

MEMO

To: Mental Health Community & Partners
From: Wayne Clark, PhD, Board President, California Mental Health Services Authority (CaIMHSA)
Re: Suicide Prevention Week is September 8 – 14, 2013

The 39th Annual National Suicide Prevention Week is almost here! Suicide Prevention Week offers an opportunity to inform the public about great strides in addressing this public health issue through prevention. This memo includes links to suicide prevention resources in California and a calendar of related events during Suicide Prevention Week and beyond. These materials are intended to:

- Help raise awareness of California's efforts to prevent suicide
- Point your collaborative partners and networks to Suicide Prevention Resources
- Encourage all of us to become involved in Suicide Prevention Week by participating in a local event

California is Leading the Way in Suicide Prevention

Thanks to the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63), a landmark initiative passed by voters in 2004, California has made a significant investment in programs that prevent mental illness, promote mental health, and connect individuals with help before they reach a crisis point. Guided by the [California Strategic Plan on Suicide Prevention](#), and funded by counties through the voter-approved initiative, California is implementing comprehensive suicide prevention programs. These programs empower everyone from youth to seniors with the tools, resources and crisis support needed to prevent suicide.

In 2009, California counties formed the California Mental Health Services Authority (CaIMHSA) to work together to deliver Prevention and Early Intervention strategies such as Suicide Prevention on a statewide scale, efficiently and effectively.

[CaIMHSA's Suicide Prevention programs](#) are improving knowledge about suicide prevention strategies, early warning signs, resources and linking people to help. Furthermore, these statewide programs reduce the stigma that may keep people from seeking help by ensuring Californians know that suicide is preventable. To learn more, please visit: www.calmhsa.org.

California has a number of suicide prevention resources, many of which are listed at www.suicideispreventable.org. If you or someone you know is in crisis and needs immediate help, California crisis centers can be reached by contacting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Strengthen California's Efforts to Prevent Suicide

Suicide Prevention Week puts a focus on the extraordinary efforts to prevent suicide that are underway in communities across California. New coalitions have been formed and partnerships strengthened to promote the message that suicide is preventable throughout California's diverse communities. Training opportunities and events are ongoing with the goal of raising awareness of suicide prevention tools and resources.

More than 120 Suicide Prevention Week events, sponsored by counties and community partners, have been compiled in a calendar and organized by different types of events. The calendar, which is available [here](#), demonstrates the breadth and depth of the suicide prevention activities in California – **we encourage you to join a local event and spread the word through your networks**. Here are just a few examples of the events planned statewide during Suicide Prevention Week and throughout the month of September:

- September 10th: The Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Network presents the **3rd Annual Suicide Prevention Summit**, featuring training from Columbia University's Kelly Posner, PhD on the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale and Barbara Stanley, PhD on Safety Planning. Contact Richard Lieberman at lieberman_richard@lacoecoe.edu for more information.
- September 10th-October 18th: **Send Silence Packing** raises awareness through a program that brings 1,100 backpacks to campuses across California, representing the 1,100 college students lost annually to suicide. 9/10: Riverside Community College; 9/17: Santiago Canyon College; 9/27: Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; and 10/18: San Francisco State University. Contact Hannah Roberts at hrober02@calpoly.edu for more information.
- September 13th: **Creating Safety Where we Live, Work, & Play: Strategies to Reduce Access to Lethal Means** in Humboldt County. This event will inform and involve the community about strategies to prevent suicide. Contact Kris Huschle at khuschle@co.humboldt.ca.us to participate.
- September 24th: **Every Life Matters: Implementing Effective Suicide Prevention Strategies in California**. CA State Senator Jim Beall and members of the CA Senate Select Committee on Mental Health will hold an important informational briefing to discuss the future of suicide prevention in California. RSVP [here](#), or visit the Committee's [homepage](#), for more information.

Through these efforts and others, Each Mind Matters -- California's Mental Health Movement -- is gaining strength. You can join the millions of Californians who are refusing to stay silent and are actively working to break down the stigma of mental illness at www.eachmindmatters.org.

For more information on the suicide prevention efforts underway in California and/or to get involved, please visit www.suicideispreventable.org, www.elsuicidiodoesprevenible.org, www.yourvoicecounts.org or contact Sarah Brichler, CaIMHSA Program Manager, at (916) 859-4827 or sarah.brichler@calmhsa.org.