

Too Soon to Die

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Americans between the ages of 25 and 34 and is the third leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 36,000 people in the United States committed suicide in 2008, and more than 660,000 showed up at emergency rooms for nonfatal, self-inflicted injuries. It is estimated that, with every suicide, there are at least 25 attempts.

Depression, mental illness, feelings of isolation or a family history of suicide can increase one's risk. Bolstering clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders, and supporting community, cultural, religious and family networks can help prevention efforts.

Last year, lawmakers in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, North Carolina and North Dakota passed legislation aimed at preventing suicide. Legislators in Arizona and North Carolina focused on those in the military and veterans, while lawmakers in New Mexico and North Dakota addressed Native American communities.

Colorado's law allows taxpayers to contribute a part of their state income tax refund to the Families in Action for Mental Health Fund, which provides education, advocacy, information and referrals to prevent suicides.

Every state except Mississippi has a comprehensive, statewide suicide prevention plan that includes screening initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and "gatekeeper" training for people who are interested in learning how to intervene and prevent suicides.

—Hollie Hendrikson

By the Numbers

Among U.S. adults each year:

8.3 million

Have serious suicidal thoughts

2.2 million

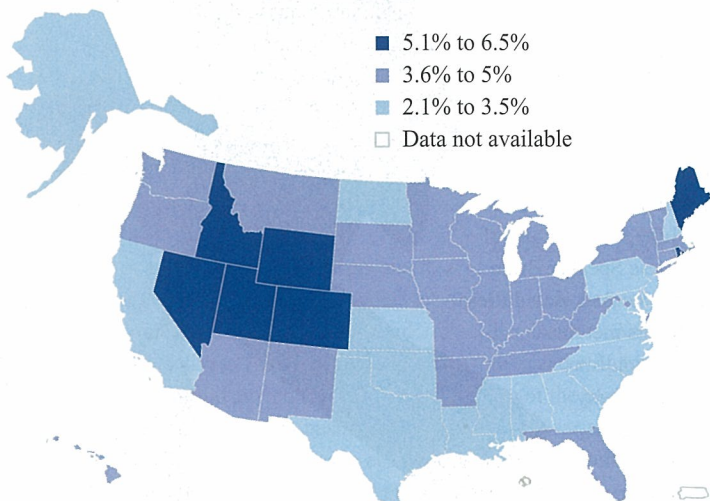
Make a suicide plan

1 million

Attempt suicide

Sources: CDC, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and National Institute of Mental Health.

Percentage of Adults Who Seriously Considered Suicide in 2008



Source: CDC, "Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among Adults Aged ≥18 Years—United States, 2008–2009," in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Oct. 21, 2011.