



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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## Take Action When You See Warning Signs of Suicide

*National Suicide Prevention Week is September 6-12<sup>th</sup>*

State officials are encouraging people to take action to help prevent suicides when a loved one, friend, neighbor or co-worker shows suicidal symptoms or talks about taking their own life.

“Suicide can happen at any age and doesn’t know any boundaries. A suicide may be preventable if we all watch for the warning signs in those around us,” said Department Secretary Karen Timberlake. “Suicide is often related to unrecognized depression and it’s important we try to help people connect with their doctor or therapist to get the care they need.”

Warning signs of suicide include:

- Talking about suicide
- Statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Preoccupation with death
- Suddenly happier or calmer
- Loss of interest in things one cares about
- Visiting or calling people one cares about
- Making arrangements, setting one's affairs in order
- Giving things away

Take warning signs seriously – question the person about their thoughts and refer them to help. If it’s urgent, call 911. You can also call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** for guidance. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 33,000 people kill themselves each year. Several factors can put a person at risk for attempting or committing suicide, although these risk factors do not always mean that suicide will occur. Risk factors for suicide include previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or other mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse, family history of suicide or violence, physical illness or feeling alone.

According to *The Burden of Suicide in Wisconsin* report, Wisconsin experiences an average of 650 deaths by suicide per year. The greatest number of suicide deaths occurs among 35-54 year old males. Men account for about 80% of all suicide deaths in Wisconsin, although women are twice as likely to make attempts. Youth age 15-24 had the highest rates of inpatient hospital and emergency department visits for self-inflicted injuries.

*The Burden of Suicide in Wisconsin* report is available at  
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/injuryprevention/pdffiles/bosfinal9%205.pdf>

To view the CDC’s suicide prevention website, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/suicide/>

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