

Zero Suicide

Transforming healthcare systems to improve suicide care



1) Lead system-wide culture change committed to reducing suicides

2) Train a competent, confident, and caring workforce

3) Identify individuals with suicide risk via comprehensive screening and assessment

4) Engage all individuals at-risk of suicide using a suicide care management plan

5) Treat suicidal thoughts and behaviors directly using evidence-based treatments.

6) Transition individuals through care with warm hand-offs and supportive contacts.

7) Improve policies and procedures through continuous quality improvement

The Zero Suicide framework – a comprehensive approach to suicide care by health care organizations – is an aspirational challenge and a practical framework for system-wide transformation that is proven to reduce deaths by suicide.

Zero Suicide can help prevent suicide in Alaska

Alaska has some of the highest suicide rates in the nation. Unfortunately, as few as 20% of the Alaskans who died from suicide received behavioral health care. Suicide deaths are preventable. By altering how health care professionals identify and treat those at risk of suicide, health care systems are in a unique position to provide the right care at the right time and improve patient safety.

The Zero Suicide framework

Zero Suicide uses a systematic leadership-driven seven-step framework that includes staff training, universal patient screening, case management, treatment, care transition and quality improvement. Each step is essential.

Benefits of Implementation

Health care organizations that have implemented Zero Suicide have seen a 50-80% reduction in suicide deaths, increased patient satisfaction, reduced hospital readmissions for suicide attempts and increased efficiency of staff time through improved risk assessment. Many health care organizations using this framework have been able to attain and maintain zero deaths by suicide among the patients under their care.

How is Zero Suicide being implemented in Alaska?

Zero Suicide is a global initiative supported by the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and in Alaska by the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. DBH is working to implement Zero Suicide by ensuring providers have tools and support including:

- Training in suicide treatment, prevention, intervention and risk stratification.
- Zero Suicide workshops facilitated by the Education and Development Center
- Bi-monthly learning community meetings

For more information and to learn more about how to implement Zero Suicide within your health care system, please contact Charity Lee, the Zero Suicide Program Coordination, Division of Behavioral Health, at charity.lee@alaska.gov.

