

Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project FY 2009 - 2011

The Division of Behavioral Health, Prevention and Early Intervention Services was recently awarded the federal Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, youth suicide prevention grant award. The grant will be administered by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This is a three-year grant period, 9/30/2008 to 9/29/2011 in the amount of \$500,000 per year.

- The *Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project* will enhance and expand suicide prevention programs and services to specific regions and youth populations where suicide rates are exceedingly high.
- The goals and outcomes of the Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project include
 1. Increase Alaska's understanding that youth suicide is preventable.
 2. Increase promotion of healthy social and emotional growth and youth development.
 3. Increased access and availability of behavioral health services.
 4. Increase use of suicide prevention research and evaluation methods.
 5. Decrease suicide and suicide behavior among Alaska's youth.
- Regional Suicide Prevention Teams (RSPT) will be developed statewide in early 2009 and will implement the community-based planning model, Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) strategic regional plans to support project outcomes. Plans will incorporate a culturally responsive and sustainable approach to include early prevention, intervention and postvention strategies targeting youth. RSPT's will include representation from school districts, community youth organizations, mental health providers, churches, parent groups, juvenile justice, children's protective services and other youth related groups.
- Special emphasis will be on high risk youth populations in Alaska including Alaska Native male teens, military youth Veterans 18-24, early teen females who have high rates of depression on-set, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) youth, and youth in residential/institutional settings such as youth detention or foster care.
- The University of Alaska Anchorage, Behavioral Health Research Services (BHRS) will be conducting the project's program evaluation including an ethnographic analysis for each region, conducting key informant interviews, assist in program evaluations for regional teams, and participating in a cross site evaluation. BHRS will also pilot a university campus program at UAA.
- Maniilaq's Project Life in Kotzebue region is entering into it's third year of the GLSMA grant and Kawerak Inc. in Nome has also recently been awarded. We look forward to collaborating with them as we align our efforts to reduce youth suicide in the Northwest Arctic region

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