

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Suicide is preventable – Know the warning signs and get help

World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. – About 80 people take their own lives every year in Snohomish County. Each suicide could have been prevented.

By comparison, Snohomish County traffic deaths average about 53 every year.

Health officials say that suicide rates have increased since 2006, and suicide now accounts for nearly one-third of all injury deaths. Snohomish County's suicide rate is higher than the rates for Washington state and the United States. (In 2010: Snohomish County = 14.6/100,000; WA = 13.8/100,000; US = 11.9/100,000)

"Suicide is a public health problem," said Dr. Gary Goldbaum, Health Officer and Director of the Snohomish Health District. "Although suicide is preventable, it is a complex problem that demands comprehensive approaches involving not just the mental health community, but all of us."

Recognizing depression among family members, friends and co-workers is a critical first step – and getting depressed people to help is the next one.

Know the warning signs:

- Talking about wanting to die or making a plan
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Depression such as moodiness or withdrawal
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Risk factors:

- Prior suicide attempt
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Mood and anxiety disorders, such as depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

What to do, if you recognize warning signs of suicide in yourself or in someone you know:

- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800.273.8255 (TALK)

- Do not leave the person alone, and listen without judging
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs, or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
- Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional

Additional crisis resources:

- **Snohomish County Suicide Prevention Lifeline and CRISIS Line**
425.258.4357 or 1.800.584.3578
- **Youth Suicide Prevention Program** <http://www.yspp.org/index.htm>
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** <http://www.namishnohomishcounty.org/crisisinformation.htm>

The Health District and the [Public Health Advisory Council](#) have organized and are facilitating local community-based health improvement planning groups to examine priority public health issues. Suicide among youth and adults is one of the top three issues. The Suicide group will be making program, policy and system recommendations targeted at decreasing Snohomish County suicide rates.

A second group will convene soon to serve on a countywide mental health panel. Snohomish County Executive John Lovick has put out a call to mental health professionals and practitioners to discuss the county's mental health treatment system and capacity, and to identify ways to improve them.

Established in 1959, the Snohomish Health District works for a safer and healthier Snohomish County through disease prevention, health promotion, and protection from environmental threats. Find more information about the Health District at <http://www.snohd.org>. **###END###**

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Public Health: Always working for a safer & healthier Snohomish County

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