



PREVENTING SUICIDE IN COLORADO

An Initiative of The Colorado Trust

SUICIDE IN COLORADO

Because Colorado has one of the highest rates of suicide in the country, The Colorado Trust sought to learn more about suicide and prevention efforts. The intensive statewide scan conducted for The Trust resulted in the 2002 comprehensive report, *Suicide in Colorado*. The report identified the characteristics of people who are most at risk of committing suicide, existing suicide-prevention resources and gaps that need to be addressed.

It was learned that an estimated 9,600 Coloradans seriously contemplate suicide each year—the majority of whom do not receive treatment for their suicidal symptoms—and, that in any given year about 600 Coloradans can be expected to die by suicide. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among youth in Colorado, though the overall number of suicide deaths among Colorado youth is relatively small compared with middle-aged and older adults. The economic impact is also significant with suicide deaths and attempts costing Colorado an estimated \$59 million in direct costs and \$571 million in indirect costs in 2000.

“FEW PEOPLE COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE OF A SINGLE EVENT
IN THEIR LIVES. AN ESTIMATED 90% OF SUICIDES ARE ASSOCIATED
WITH A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS, USUALLY DEPRESSION, OR
SUBSTANCE ABUSE—LARGELY TREATABLE DISEASES.”

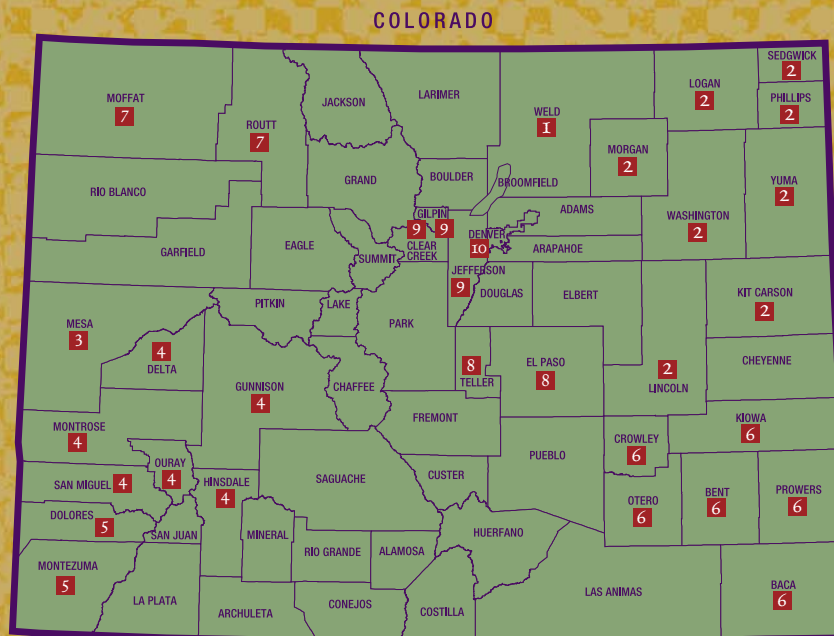
—JOHN R. MORAN, JR., PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE COLORADO TRUST

PREVENTING SUICIDE

Certainly no report was needed to know that every suicide death leaves a wake of devastation. The question is how to better prevent incidences of suicide. *Suicide in Colorado* notes that no single approach to suicide prevention is sufficient—there is a clear need for comprehensive strategies to address the problem of suicide and suicide behaviors.

In response, The Colorado Trust developed its Preventing Suicide in Colorado Initiative. Under this four year, \$2.6 million effort, 10 organizations that provide mental health services are encouraging people at risk of attempting suicide to seek care. Collectively, these organizations are reaching out to people in 31 counties across the state, with a focus on providing more education and awareness, referring at-risk individuals for screening, providing therapy and counseling for referred patients, and following up to ensure that referred patients receive counseling.

GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE COLORADO TRUST'S PREVENTING SUICIDE IN COLORADO INITIATIVE



1 *Hispanic Youth Suicide Prevention Project of Suicide Education & Support Services of Weld County*

POPULATIONS SERVED: Hispanic youth, in and out of school settings, who may be at-risk for suicide, as well as their families

FOCUS: Raising awareness, empowering youth gatekeepers, facilitating the connection between youth and the mental health services system, and coordinating data collection between agencies that interact with suicidal youth

Contact: Linda Chase • 970-506-2737 • ljchase@endsuicide.org • www.endsuicide.org

2 *The LifeSource Project*

POPULATIONS SERVED: General population, people with depression and at-risk adults, children and white males in eight northeast Colorado counties

FOCUS: Awareness, improved gatekeeper skills, increased referrals for treatment and improved prevention services

Contact: Maranda Miller • 970-526-3616 • maranda.miller@rural-solutions.org • www.rural-solutions.org

3 *Link for Life*

POPULATIONS SERVED: Citizens of Mesa County, with an emphasis on men age 45 and older

FOCUS: Public awareness, education and training

Contact: Karen Levad • 970-248-6937 • karen.levad@mesacounty.us • www.mesacounty.us

4 *Midwestern Colorado Suicide Prevention/Intervention Coalition*

POPULATIONS SERVED: Youth, middle-aged men and the elderly in Montrose, Delta, Ouray, San Miguel, Gunnison and Hinsdale counties

FOCUS: Educating the public to recognize suicidal behavior and know what resources are available; providing screenings and referral programs; offering support programs to schools, senior centers, primary care physicians and others; and offering post-vention support groups

Contacts: Karen Ickes and Nancy Halderman • 970-249-9694 • kickes@midwestmhc.org and nhalderman@midwestmhc.org • www.midwestmhc.org

Continued on Back

5 *Montelores Suicide Prevention Initiative*
POPULATIONS SERVED: Residents of Montezuma and Dolores counties; general population in year one, youth and Native Americans in year two and senior citizens in year three
FOCUS: Awareness, education, screening, treatment and post-vention
Contact: Diana Buza • 970-564-1195 • dlbuza@yahoo.com • www.ThePinonProject.org

6 *Project HOPE*
POPULATIONS SERVED: Young people, adults and service providers in Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties
FOCUS: Education and awareness, gatekeeper training, screenings and appropriate referrals
Contact: Catherin Dearcos • 719-384-5446 • cdearcos@semhs.org • www.semhs.org

7 *REPS (Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide)*
POPULATIONS SERVED: Residents of Yampa Valley, in Moffat and Routt counties
FOCUS: Education and awareness, screening, referrals and risk assessments
Contact: Barb Seed • 970-824-6541 • bseed@cwrmh.org • www.cwrmh.org

8 *Suicide Prevention Education and Advocacy Coalition*
POPULATIONS SERVED: General population, teens and seniors of El Paso and Teller counties
FOCUS: Education and awareness, gatekeeper training for caretakers of seniors and treatment for the uninsured
Contact: Joan Morrill • 719-573-7447 • jlmorrill@sppppr.org • www.sppppr.org

9 *Tri-County Trust Project: Suicide Prevention*
POPULATIONS SERVED: Youth in middle and high schools in Jefferson, Gilpin and Clear Creek counties, as well as gatekeepers
FOCUS: Education, awareness and training
Contact: Erin Keenan • 303-432-5716 • erink@jcmh.org • Heather Wahe • 303-432-5741 • heatherw@jcmh.org • www.jcmh.org

10 *Voz y Corazon*
POPULATIONS SERVED: Hispanic girls between the ages of 11 and 17 in West Denver
FOCUS: Education, awareness, gatekeeper training and the continued involvement of project participants; also improving girls' abilities to provide suicide prevention messages and activities to others
Contact: Lydia Prado • 303-504-6647 • lprado@mhcd.org • www.mhcd.org

The Preventing Suicide in Colorado Initiative is managed jointly by The Center for Public-Private Sector Cooperation at the University of Colorado at Denver and the Mental Health Association of Colorado.

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Jeanne Rohner, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of Colorado • 303.377.3040 • jmrohner@mhacolorado.org

For more information about The Colorado Trust and its efforts to prevent suicide, contact Carol Breslau, Vice President for Initiatives • 303-837-1200 • carol@coloradotrust.org.