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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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Riverside County Takes Action to Address Suicide, Celebrate Recovery

Action by Board of Supervisors Adopts Suicide Prevention Plan and Recognizes National Recovery Month

Suicides in Riverside County have increased in recent years along with the number of suicide attempts resulting in emergency room visits. Riverside University Health System (RUHS) – Behavioral Health and RUHS – Public Health filed a new suicide prevention strategic plan with the Board of Supervisors today, called *Building Hope and Resiliency – A Collaborative Approach to Suicide Prevention in Riverside County*.

Suicide is the 10th leading overall cause of death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The impact of a suicide is devastating to families and friends and can have a ripple effect that extends the loss and trauma to entire communities.

“With the strategic plan we have formally adopted, we are launching a countywide effort and coalition to prevent suicide and save lives in Riverside County,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “I commend our departments of Behavioral Health and Public Health, and the Riverside County Office of Education which engaged with the county to develop this plan.”

The board recognized September 2 through 6 as National Suicide Prevention Week and also recognized the entire month of September as National Recovery Month, dedicated to

increasing awareness of substance use disorders and honoring the people who are thriving in recovery.

“This strategic plan represents countless hours of effort among people who are committed to decreasing the tragic loss and heartbreak of suicide,” said Dr. Matthew Chang, director of RUHS – Behavioral Health. “It provides a solid foundation for making real progress that will ultimately lead to a reduction of suicides in Riverside County.”

Suicides in Riverside County increased 30 percent between 2007 and 2017 while the population grew only 17 percent during the same period. Adults between the ages of 25 and 69 represent the largest age group, comprising more than half of all suicides, with older adults (age 60 and above) being the next largest group at about 31 percent, followed by those age 25 and under at around 15 percent.

In last fiscal year, there were 4,359 calls for assistance that included 85 active rescues for individuals who were in immediate danger of dying by suicide, along with more than 10,000 calls from Riverside County to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for assistance. Although males were more than three times as likely to commit suicide than females, females comprised about 59 percent of suicide attempts in Riverside County during a similar time period.

The plan includes 10 strategic approaches that were identified through research, a review of Riverside County specific data and input solicited from more than 55 individuals and 33 agencies representing community stakeholders, including local school districts, community partners, behavioral health professionals, the Riverside County Office of Education and others.

Next steps include the development of a suicide prevention coalition that will bring the plan to life and advance the effort in reducing suicide in Riverside County.

The suicide prevention strategic plan can be found [online here](#). To join the effort to prevent suicide in Riverside County, visit [this webpage](#). Immediate assistance can be obtained through Riverside County’s local Suicide Prevention Crisis Line – 951-686-HELP.

For more information on accessing behavioral health services, contact the RUHS-Behavioral Health Access Line at (800) 706-7500.

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