



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jason Hoppin
831-454-3401

COUNTY TASK FORCE RELEASES DRAFT SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN

Amid a growing nationwide suicide epidemic, the Santa Cruz County Suicide Prevention Task Force on Monday release a draft Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan that envisions a system of prevention, intervention and postvention through priorities that include the establishment of new programs and services, an improved understanding of local strengths and needs and better information sharing and collaboration.

The suicide rate in Santa Cruz County is 16.4 per 100,000 residents, compared to 10.7 statewide. Nationwide, the suicide rate increased in 49 states since 1999, and is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Furthermore, it is one of only three leading causes of death on the rise, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

In September 2018, Santa Cruz County convened the Suicide Prevention Task Force to focus on preventing suicide deaths. The Task Force is comprised of community members; community-based, health care and faith-based organizations; school, law enforcement and hospice personnel; behavioral health and public health agencies; veterans and more.

"This plan is result of the efforts of a diverse group of people dedicated to building hope and saving lives," said Noah Whitaker, co-chair of the Suicide Prevention Task Force. "Our desire is for more people and organizations in the community to see this plan, get inspired, and step forward to help us build a suicide-safer Santa Cruz County."

Comments on the draft Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan may be submitted through May 16th. The Task Force will convene a stakeholder town hall meeting to receive additional feedback May 16th, 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. at 1400 Emeline Ave., Building K, Room 206-207, Santa Cruz.

View and download the plan at www.santacruzhealth.org/MHSA under "Suicide Prevention Draft Strategic Plan 2019". Comments may be made directly through that website under "Submit a Public Comment" or by emailing cassandra.eslami@santacruzcounty.us.

If you or someone you know is feeling increased anxiety and/or depression, general hopelessness, changes in mood, sleep, or eating patterns, increased drug and/or alcohol use, or grief over losing a loved one to suicide please call the 24-hour suicide crisis line at 1-877-663-5433 (1-877-ONE-LIFE).

For media interested in responsibly reporting on suicide and related issues, visit <http://reportingonsuicide.org>.