

**SB**

**35**

<target><bill>SB 35</bill><subject>SB  
35</subject><comm>SFIN26</comm></target>

4/10/09

# Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Bettye Davis@legis.state.ak.us  
<http://www.akdemocrats.org>

## Senator Bettye Davis

### Sponsor Statement

**SB 35** "An Act extending the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council; and providing for an effective date."

SB 35 extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to June 30, 2013. Suicide is a very serious public health concern in Alaska, particularly among young males and the Alaska native population. Extension of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is important in curtailing this avoidable loss of life. The mission of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is to advise the governor and the 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.

The Executive Summary of the July, 2005 study by the Alaska Injury Prevention Center funded by Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority "Alaska Suicide Hospitalizations, 2001-2002," reported that in 2002 32,000 people took their own lives in the United States, and 20 times that number sought treatment for self-inflicted injuries. Alaska had the highest age-adjusted suicide rate of all the states in 2002 at 21.12 per 100,000 population, which is nearly twice that of the U.S. rate of 10.99 per 100,000. An average of 125 people die from suicide each year in Alaska, making it the number one cause of death for Alaskans under the age of 50 years (if unintentional injuries are examined individually instead of in groups).

Hospitalizations for suicide per the above study make a compelling case for the prevention of suicide and new insights into this dramatic public health problem. Over \$4 million in hospital costs alone is spent in public funds each year to care for suicide attempts. This did not include physicians' and specialists' costs. While the toll on society and family members by suicide may be incalculable, significant numbers were revealed:

- The average age for the patients was 30 years.
- The average length of each hospital stay was 4 days, with a range of 1 to 366.
- The average cost per case was \$8,986.
- Over 75% of the hospital costs were paid through public funding sources.
- 15% of hospital costs had to be written-off for patients' inability to pay.

The unabated high rate of suicide in Alaska demands continued attention and effort and earnestly urges, if not compels, the extension of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council. A subsequent study to the above by the Alaska Injury Prevention Center from 9/1/03-8/31/06 found 426 suicides in Alaska during this 36-month period, with the continuing rate of suicide at over 21/100,000. Males outnumbered females 4 to 1. The age-group 20-29 had both the greatest number of suicides and the highest rate per 100,000 population. Alaska Natives had a significantly higher average rate of suicide than the non-Native population (51.4/100,000 compared to 16.9/100,000). The leading cause of death was firearms with toxicology reports in 1/3 of the cases. Alcohol was found in 44% of the toxicology tests and marijuana was found in 15%.

# SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 2/27/09

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED  
IN TO OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

Finance Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 35

## SB 35 EXTEND SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL

"An Act extending the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with  SCS or  CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- adopt previous  SCS or  CS SB 35 (HSS)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent
- further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>SENATE BILL:</b>                               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same Title               |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Title     |  |
| <hr/>   |  |
| <b>HOUSE BILL:</b>                                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same Title               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Title Change   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Title w/ SCR # _____ |  |

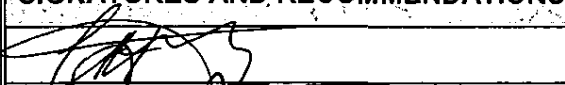
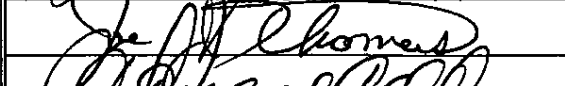
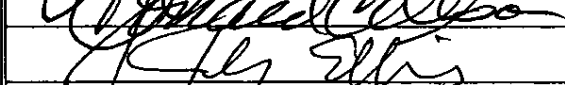

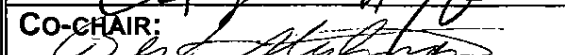
**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

| Department | Date | Fiscal | Indet. | Zero | FN# |
|------------|------|--------|--------|------|-----|
|            |      |        |        |      |     |
|            |      |        |        |      |     |
|            |      |        |        |      |     |
|            |      |        |        |      |     |
|            |      |        |        |      |     |

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):**

| Department | Date    | Fiscal | Indet. | Zero | FN# |
|------------|---------|--------|--------|------|-----|
| DHS        | 1/23/09 | ✓      |        |      | 1   |
| DHS        | 1/23/09 | ✓      |        |      | 2   |
|            |         |        |        |      |     |
|            |         |        |        |      |     |
|            |         |        |        |      |     |

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

| SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:   | PRINTED LAST NAME | DO PASS | DO NOT PASS | NO REC | AMEND |
|---|-------------------|---------|-------------|--------|-------|
|            | THOMAS            | ✓       |             |        |       |
|            | OLSEN             | ✓       |             |        |       |
|            | ELLIS             | ✓       |             |        |       |
| CO-CHAIR:  | Hoffman           | ✓       |             |        |       |
| CO-CHAIR:  | STEAMAN           | ✓       |             |        |       |

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2  
Bill Version: CSSB 35(HSS)  
(S) Publish Date: 2/27/09

Identifier (file name): SB035-DHSS-BHA-01-23-09 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services  
Title: Extend Suicide Prevention Council RDU: Behavioral Health  
Component: Behavioral Health Administration  
Sponsor: Davis  
Requester: Senate Health & Social Services Component Number: 2665

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

|                               | Appropriation<br>Required | Information |             |             |             |             |             |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                               |                           | FY 2010     | FY 2011     | FY 2012     | FY 2013     | FY 2014     | FY 2015     |
| <b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b> |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Personal Services             |                           | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        |
| Travel                        |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Contractual                   |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Supplies                      |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Equipment                     |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Land & Structures             |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Grants & Claims               |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Miscellaneous                 |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>        | <b>0.0</b>                | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> |

|                             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|                             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

|                            |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts      |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1003 GF Match              |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1004 GF                    |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts   |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health      |            | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        | 46.3        |
| Other Interagency Receipts |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>0.0</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> | <b>46.3</b> |

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

**POSITIONS**

|           |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Full-time |  | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Part-time |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Temporary |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The proposed bill extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC or council) to June 30, 2013. The 0.5 FTE administrative support position, hired by the council, will continue to be assigned to the Division of Behavioral Health.

Prepared by: Melissa Stone Phone 269-3410  
Division: Behavioral Health Date/Time 1/23/09 12:00 AM  
Approved by: William H. Hogan, Commissioner Date 1/23/2009  
Dept. of Health & Social Services

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
Bill Version: CSSB 35(HSS)  
(S) Publish Date: 2/27/09

Identifier (file name): SB035-DHSS-SPC-01-23-09 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services  
Title: Extend Suicide Prevention Council RDU: Behavioral Health  
Component: Suicide Prevention Council  
Sponsor: Davis  
Requester: Senate Health & Social Services Component Number: 2651

### Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

|                               | Appropriation<br>Required | Information |             |             |             |             |             |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                               |                           | FY 2010     | FY 2011     | FY 2012     | FY 2013     | FY 2014     | FY 2015     |
| <b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b> |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Personal Services             |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Travel                        |                           | 35.0        | 35.0        | 35.0        | 35.0        | 35.0        | 35.0        |
| Contractual                   |                           | 30.6        | 30.6        | 30.6        | 30.6        | 30.6        | 30.6        |
| Supplies                      |                           | 17.2        | 17.2        | 17.2        | 17.2        | 17.2        | 17.2        |
| Equipment                     |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Land & Structures             |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Grants & Claims               |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Miscellaneous                 |                           |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>        | <b>0.0</b>                | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> |

|                             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|                             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

### FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

|                            |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts      |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1003 GF Match              |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1004 GF                    |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts   |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health      |            | 82.8        | 82.8        | 82.8        | 82.8        | 82.8        | 82.8        |
| Other Interagency Receipts |            |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>0.0</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> | <b>82.8</b> |

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

### POSITIONS

|           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Part-time |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Temporary |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The proposed bill extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC or council) to June 30, 2013. The SSPC will continue to be assigned to the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH). The costs to DBH would include expenses related to the council meetings, teleconferences, presentations and suicide prevention public awareness campaigns.

Prepared by: Melissa Stone Phone 269-3410  
Division: Behavioral Health Date/Time 1/23/09 12:00 AM  
Approved by: William H. Hogan, Commissioner Date 1/23/2009  
Dept. of Health & Social Services

# LEGAL SERVICES

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LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

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FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

4/10/09  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

March 2, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Sectional summary of CSSB 35(HSS), relating to the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (Work Order No. 26-LS0229E)

**TO:** Senator Bettye Davis  
Chair of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee  
Attn: Thomas Obermeyer

**FROM:** Alpheus Bullard *TLAB*  
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Adds a member to the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (Council), and changes the composition of the Council.

**Section 2.** Provides that legislative members of the Council are nonvoting members.

**Section 3.** Clarifies that the Council's presiding officer, and other officers that the Council may consider necessary, are elected by a majority of the Council's voting membership.

**Section 4.** Establishes that seven voting members of the Council constitute a forum.

**Section 5.** Extends the termination date of the Council to 2013.

**Section 6.** Provides an effective date.

TLAB:plm  
09-130.plm

4/10/09

# **Alaska Suicide Hospitalizations 2001 - 2002**

**Alaska Injury  
Prevention Center**



**Ron Perkins, MPH**

**Anchorage, Alaska  
July 2005**

This research was made possible with funding from:

**The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

In 2002, nearly 32,000 people took their own lives in the United States, and estimates indicate that 20 times that number sought treatment for self-inflicted injuries. Alaska had the highest age adjusted suicide rate of all the states in 2002 at 21.12, which is nearly double the U.S. rate of 10.99 per 100,000 population. An average of 125 people die from suicide each year in Alaska, making it the number one cause of death for Alaskans under the age of 50 years (if unintentional injuries are examined individually instead of grouped). The epidemiology for suicide deaths is very different from the epidemiology for suicidal acts that result in hospitalization. This analysis looks at the epidemiology and costs associated with hospitalizations for self inflicted injuries.

### RESULTS

Using data supplied by the Alaska Trauma Registry (ATR) and funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Alaska Injury Prevention Center (AIPC) conducted a thorough analysis of the 1,223 hospitalized suicide attempts in Alaska for 2001 and 2002. The epidemiology and hospital costs associated with this injury group are reported below.

A few of the interesting facts revealed by this study for Alaska's suicide attempts:

- ✓ The average age for the patients was 30 years.
- ✓ The average length of each hospital stay was 4 days, with a range of 1 to 366.
- ✓ 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 care for suicide attempts, and those are just the documented hospital costs. Physician's fees and other specialist's fees are usually not included in the hospital costs. Also not included in hospital costs are self-inflicted injuries that result in death or long-term disabilities. These suicidal acts take a huge toll on individuals and families and are very difficult to quantify.

### CONCLUSIONS

The *Alaska Suicide Hospitalizations* analysis makes a compelling case for the prevention of suicide, and gives new insights into this dramatic public health problem. Hospitals must accept the loss of at least 15% of the costs due to the patients' inability to pay.

# **Alaska Suicide Follow-back Study Final Report**

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**Study period September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2006**

**Prepared for the:**

**Alaska State-wide Suicide Prevention Council  
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services  
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**

**Submitted by the:**

**Alaska Injury Prevention Center  
Critical Illness and Trauma Foundation, Inc.  
American Association of Suicidology**

## **Acknowledgements**

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The investigators gratefully acknowledge the support and cooperation of the following agencies and organizations in the completion of this study:

**Alaska Statewide Suicide Prevention Council**

**Office of the Alaska State Medical Examiner**

**Alaska Department of Health and Social Services**

**Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority**

**Alaska Dept. of Public Safety – Alaska State Troopers**

**Anchorage Police Department**

**Other local police departments**

### **Funding support:**

The Alaska Suicide Follow Back Study was prepared for the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council and was substantially funded through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

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## **Table of Contents**

---

### **SECTION 1 – All Cases**

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Table of Figures & Tables ..... | 4  |
| Executive Summary .....         | 5  |
| Introduction .....              | 6  |
| Project Outline .....           | 7  |
| Project Methods .....           | 8  |
| Results .....                   | 10 |
| Discussion .....                | 18 |
| Conclusions .....               | 19 |
| References .....                | 21 |

### **SECTION 2 - Interviewed Cases**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Introduction and Background ..... | 23 |
| Methodology .....                 | 24 |
| Results .....                     | 26 |
| Limitations and Strengths .....   | 34 |
| Conclusions .....                 | 36 |
| Recommendations .....             | 37 |
| References .....                  | 41 |
| Contact Information .....         | 42 |

---

## **Table of Figures and Tables**

---

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1: Temporal Distribution .....                        | 10 |
| Figure 2: Number of Suicides by Age Group .....              | 11 |
| Figure 3: Rate of Suicide by Age Group .....                 | 11 |
| Figure 4: Rates of Suicide by Ethnicity .....                | 12 |
| Figure 5: Number of Cases for 10-19 Age Group .....          | 13 |
| Figure 6: Rates for 10-19 Age Group .....                    | 13 |
| Table 1: Mechanism by Ethnicity of Suicide .....             | 14 |
| Figure 7: Type of Firearms Used.....                         | 15 |
| Figure 8: Rates of Suicide by EMS Region .....               | 16 |
| Table 2: Alcohol/drug Use by Ethnicity .....                 | 17 |
| Table 3: Alcohol/drug Use by Ethnicity and Urban/Rural ..... | 18 |

## **Executive Summary**

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### **Goals**

There were two goals for the study: (1) to do an in-depth demographic analysis of the suicides in Alaska for three years from September 1, 2003 through August 31, 2006 and (2) to conduct interviews with key informants for as many suicide cases as possible. This report is divided into two sections, Section 1 addressing the epidemiological data and Section 2 addressing the data derived from the interviews.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the data gathering, reporting, and analysis was to better understand the etiology and antecedents of suicide among Alaskans, in order to identify potential points of intervention and strategies to reduce the rate of suicide.

### **Methods**

Death certificates attributed to suicides occurring in Alaska between September 1, 2003 and August 31, 2006 were reviewed retrospectively. Information from the Alaska State Medical Examiner, State Troopers, and other law enforcement agencies was collated and reviewed for each suicide death. A cadre of Native and non-Native interviewers was trained in how to use the interview protocol and how to conduct follow-back interviews with survivors of the decedents. All information was entered into a secure database. All efforts to protect confidentiality were in accordance with the Institutional Review Board requirements of the Alaska Native Medical Center, the University of Alaska – Anchorage, and the National Institutes of Health (Certificate of Confidentiality).

### **Results**

There were 426 suicides during the 36 month study period. The average annual suicide rate for the three year study period was 21.4/100,000 (U.S. Census, 2005 estimated population). Males out-numbered females 4 to 1. The age-group of 20 to 29 had both the greatest number of suicides and the highest rate per 100,000 population. Alaska Natives had a significantly higher average rate of suicide than the non-Native population (51.4/100,000 compared to 16.9/100,000). The leading mechanism of death was firearms, accounting for 63% of the suicides. The use of handguns was more prevalent in the non-Native population whereas long guns were used more often by Alaska Natives. The EMS region with the greatest number of Native suicides was Region 4, which includes Bethel and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Region 2, which includes the Northwest Arctic census area had the highest overall rate of suicide deaths. Follow-back interviews were conducted with 71 informants for 56 of the suicide decedents. Reported alcohol/drug use was the same for Urban as for Rural Native decedents. The same alcohol/drug use pattern was seen for Urban and for Rural non-Native decedents. Toxicology results were received for 33% of all the suicide cases. Alcohol was found in 44% of the toxicology tests and THC (marijuana) was found in 15%.

### **Conclusion**

This study adds volumes of information to our existing knowledge of suicide in Alaska. More in-depth studies are already in progress, which will continue to add to our knowledge base while bringing in additional resources for prevention and treatment. The report also highlights the need for better death data collection, to quantify alcohol and drug involvement and other contributing factors.

## Our Mission

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.

- ▶ **The meaning of our logo**
- ▶ ***Alaska Suicide Follow-back Study Final Report - Feb. 2007***  
*Alaska Injury Prevention Center, Ron Perkins*
- ▶ ***The Lifeline National Number***
- ▶ **Alaska Suicide Attempt Hospitalizations, 2001-2002 (pdf)**  
*Alaska Injury Prevention Center, Ron Perkins*
- ▶ ***Moving Forward***, the DHSS Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan (CIMHP), can be downloaded at the following website address:
- ▶ Discussion Assistance for Ramy's DVD

## 30 Second Radio Spots:

- ▶ Suicide Hurts (mp3)
- ▶ Tell Someone (mp3)
- ▶ Video Game (mp3)

## Associated in-state links

- ▶ The Alaska Mental Health Board
- ▶ The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- ▶ The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- ▶ ASIST - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

## Annual Reports

- ▶ 2008 Annual Report (689 Kb .pdf file)
- ▶ 2007 Annual Report (550 Kb .pdf file)
- ▶ 2006 Annual Report (1.2 MB .pdf file)
- ▶ 2005 Annual Report (561 Kb .pdf file)
- ▶ 2004 Annual Report (1.2 Mb .pdf file)
- ▶ 2003 Annual Report (515 Kb .pdf file)
- ▶ 2002 Annual Report (291 Kb .pdf file)

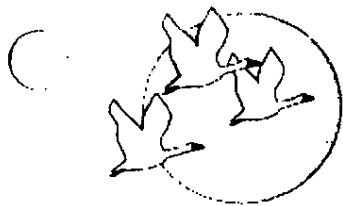
## Alaska State Suicide Prevention Plan

- ▶ Download the State Plan (611 Kb)

## Scheduled Meetings

### Upcoming Meeting

- ▶ Statewide Suicide Prevention Council February 4-5, 2009 (Goldbelt Hotel in Juneau)



## Resources

### Alaska Suicide-Related Resources

Alaska Suicide-Related Resources  
Alaska Directories and Information Resources  
Suicide, Mental Health and Related Issues in Alaska Native and American Indian Populations

### National and International Resources

National Suicide Prevention Plans  
National/International Suicide Prevention Organizations  
National Youth Suicide Prevention Organizations  
Suicide Prevention Resource Center <sup>NEW!</sup>  
Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use <sup>NEW!</sup>  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA)

### Alaska State Suicide Prevention Plan

Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan (611 Kb pdf file)

### Organizations Addressing Depression and Suicide

Suicide Training and Curricula/Programs  
Clinical Resources

### Looking for Help?

If you are feeling down or are looking for help for yourself or others, please talk to someone. Here are some resources.

**National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline**  
1-800-273-8255

Alaska Community  
Mental Health Centers

CARELINE  
1-877-266-HELP