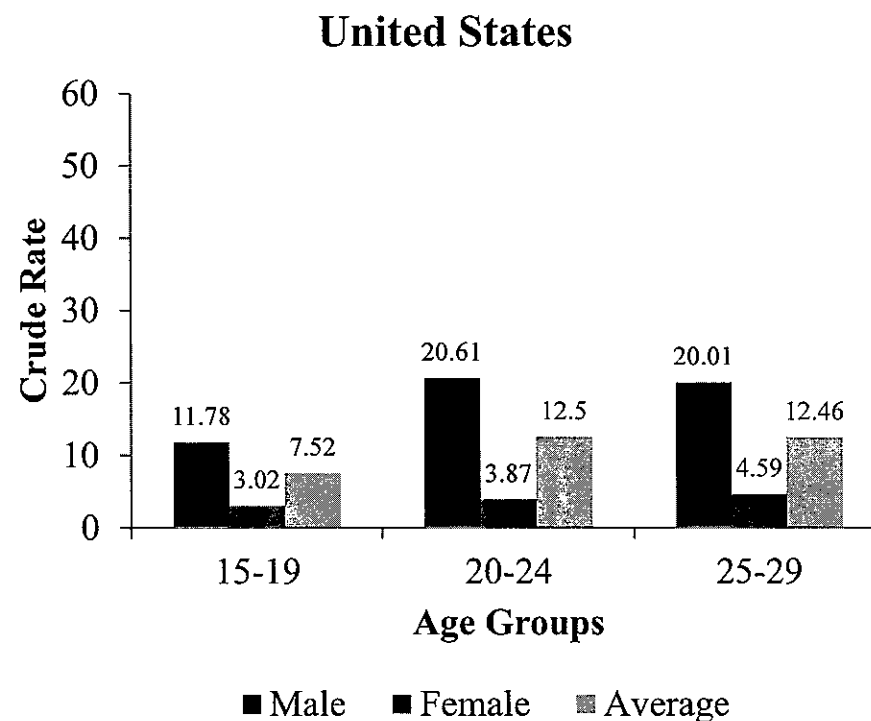
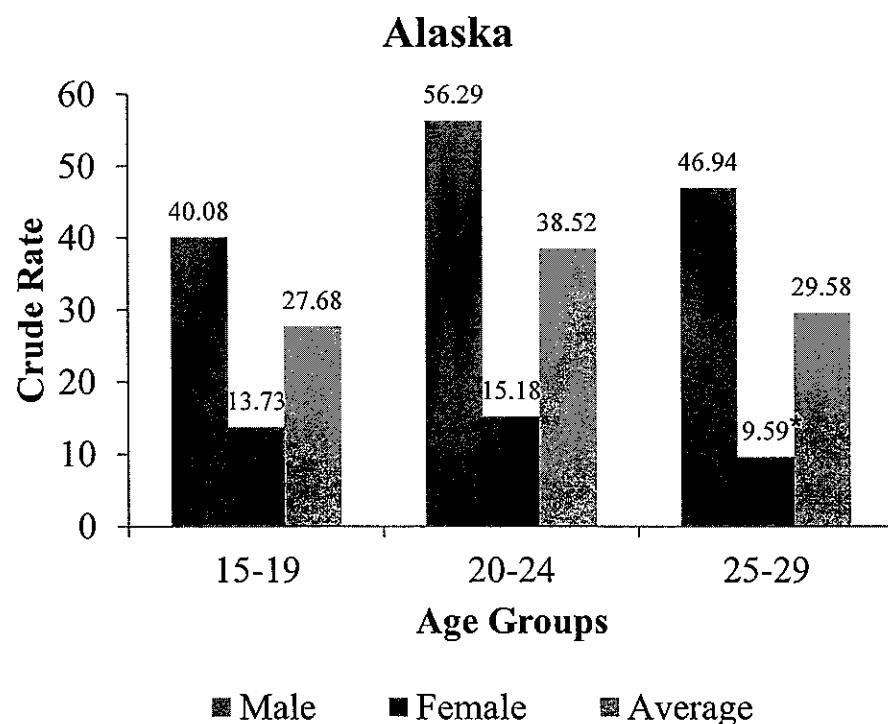


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## Suicide Rates, by Age and Sex per 100,000 (2004-2009)



\*Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

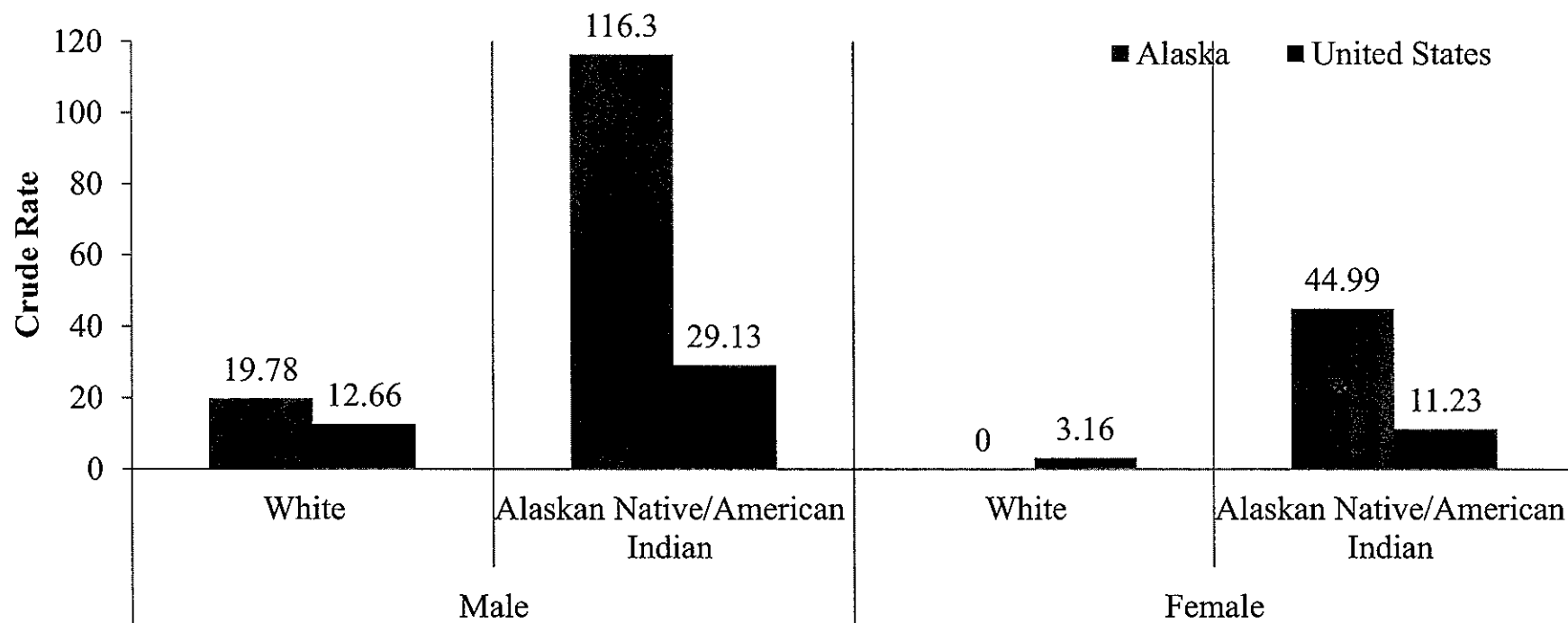


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## Suicide Rates, Ages 15-19, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, per 100,000 (2004-2009)



\*Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

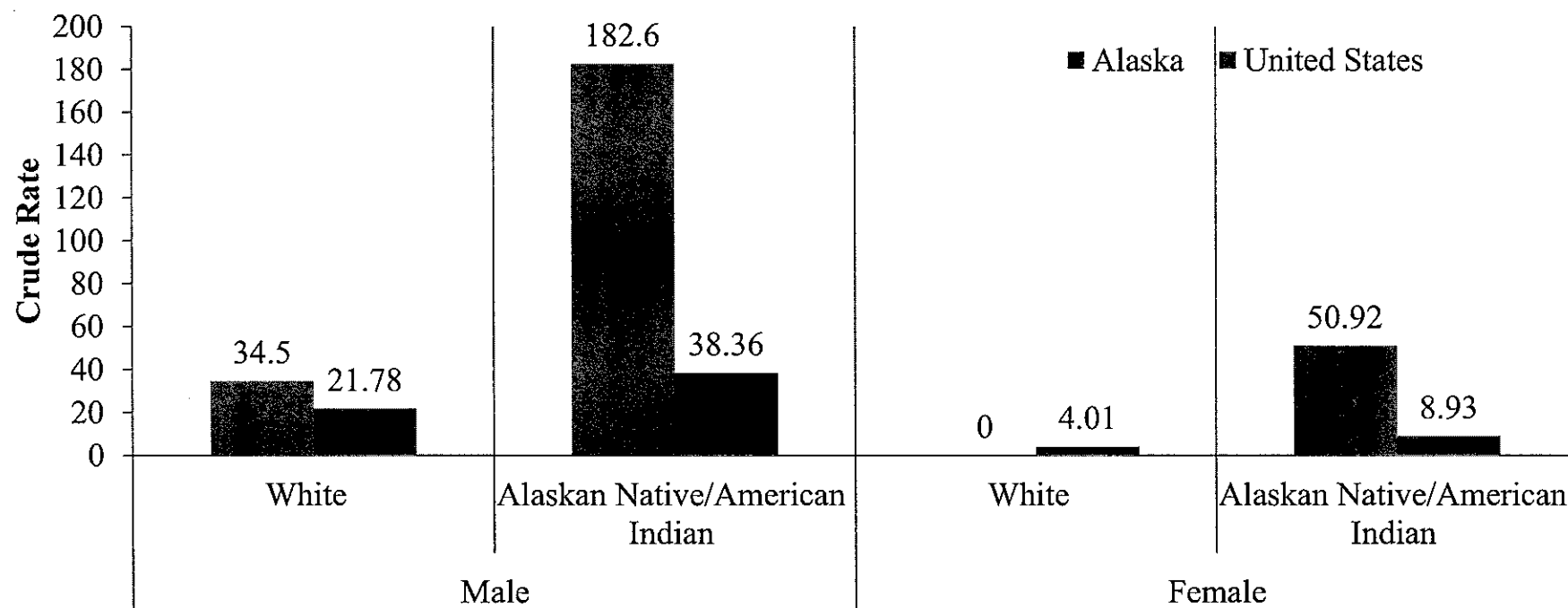


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## Suicide Rates, Ages 20-24, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, per 100,000 (2004-2009)



\*Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).



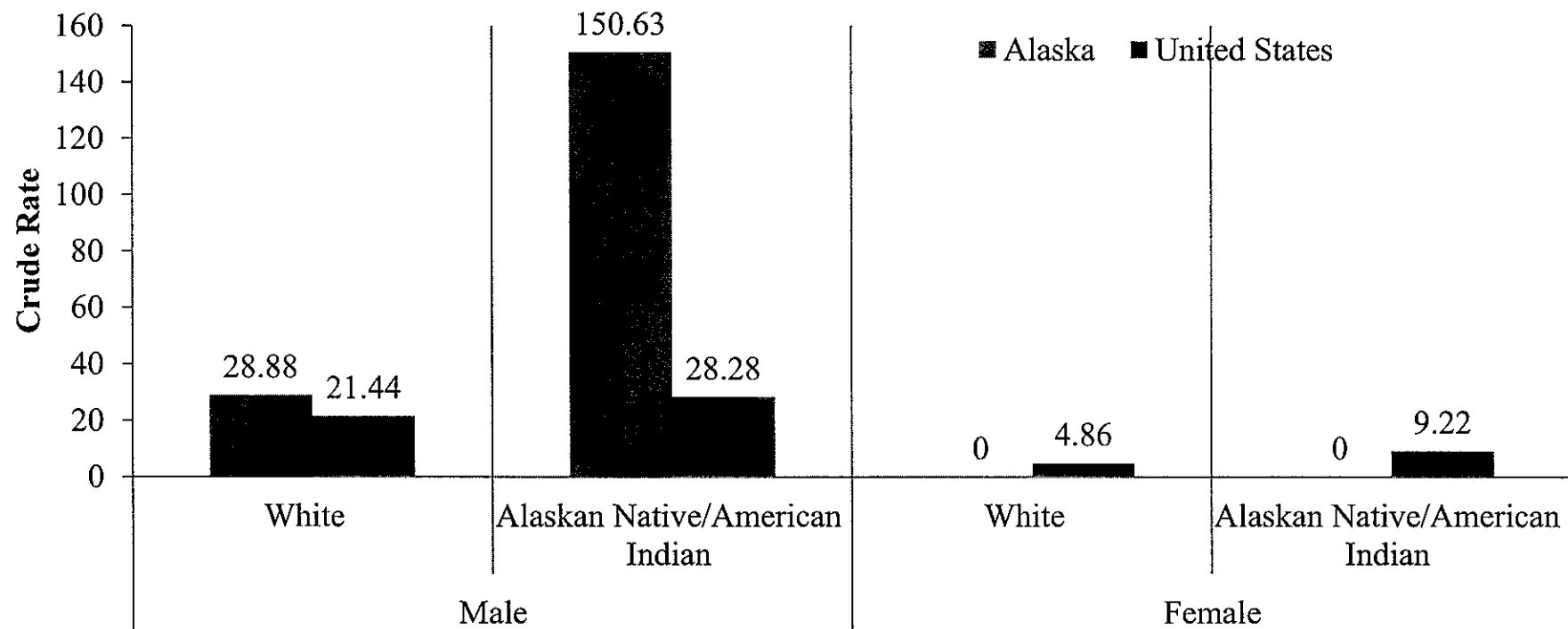


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## Suicide Rates, Ages 25-29, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, per 100,000 (2004-2009)



\*Rates based on 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Available from: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars).

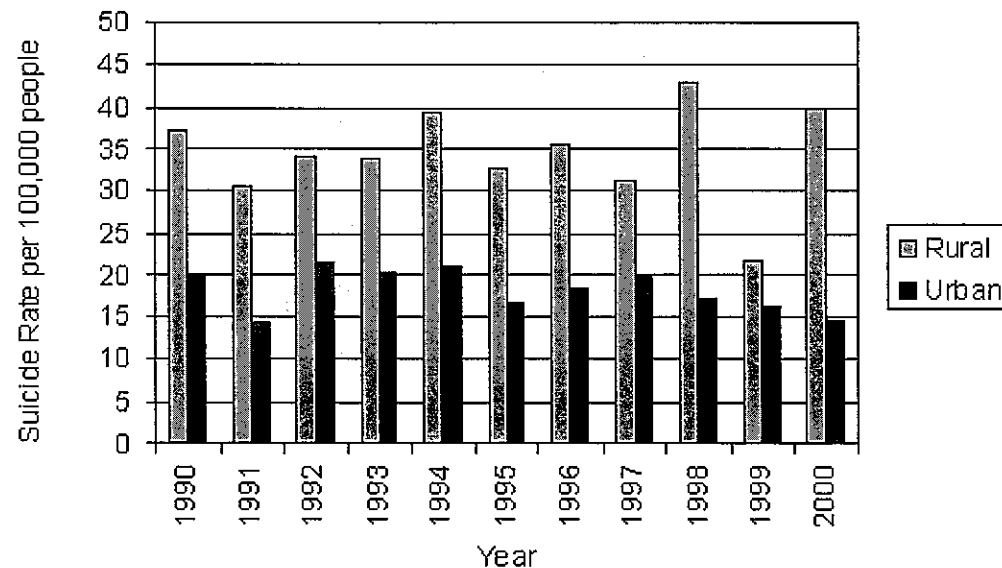


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## Rural and Urban Suicide Rates for Alaskans, per 100,000 (1990-2000)



Source: Alaska Suicide Prevention Council; Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics.



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# Alaska Suicide Rate, by Region per 100,000 (2009)

Source: Alaskan Suicide Prevention Council; Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics.

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## Suicide Attempts: Alaska Suicide Hospitalization Study 2001-2002

- The Alaska Injury Prevention Center conducted a thorough analysis of the 1,223 hospitalized suicide attempts in Alaska for 2001 and 2002.
- This analysis looks at the epidemiology and costs associated with hospitalizations for self inflicted injuries
  - [http://www.alaska-ipc.org/documents/Hospital\\_Suicide\\_report.pdf](http://www.alaska-ipc.org/documents/Hospital_Suicide_report.pdf)



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## A few facts revealed by this study:

- The average age for the patients was 30 years.
- The average length of hospital stays was 4 days.
- The average hospital costs per year were \$5,508,363.
- The average cost per case was \$8,986.
- Over 75% of the hospital costs were paid through public funding sources.
  - More than \$4 million in “public funds” is spent each year to pay for hospitalizations for suicide attempts.
- The hospital cases were over-represented by people from rural communities.



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# Learning from Others: Policy Options to Prevent Suicide

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## State Laws: Gatekeeper Training for Key School Personnel

- At least 19 states have laws that either mandate or encourage some type of gatekeeper training.
    - Laws in KY, LA, MS, and TN require a 2-hour annual in-service training for certain school personnel on suicide prevention (*Jason Flatt Act*).
    - Laws in AR, CT, IL, IN, NJ, and WI require similar training, but not on an annual basis.
    - CA, CO, MA, MI, MO, NV, NY, TX, and VA encourage suicide prevention training, sometimes as an option for professional development.
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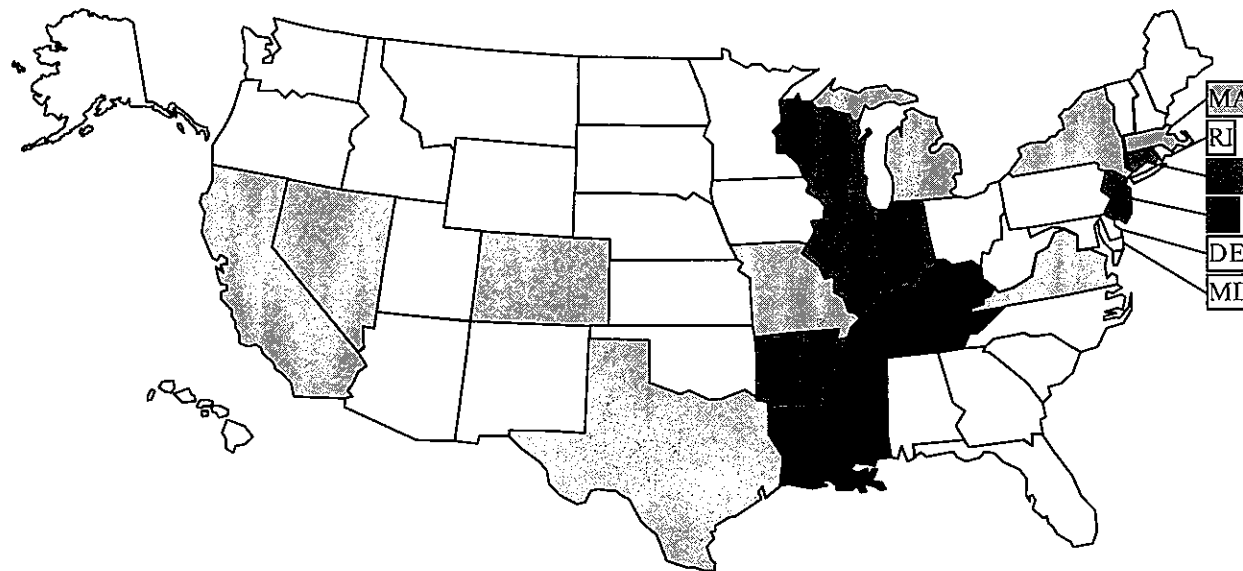





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## State Laws: Gatekeeper Training



-  Mandated Annual 2-Hour Suicide Prevention Training (Jason Flatt Act)
-  Required Suicide Prevention Training (not Annual)
-  Encourages Suicide Prevention Training





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## State Laws: Suicide Prevention Education Required in School Curriculum

- At least seven states have laws that require school curriculum to include suicide prevention education or awareness.
  - IA, ME, MD, NH, RI, VT, and WA
- Controversy?
  - "Many experts share the view that it is unwise to teach young people about suicide explicitly."
    - World Health Organization, 2000

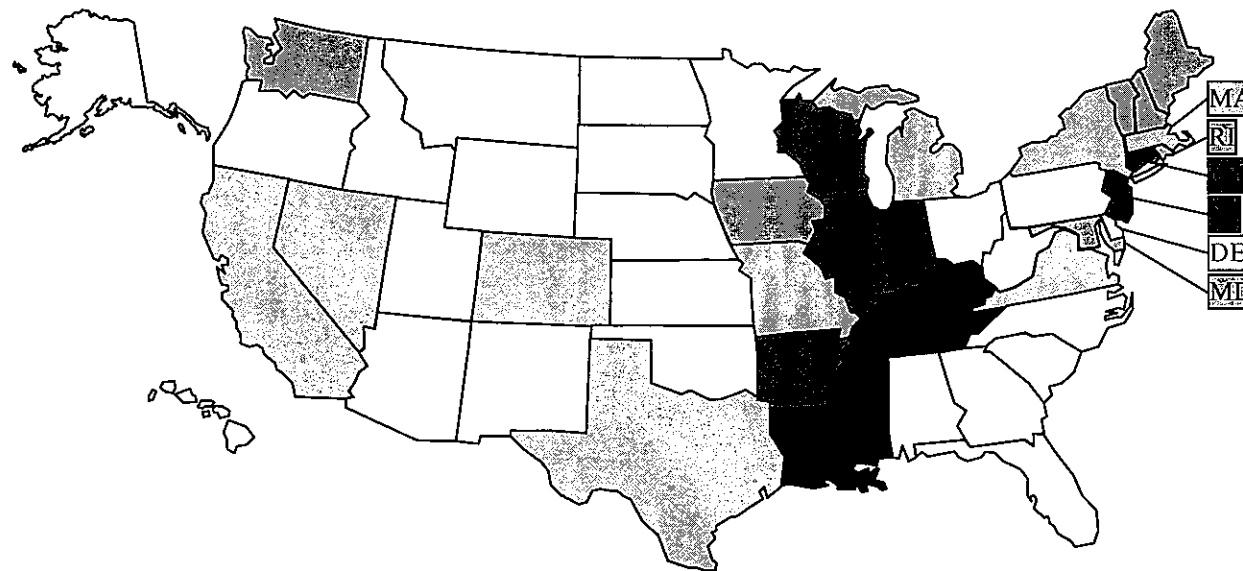






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## State Laws: Gatekeeper Training and Suicide Prevention in Curriculum



-  Mandated Annual 2-Hour Suicide Prevention Training (Jason Flatt Act)
-  Required Suicide Prevention Training (not Annual)
-  Encourages Suicide Prevention Training
-  Suicide Prevention Required in School Curriculum



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## Other Examples of State Laws Addressing Suicide Prevention

- Appropriations: in 2011 at least 10 state legislatures appropriated funding for suicide prevention activities.
- Delaware: requires the Department of Transportation to display on variable message signs information regarding missing senior citizens, suicidal persons, or persons with a disability (2011).
- Colorado: allows taxpayers to contribute a part of their state income tax refund to the Families in Action for Mental Health Fund.

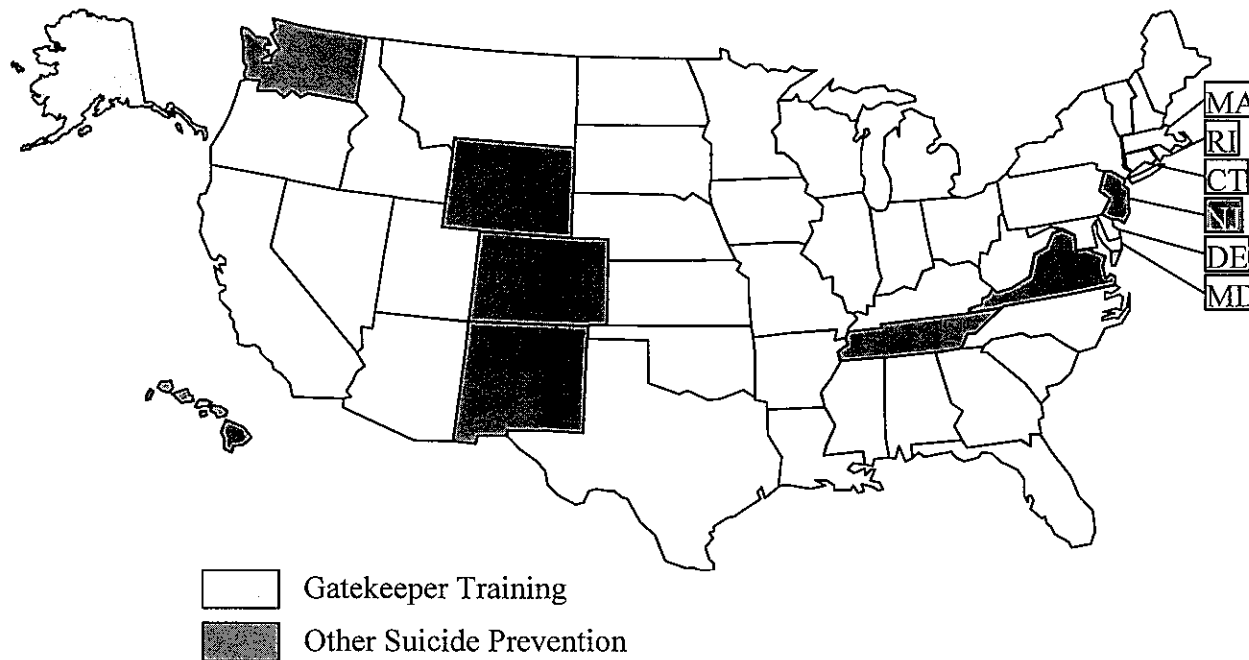


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# Suicide Prevention Proposed Legislation: 2012





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# Suicide Risk Factors

- About 90 percent of people who kill themselves have a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric illness
- Access to mental health services
- Alcohol or drug abuse, particularly when combined with depression
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, or some other anxiety disorder
- Past History of Attempted Suicide
- Family history of suicide, suicide attempts, depression or other psychiatric illness.
- Demographics



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# Reinventing the Wheel? Suicide Prevention Resources

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# Alaska Suicide Prevention Resources

- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' Statewide Suicide Prevention Council
  - <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/default.htm>
- 5-year Suicide Prevention Plan
  - [http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/pdfs\\_sspc/SSPC\\_2012-2017.pdf](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/suicideprevention/pdfs_sspc/SSPC_2012-2017.pdf)
- Alaska Injury Prevention Center
  - Alaska Suicide Follow-back Study
  - Alaska Suicide Hospitalization Study 2001-2002



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## Federal Suicide Prevention Resources

- The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention was launched in Sept 2010 by HHS Secretary Sebelius and Defense Secretary Gates
  - <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>
  - American Indian/Alaskan Native Task Force
    - Goal: In partnership with Tribes, the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Task Force will implement suicide prevention strategies to reduce the rate of suicide in AI/AN communities.





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## Indian Health Service Suicide Prevention Initiative

- The National Suicide Prevention Initiative addresses the tragedy of suicide in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
- The IHS National Suicide Prevention Initiative builds on the foundation of the HHS “National Strategy for Suicide Prevention” and the 11 goals and objectives for the Nation to reduce suicidal behavior and its consequences, while ensuring we honor and respect Tribal traditions and practices.
  - Available at:  
[www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Behavioral](http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Behavioral)



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**Thank You!**  
**Hollie Hendrikson**  
**[Hollie.Hendrikson@ncsl.org](mailto:Hollie.Hendrikson@ncsl.org)**  
**303-856-1525**

