



# **2005 - 2007 Suicide Prevention Report**

## **Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee**

December 2007

## 2005 – 2007 Suicide Prevention Report to the Gov Rod R. Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly

In 2001, the statewide effort to address suicide in Illinois began and flourished with facilitation from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The first meeting of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition was convened in 2002, with the main task of developing a state plan for suicide prevention. By 2003, a rough draft of the plan was completed, and included key recommendations for suicide prevention.

In 2004, the Suicide Prevention, Education and Treatment Act (Public Act 093-0907) was passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed into law by Gov Rod R. Blagojevich. Public Act 093-0907 (<http://www.ilga.gov>) directed the Illinois Department of Public Health to appoint an advisory board entitled the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee. The committee represents statewide organizations and other agencies that focus on the prevention of suicide and the improvement of mental health treatment, or that provide suicide prevention or survivor support services. The committee is charged with the development and implementation of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. In addition to the strategic plan, it also is charged with implementing: 1) a statewide suicide prevention conference, 2) a media campaign, 3) a public awareness campaign, 4) education initiatives, and, 5) if funds are appropriated, five pilot programs to provide training and direct service.

In 2007, an alliance was formed between the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee (ISPSPC) and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition, unifying the strengths of these groups to continue to advance suicide prevention efforts in Illinois. To solidify this merger, a bill was passed during the 2007 legislative session to amend Public Act 093-0907 and officially changing the name of the committee to the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance. This technical amendment (Public Act 095-0109) became law on January 1, 2008.

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition have met 14 times (8/19/05, 10/12/05, 11/21/05, 12/9/05, 1/19/06, 4/21/06, 7/21/06, 10/23/06, 1/11/07, 3/14/07, 5/10/07, 7/13/07, 9/21/07, 11/19/07) over the past three years in Springfield, Chicago and Carbondale. One of the first accomplishments of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition was the development of a vision and mission statement to help guide suicide prevention efforts.

**Vision:** The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition envisions an Illinois where no one is touched by suicide.

**Mission:** To reduce suicide and its stigma in Illinois.

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition is fulfilling its mission through a positive, public health approach to suicide prevention by collaboratively working with concerned stakeholders from the public and private sectors to increase awareness and education, provide opportunities to develop individual and organizational capacity in addressing suicide prevention, and advocate for improved access to treatment.

The goals and activities of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition challenge communities, educators, advocates, clergy, public health professionals, hospital personnel, health care providers, prevention specialists, law enforcement, physicians, mental health professionals and policy-makers to take positive and active steps to reduce the number of suicides and lessen its stigma. The following accomplishments outline and highlight the work of the alliance in an effort to carry out our mission over the past two years.

### **A. Education and Training Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's educational and training efforts focused on increasing the capacity of professionals and community members to gain the knowledge and skills to increase and improve identification and treatment of suicidal behavior utilizing existing services, and provide timely support and/or referral to potentially suicidal individuals.

#### Accomplishments:

- Educated more than 3,000 Illinois professionals and community members at 60 suicide prevention workshops in more than 65 communities across the state
- Created, monitored and helped fund, with support from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of Human Services, 30 mini-grants to non-profit organizations to provide community-based suicide prevention programs
- Recruited and monitored 10 training assistant group personnel to host community-based suicide prevention workshops and provide technical assistance
- Trained 39 professionals to be certified trainers in the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) community gatekeeper model – a suicide prevention model which trains community members about the signs and symptoms of suicide and teaches them how to help identify and intervene with at-risk individuals
- Conducted more than 250 local QPR trainings across the state, resulting in the training of more than 2,000 community gatekeepers in Illinois
- Offered QPR training to graduate students at Bradley University
- Trained 10 professionals to be certified in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) program - a clinical skills program that teaches professionals how to assess and screen for suicide

- Coordinated and implemented the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's (SPRC) four-day Core Competency Training for communities interested in developing local suicide prevention coalition to assist in implementing the state plan
- Provided five full-day regional workshops on a variety of suicide prevention topics in Batavia, Belleville, Carbondale, Peoria and Rockford
- Offered the first ever elective course on suicide prevention at Aurora University in partnership with the university's Social Work Department
- Surveyed mental health screening sites to determine gaps across the state and develop recommendations for expansion
- Implemented youth peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs
- Participated in the national PREVENT Institute by four alliance members to strengthen and to expand suicide prevention efforts
- Convened a two-day statewide conference on suicide prevention.

## **B. Public Awareness Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's public awareness efforts focused on increasing public awareness on suicide prevention and decreasing stigma around suicide and mental health.

### Accomplishments:

- Conducted a survey on current statewide suicide prevention/awareness activities and developed findings report
- Recruited and engaged a public relations firm to develop a statewide suicide prevention public awareness campaign
  - i. Implemented focus group discussion projects across the state to gain the thoughts and insights of community members and survivors to develop key messages for the public awareness campaign
  - ii. Developed an individualized suicide prevention public awareness campaign, including a draft of a suicide prevention Web site
  - iii. Developed a logo to represent the work of the alliance – the violet, Illinois' state flower, illustrates the beauty of life and the promise of new beginnings for those affected by suicide
  - iv. Created an informational brochure and presentation
  - v. Provided media outreach support to alliance members
  - vi. Created suicide prevention outreach toolkits for alliance members
- Collaborated with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Midwest Chapter to design and facilitate a suicide prevention speakers bureau
- Developed a suicide prevention educational packet to honor World Suicide Prevention Day 2006 and 2007 to invite clergy and faith-based communities across the state to promote awareness and understanding of suicide prevention.

### **C. Community Outreach Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's community outreach efforts have focused on increasing the number of partners and collaborations to assist with the implementation of suicide prevention efforts on the local level.

Accomplishments:

- Created community outreach toolkits with information on high-risk groups, how to form a local coalition and how to initiate community awareness activities
- Provided technical assistance to 11 community-based teams to create local suicide prevention efforts in Brown, Coles, DeKalb, Franklin, Fulton, Hancock, Lake, McHenry, Marshall, Montgomery, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Williamson and Woodford counties; in the Asian-American community in Cook County, and in the cities of Batavia, Belleville, Charleston, Carbondale, Harrisburg, Ottawa and Rockford
- Empowered and provided technical assistance in 10 communities to establish local outreach initiatives
- Worked in collaboration with law enforcement in southern Illinois to establish suicide prevention initiatives
- Partnered with member agencies and organizations to utilize existing community outreach activities to incorporate suicide prevention awareness
- Organized the pilot Tri-County Suicide Prevention Coalition in Salina, White and Gallatin counties in southern, rural Illinois
- Established a weekly column in *The Southern Illinoisan* on mental health and suicide prevention issues.

### **D. Data Collection and Analysis Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's data collection and analysis efforts focused on increasing the quality and availability of statewide and community data for planning, surveillance and evaluation of suicide.

Accomplishments:

- Analyzed Illinois data collection strengths and weaknesses, and developed a findings report
- Created partnerships with the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance data collection strategies
- Partnered with Children's Memorial Research Center to support their work with the three pilot sites of the Illinois Violence Death Reporting System, gaining access to improved information and data about suicidal deaths in Kane County, Peoria County, suburban Cook County, and Chicago
- Developed action steps for the Illinois Injury Prevention Coalition's Strategic Plan to mandate e-coding in state hospitals to link various databases with suicide data for surveillance, research and evaluation

- Served as a resource for injury prevention programs by providing statistics on crisis calls, death reporting, legislation tracking and data analysis
- Drafted a proposal to include survey questions concerning suicidal ideation on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

### **E. Legislative and Advocacy Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's legislative and advocacy efforts focused on initiating new legislation, tracking existing legislative issues, and reporting activities and accomplishments to the governor and General Assembly.

Accomplishments:

- Developed awareness and advocacy toolkit for alliance members for their local community activities
- Organized two candlelight vigils and awareness evenings in Springfield to remember those individuals who have been touched by suicide
- Provided technical assistance to Illinois Public Health Association in drafting a suicide prevention resolution
- Drafted new suicide prevention legislation
- Formed partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders, legislators and state agencies.

### **F. State Agency Review and Support Efforts**

The Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition's state agency review and support efforts focused on reviewing state agency policy and procedures, identifying a strategy for taking inventory of what suicide prevention activities exist in state agencies, and completing the State Agency Review and Support Report, as mandated in Public Act 093-0109.

Accomplishments:

- Submitted State Agency Review and Support Report. The review process included the following:
  - i. Reviewed statutorily prescribed missions, policies, and procedures of the Illinois Departments of Public Health, Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department on Aging
  - ii. Examined national and state resources such as the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, the draft Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, and the best practices registries from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, to identify potential recommendations to include in this report
  - iii. Reviewed legislation from other states pertaining to suicide prevention-related policy changes
  - iv. Gained input from committee workgroups and local suicide prevention coalitions.

- Provide guidance to other committee workgroups on avenues of implementing their activities within the state agencies
- Identified potential next steps to expand on the State Agency Review and Support Report
  - i. Recommendation to identify suicide-related activities and programming that has occurred among state agencies
  - ii. Recommendation to identify additional suicide-related activities and programming for state agencies to implement
  - iii. Recommendation to identify avenues for implementing the action steps of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan within state agencies.

In addition to the above, the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition devoted substantial time to the development of a strong structure to ensure the necessary support required to continue to carry out suicide prevention efforts for years to come. Much time and effort was put into the development of an operational business plan, including a calendar of annual operations and an annual evaluation, creating a member resource manual, creating an orientation plan for new members and leadership skill building.

In conclusion, the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Coalition is committed to suicide prevention and improving mental health and well-being. Per the requirements in Public Act 093-0907, the alliance is dedicated to overseeing the implementation of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan.

Over the next five years, the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance seeks to develop and enhance comprehensive suicide prevention, early intervention, and post-vention programs and services and building support across diverse communities.

The following initiatives are recommended next steps in carrying out the goals of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan:

- **Develop and Evaluate Five Model Suicide Prevention Comprehensive Pilot Programs (three-year programs)** - To develop and evaluate five model, comprehensive programs statewide that include suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention in order to provide replicable, evidenced-based outcomes that other communities and service providers can use with adaptations.
- **Implement a Suicide Prevention, Early Intervention and Training Initiative** - To provide the following specific services:
  - i. Develop and enhance the capacity of community gatekeepers statewide through community-based mini-grants to increase suicide prevention and early intervention skills through local education by experts in the field.
  - ii. Assess the current capacity and network of crisis lines.
  - iii. Enhance professional development abilities through a statewide conference on suicide prevention.
  - iv. Develop and enhance the capacity of health service providers statewide to increase suicide prevention and early intervention skills through local education by experts in the field.
  - v. Develop and enhance the capacity of service providers to the aging population on suicide prevention and early intervention skills.
  - vi. Develop and enhance service provider skills to traumatized children in the child welfare system on suicide prevention and early intervention.
- **Implement the Suicide Prevention Public Awareness Campaign** - To develop and implement a public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of suicide, and increase awareness of risk factors, including mental illnesses, and promote linkage to human services for at-risk individuals.
- **Develop and Implement a Suicide Prevention Community Outreach Initiative** - To build capacity across the state to promote local suicide prevention efforts by building/expanding 20 to 25 new effective and efficient coalitions and partnerships.
- **Improve and Implement Suicide Prevention School-based Initiatives** - To support and build the following:
  - i. Professional development related to suicide prevention.
  - ii. Grants to school districts to develop and implement suicide prevention initiatives within their curricula, increase in-school mental health support, conduct staff development, and educate students and parents/other caregivers.



- **Improve Suicide Prevention Data Collection and Analysis** - To provide the following services:
  - i. Develop and implement the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System statewide in order to collect more effective and accurate data on suicide deaths.
  - ii. Work with an epidemiologist to analyze suicide attempt data statewide, train providers on how to collect better data and provide reports on data by county.
  
- **Support Suicide Prevention Evaluation and Research** - To support research-based evaluation methods and technical assistance to plan for replication of suicide prevention efforts according to outcome measures.
  
- **Inventory Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Post-vention activities within State Agencies** – To ensure suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention services are implemented throughout the state system through the following activities:
  - i. Identify suicide-related activities and programming that has occurred among state agencies.
  - ii. Identify additional suicide-related activities and programming from state agencies to implement.
  - iii. Identify avenues for implementing the action steps of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan within state agencies.

## Participating Organizations

Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \*  
Anna Bixby Womens Center for Domestic Violence  
Children’s Memorial Hospital  
Cook County Department of Public Health  
DuPage County Health Department  
East Central Illinois Area Agency /Aging  
Eldorado Public Health Department  
Farm Resource Center  
Jackson County Health Department  
Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence \*  
Illinois Department on Aging \*  
Illinois Department of Corrections \*  
Loyola University  
Mental Health America of Illinois \*  
*(formerly Mental Health Association in Illinois)*  
Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley  
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services \*  
Illinois Department of Human Services

- . Bureau of Child and Adolescent Health
- . Bureau of Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention
- . Bureau of Youth Services and Delinquency Prevention
- . Division of Mental Health \*
- . Office of Family Health

Illinois Department of Public Health

- . Center for Health Statistics
- . Division of Emergency Medical Services and Highway Safety \*
- . Division of Minority Affairs
- . Injury and Violence Prevention Program \*

Illinois Higher Education Center \*  
Illinois State Board of Education \*  
Illinois State Police \*  
Illinois Violence Prevention Authority \*  
Kane County Public Health Department

Life-Savers Training Corporation \*

Mental Health Association of Macon County

NAMI Illinois - National Alliance on Mental Illness \*

Northern Illinois University

Office of the Illinois Attorney General \*

Rockford Coalition for Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Suicide Prevention Services \*

Springfield Public Health Department

Southern Illinois University

Southern Illinois Resources for Social Services

Streamwood Behavioral Health Center - Jason Foundation \*

Survivors \*

SwedishAmerican Hospital

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance\*

Thresholds

University of Illinois at Chicago

West Chicago Elementary School District #33

Westside Domestic Abuse Project

Violence Prevention Collaborative-Winnebago County Health Department

Voices for Illinois Children

**\* Appointed member of the Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Committee**

