

**KANSAS SUICIDE PREVENTION SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council**

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## Introduction

*In 2012, Secretary Robert Moser of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) stated in the introduction to the Annual Summary of Vital Statistics, "I am deeply concerned by the 31.5 percent increase (384 deaths in 2011 to 505 in 2012) in the number of Kansas resident suicides. One out of five of those deaths occurred to persons 45 to 54. Our agency is working with state agencies and private organizations to increase awareness and provide tools and resources toward suicide prevention to more effectively address this issue."*

In the State of Kansas suicide remains a public behavioral health issue. The number of state suicide incidence is higher than the national goal of 10.2 per 100,000 population.

The Suicide Prevention Subcommittee of the Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council which is comprised of representatives of behavioral health organizations, state agencies, military/veterans organizations, educational institutions, and the community at large, who are dedicated to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths, and the pain for those affected by suicide deaths, through research projects, educational programs, intervention services, and bereavement services. Over the years, the SPS has met to prioritize goals and activities around transforming policy, programs and services, and funding.

Encouraging state and local activities such as:

- Recognizing suicide as a significant public health problem in Kansas and declare suicide prevention a statewide priority.
- Supporting the development of accessible behavioral health services for all 105 counties of our state, implementing evidence-based and best practice strategies on suicide prevention.
- Acknowledging that no single suicide prevention effort will be sufficient or appropriate for all populations or communities; and
- Encouraging initiatives based on the goals and activities contained in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and Zero Suicide of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.
- Outreach, education and awareness through conferences and workshops to schools and organizations.
- Support implementation of the Kansas Suicide Prevention State Plan.
- Signing of annual Suicide Prevention Proclamations with the Kansas Governor, state and local legislators, and in many city commissions/councils and county commissions across the state.

## Mission

*To bring Kansans of diverse backgrounds, government and private agencies, health care providers and funders together to share information about suicide risk, attempts, and deaths in Kansas, about evidence-based and promising practices that are employed in the state or nationally, and to stimulate and support the adoption of new initiatives where needed to recognize and reduce suicide risk.*

## Vision

*To create a suicide-free Kansas where quality mental health services are available, trusted, and used when needed, without stigma.*

## Membership

Leadership: Bill Art - Chair  
Marcia Epstein - Co-Chair  
Stan Edlavitch - Secretary/Treasurer

### Membership:

- AFSP- Kansas – Barb Nelson
- Central Kansas Partnership – Janel Rose, Gail Sullivan
- Comcare – Jason Scheck
- Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council – Wes Cole, Jane Adams, Eric Harkness, Sue Schuster
- Harvey County Coalition – Chaplain Jason Reynolds
- Headquarters, Inc. – Andy Brown
- Healing After Suicide – Marcia Epstein
- Johnson County Suicide Prevention Coalition – Bill Art
- Kansas Mental Health Coalition – Marcia Epstein, Eric Harkness
- KYSP and KSPRC – Jane Faubion, Chris Maxwell
- Kansas National Guard – Chaplain John Potter
- KCSAPP – Stan Edlavitch
- KDADS Behavioral Health – Sarah Fischer, Peter Vopata
- KDHE Injury and Disability Prevention Programs – Lori Haskett, Jane Stueve
- Mental Health America of the Heartland – Courtney Ryan
- NAMI- KS and local NAMI chapters – Eric Harkness, Tomas Hernandez
- Northeast Problem Gambling Coalition- Hilary Dunnaway
- SASS Mo-Kan – Bonnie Swade
- Sedgwick County Suicide Prevention – Jason Deselms
- Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition – Steve Christenberry
- Southeast Community Mental Health Center – Robert Chase
- Southeast Kansas Coalition – Bobbye Maley
- Southwest Kansas Coalition – Vicki Broz
- Suicide Prevention Coalition of Northwest Kansas - Joyce Morgan, Johanna Mason
- Youth Suicide Prevention Coalition of Reno, Pratt, Harper, Barber, and Kingman Counties

Liaisons from other agencies:

- Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council: Wes Cole, Chair
- KDADS (Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services): Sarah Fischer
- SPRC (Suicide Prevention Resource Center): interim Prevention Specialist serving Kansas, Smita Varia

**FY 2014 Highlights, Activities and Goals of Suicide Prevention Subcommittee:**

- The SPS has met monthly, primarily through telephone conferences, to share information about effective practices, to assist communities and organizations with specific needs, and to prioritize goals and activities for suicide prevention
- Significant information has also been shared by email between meetings
- Consultation for Kansas communities with significant concerns about suicide, including to media representatives, was provided by Chair Bill Art and Co-Chair Marcia Epstein
- SPS members have provided training on suicide prevention in state-wide conferences, as well as local communities
- Several SPS members are active in the American Association of Suicidology and the Zero Suicide Learning Collaborative, to bring the most current understanding of effective suicide prevention to Kansas
- Recognition of annual National Suicide Prevention Week, with a state proclamation meeting and signing by Governor Brownback. Participants in the signing and at a panel presentation after, included KDADS Secretary Shawn Sullivan, KDHE Secretary Robert Moser, Chaplain John Potter of the Kansas National Guard, Jason Deselms of the Robert J Dole VA Health Center, Rick Cagan of NAMI-Kansas, SPS Chair Bill Art and Co-Chair Marcia Epstein, and many others including survivors of suicide attempts and survivors of suicide loss. The panel presentation organized by KDADS staff was the first significant meeting on suicide prevention with both KDHE and KDADS secretaries.
- Encouraged and increased availability and usage of suicide data from KDHE Vital Statistics.
- Increased awareness on linkage between problem gambling and suicide risk.

\*FY 2014 Highlights, Activities and Milestones of Individuals and Organizations Represented in the Suicide Prevention Subcommittee are located in Appendix I.

The following chart highlights the FY 2014 Goals, Objectives, and Progress of the SPS:

GOAL	ACCOMPLISHMENT
1. Review and update Suicide Prevention State Plan with statewide input.	SPS began this process with assistance from our KDADS liaison by creating opportunities for participation at the Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention Summit in Hays in July 2014, through other meetings, and by email. Responsibility has been transferred to KDADS with support of committee.
2. Provide Suicide Prevention Awareness Presentations at Statewide Conferences and/or Annual Meetings.	Presentations were made by SPS members at major conferences including: Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention Summit; Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas conference; Safe, Healthy, Prepared Schools conference, and the Governor’s Public Health Conference.
3. Create Kansas Suicide over the Lifespan Prevention Resource Center	SPS has completed and submitted plan for suicide prevention resource center, which has not been funded. Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention launched resource center funded by the Garrett Lee Smith Grant
4. Inform public policy for suicide prevention in Kansas	SPS members participated in Suicide Prevention Week, September 8-14, 2013 including the August 23, 2013 SPW Proclamation-Signing with Governor Brownback and the panel discussion that followed. That discussion was the first time that the secretaries of KDADS (or formerly SRS) and KDHE participated in such a meeting about suicide prevention. SPS members provided consultation, and Headquarters, Inc. provided mini-grants with SAMHSA funding for Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention, to support new and on-going suicide prevention coalitions. SPS members served on Kansas Mental Health Coalition, which advocates for legislation to support needed behavioral health services. SPS members began participating in Zero Suicide of National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.

### Goals and Recommendations for FY 2015

Goal for FY 2015: Reduce the number of state suicide incidence equal to or below the national goal of 10.2 per 100,000 population, as listed in the Healthy People 2020 Leading Health Indicators.

- The SPS recommends the following activities in support this goal:
- Working with Legislature to promote awareness of suicide prevention.
- Increase awareness that suicide prevention is a priority for all Kansans
- Encourage National Suicide Prevention Week activities in communities across Kansas
- Write, distribute and promote op-eds, and disseminate information about safe messaging covering suicide, and urge the development of effective materials, including through local media outlets.
- Encourage the development of new local coalitions and enrichment of collaborating existing local coalitions each bringing unique perspectives and resources for effective suicide prevention initiatives.

- Support and increase availability of support groups for survivors of suicide loss.
- Assist local suicide prevention efforts and promote local support groups in fund-raising efforts, building capacity, and increasing availability for survivors of suicide loss.
- Identify and develop relationships with other high-risk populations as well as rural and frontier geographical areas in Kansas to bring evidence-based and best practices around the state that would benefit from targeted resources being applied to promote suicide prevention and measure for reduction in suicide/suicide attempts at specified intervals.
- Move to develop relationships with tribal entities in Kansas in order to encourage utilization of culturally appropriate evidence-based practices in tribal settings.
- Increase number of trainings and workshops, to promote and support application of best practices and evidence-based approaches in the field of suicidology among BSRB licensed behavioral health practitioners and community gatekeepers when working to prevent suicides.
- Increase collaboration with KDADS and KDHE to promote use of evidence-based and best practices where applicable, and work with KDHE and KDADS to disseminate data and act upon measured outcomes from this effort.
- Promote and increase utilization of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL), including the Veterans Crisis Line, across the state, especially in rural areas, in attempt to establish consumer involvement in suicide prevention in those areas.
- Encourage the implementation of best practices for all military installations and all service branches in Kansas to assist them with addressing issues among their troops.
- Develop a sustainability plan for a cross-lifespans suicide prevention resource center in Kansas.

### **Summary**

Too many Kansans are lost to suicide each year. The 2012 rate of state suicides are above the national target rate of incidence by suicide. A key ingredient critical to the success in reducing suicide in Kansas is collaborative partnerships among key stakeholders to form local planning teams or coalitions of public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals, each bringing unique perspectives and resources at the community level to shape community values and norms for successful suicide prevention initiatives. Everyone has a role in suicide prevention.

We support the application from KDHE to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for Kansas to be included in National Violent Death Review System (NVDRS). Better surveillance of suicide deaths is needed to efficiently bring the most effective suicide prevention resources to specific areas and populations of our state, and will support the work of the Suicide Prevention Subcommittee.

## **Appendix I**

The following activities represent the individual efforts of subcommittee members for FY2014:

### **Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.**

The Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. distributed information from NIMH on suicide prevention and research at three conferences, including groups with military members and families.

### **Central Kansas Partnership, Suicide Prevention Task Force, Barton County area**

The task force met nearly monthly at the Barton County Health Department to set priority areas, goals, and objectives. Developed a communications plan for informing members of our coverage area of our task force and future activities. Conducted a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behaviors. We included information about the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline service at Headquarters, Inc. as part of our radio messages and Church Outreach Initiative. We sent 4 members and a presenter to the Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention Summit in July 2013. As part of our public awareness campaign we held a Run for Life event and a Survivors Remembrance Ceremony in September 2013. We reviewed data collected to establish the needs of our communities to determine what projects we targeted. We researched evidence-based youth suicide prevention programs and offered suggestions to the Partnership about what program(s) we would like to see implemented in our area. Yellow Ribbon Program K-12 and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) for adults. We planned and carried out our Task Force & Partnership sponsored youth suicide prevention activities including Bully—the Movie at Golden Belt Cinema 6 for youth and parents, a separate showing for parents, and additional showings and discussions at elementary, middle schools and high schools. We are sending two professional counselors on our task force to the ASIST “Train the Trainer” training.

### **Headquarters, Inc., located in Lawrence, services available to all Kansas**

Headquarters, Inc. hired Andy Brown as Executive Director in May 2013. Currently the agency operates Headquarters Counseling Center, an American Association of Suicidology (AAS) accredited crisis center, a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) crisis center which answers calls from Kansas area codes, and will serve as the rollover crisis center for calls from Comcare’s NSPL crisis center which will take calls originating in Sedgwick County starting in July 2014. Additionally Headquarters, Inc. operates Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention (KYSP) and the Kansas Suicide Prevention Resource Center (KSPRC).

### **Kansas National Guard**

Created a Kansas National Guard Suicide Prevention Program to reduce suicidal behavior, identify at-risk individuals, refer to helping agencies, and track individuals to ensure that problems are resolved. Created a Suicide Prevention Council that will manage the Suicide Prevention Program and to coordinate, develop, and utilize the best known methodology in caring for service members, civilians, and family members at risk of suicide. Kansas National Guard trainers conducted 7 ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) courses across

the state and certified 212 personnel. Conducted Ask, Care, Escort, (ACE) training throughout Kansas National Guard units to increase suicide awareness and prevention efforts. Became a charter member organization for the Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition.

### **Kansas Youth Suicide Prevention (KYSP) and Kansas Suicide Prevention Resource Center (KSPRC)**

Development of stakeholders/interested parties database, now with 1200 entries.

Development of the monthly KYSP e-newsletter.

Development of web-based Kansas Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

Hosted KYSP Statewide Summit, July 30-31, 2013.

Developed and awarded Mini-Grants. Eleven different sites in four different regions of the state received \$104,000 in mini-grants:

Eight Local Activity grants were awarded for a total of \$20,000.

Five Coalition Development grants were awarded for a total of \$46,811. Four new and one existing Coalition were funded by Coalition Development mini-grants. A sixth new coalition is in development by one of the Local Activities grantees (Atchison Co) and a seventh is in development by an Intervention Training grantee (Dodge City). Kansas now has Coalitions in all four regions of the State.

Four Intervention Training grants were awarded for a total of \$36,947, all to CMHCs. Trained to date: 1321 workforce; 2510 student and adult gatekeepers.

Secured first and second MOA for Complete System Exemplar Project – FHSU and Mattie Rhodes Counseling Center.

Meet bi-weekly with KDADS to collaborate on suicide prevention programming.

ASIST T4T with LivingWorks; June 16-20, Salina, KS – Fifteen trainees from all over KS.

Provided support to Headquarters Counseling Center to begin offering online emotional support (chat services) to users in Douglas County, June 25 – statewide expansion and integration with NSPL's Crisis Chat expected in next 6 months.

### **MarciaEpstein.biz, based in Lawrence**

Since serving as Director of Headquarters, Inc. for 34 years, ending November of 2013, Marcia Epstein continues providing counseling, leadership, and consultation in many areas of suicide prevention. She provides counseling for people at risk of suicide and/or bereaved by suicide from Douglas, Johnson, and nearby counties. She facilitates Healing After Suicide bereavement support group, International Survivors of Suicide Loss community workshops, and is leading a collaboration of facilitators of suicide bereavement groups in Kansas. She provides training and consultation for other professionals working with people at risk of suicide. She provides ASIST



(Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), QPR (Question-Persuade-Refer) and customized suicide prevention training. She is an active member in Kansas Mental Health Coalition, American Association of Suicidology, and Zero Suicide Learning Collaborative of national Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, as well as the Suicide Prevention Subcommittee. In addition, she promotes the use of community radio and spoken word poetry events as additional tools for healing. She hosts Talk With ME radio show Monday – Friday on [www.TheVoiceOfLawrence.com](http://www.TheVoiceOfLawrence.com) with guests and topics frequently highlighting suicide prevention and suicide bereavement.

### **Mental Health America of the Heartland (MHAH), Kansas City area**

The Child and Youth Mental Health Initiative of MHAH educated 2,239 Kansans about youth suicide prevention from July 2013 to June 2014. This was done across 13 different school and community settings in Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte counties.

### **SASS-MoKan (Suicide Awareness Survivor Support MO and KS), Kansas City area**

Every September during Suicide Prevention Week we hold a community awareness walk in Loose Park, Kansas City, Missouri KC. Our walk continues to grow yearly and last year's event had around 300 participants. We have gotten media coverage from several of the TV and radio stations. We believe it is critical to get media support. Our goal for our walk is to continue to bring awareness to the public, dispel the stigma surrounding suicide, and unite survivors of suicide loss. Some of the proceeds from our walk are sent to area suicide bereavement support groups for needed materials. We also sent a contribution to the Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition to support their efforts and for the May 2014 KU walk for suicide awareness/prevention sponsored by the AFSP – Greater Kansas.

SASS continues to reach out to the community by facilitating a support group for people who have lost a loved one to suicide. Each November we facilitate a Memorial Service for those families who have experienced a loss by suicide and in the spring we hold a Healing Day for survivors of suicide loss.

SASS also believes education is important. During this past year we made several presentations using SOS and QPR suicide prevention education materials. We have and continue to participate in area health fairs and give presentations at schools, religious organizations, and have recently been invited to give an in-service to caregivers at KU Medical Center.

SASS sends out a quarterly newsletter which always includes information about suicide, recommended books, and upcoming activities. This past year SASS has partnered with the Jewish Community Center's new formation of the Mental Health Coalition made up from area hospitals, mental health centers, businesses, The purpose of this group is to encourage others that it is okay to talk about mental illness and provide support.

SASS is proud of its accomplishments and continues to strive for ways to bring more awareness to our community.

### **Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition**

In September 2013, we held first Shawnee County Suicide Prevention 5K run/walk event to raise awareness and also to raise funds for Coalition activities. Hosted workshop entitled Using DSM-5 for Clinical Assessments and Interventions with Suicidal Clients; Surviving Completed Suicides, at St. Francis Hospital, facilitated by David Jensen, LSCSW.

Established a Board of Directors consisting of the current Coalition officers plus 4 other members who were instrumental in developing the Suicide Cluster Response Plan as well as the subsequent formation of the Coalition.

Liz McGinnis, a consultant with the Yellow Ribbon Program, conducted two “train the trainer” workshops for about 20 School Resource Officers, mental health professionals, and others who are connected directly or indirectly to our Coalition.

Officer Shawn Kimble and Steve Christenberry facilitated our first Yellow Ribbon training as part of the week long Crisis Intervention Team training. The Coalition Board of Directors retained the Washburn Law Clinic to help us incorporate as a non-profit organization. The application to the IRS has been submitted and we are awaiting approval as of June 2014. The Coalition’s Resource Development Committee began planning for the second annual 5K Suicide Prevention and Awareness run, to be held during Suicide Prevention Week on Saturday, September 6, 2014. The Coalition co-sponsored two Zero Suicide clinician training workshops in Topeka, facilitated by Dr. Bill Geis. Work has begun on a freestanding Coalition website and we will soon be printing an informational booklet for survivors of suicide, patterned after one developed by the Sedgwick County Suicide Prevention Coalition.