

Idaho Suicide Prevention Program

Annual Report to the Governor's Office and Legislature
SFY2023

Achievements and Ongoing Efforts
November 2023



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH



**SUICIDE
PREVENTION**
PROGRAM

Department of Health and Welfare
Division of Public Health
Suicide Prevention Program

Elke Shaw-Tulloch, MHS, Administrator,
Division of Public Health, 208-334-5950,
Elke.Shaw-tulloch@dhw.idaho.gov

Teresa Abbott, Health Program Manager,
Suicide Prevention Program, 208-334-4938,
Teresa.Abbott@dhw.idaho.gov



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee appropriated \$1,783,800 to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Public Health's Suicide Prevention Program (SPP). This annual report provides an overview of SPP's activities and progress toward reducing suicide in Idaho during SFY23 and continuing efforts in SFY24.

In the past year, **SPP continued to support Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)**, a public/private, multidisciplinary stakeholder group comprised of individuals who shaped the *Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2023*. SPP served as the facilitator, provided technical assistance, and supported implementation activities of ISPAC and the stakeholder teams that manage and implement the plan.

Between 2019-2022, the **Idaho aggregated suicide rate improved to 21.7 suicides per 100,000 population**, representing a reduction of nearly 9% from the 2018 baseline. Although no steady improvement trend has been realized with rates fluctuating each year, the aggregated rate reduction since implementing the *Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan* shows progress toward the overarching goal of reducing suicide by 20% by 2025.

In accordance with the Legislature's annual budget appropriations, **SPP updated agreements with State Department of Education to deliver youth suicide prevention programming statewide**. During the past academic year, regional coordinators directly engaged with 98 Idaho elementary and secondary public schools, delivering support resources and prevention trainings.

SPP continued to support 988 — the calling code for the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. New funding sources subgranted to the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline allowed them to meet the higher demand for behavioral health crisis support. Call volume to the crisis line increased 36% following the July 2022 launch of the three-digit crisis number and has remained steady following national and statewide public awareness efforts. Staffing and facility upgrades have allowed the hotline to successfully respond to more help-seekers and still meet National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration performance standards.

SPP awarded subgrants to all seven Idaho Public Health Districts to establish local suicide prevention collectives in SFY23. Each district is responsible for building local capacity to develop and implement suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities. Coordinators in each Public Health District provided local outreach events and educational resources promoting suicide awareness and prevention.

	2018 (BASELINE)	2019-22 (4-YR AGGREGATE)	Annual rate:			
			2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Idaho Resident Suicide Deaths	418	1,614	365	421	387	441
Suicide Rate	23.8	21.7	20.4	22.9	20.4	22.7

Source: Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, Division of Public Health, September 2023.

Rate = Number of suicides per 100,000 population



ANNUAL REPORT

This annual report provides an overview of Suicide Prevention Program (SPP) activities and progress toward reducing suicide in Idaho during SFY23 and ongoing efforts in SFY24. During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee appropriated \$1,783,800 to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW), Division of Public Health's Suicide Prevention Program (SPP).

Bureau of Equity and Strategic Partnerships

DHW's Bureau of Equity and Strategic Partnerships (BESP) combines the work of Get Healthy Idaho to advance Idaho's health improvement plan and integrate goals of five programs: Get Healthy Idaho, Health Disparities Program, Drug Overdose Prevention Program, Refugee Health Screening Program, and SPP. BESP collaborates across the department with other state and local government agencies, community partners, and organizations across industry sectors to ensure a multi-pronged cohesive statewide strategy is developed to identify and address the social determinants of health, which are the root causes of inequities in health outcomes.

Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)

Since 2018, SPP has participated in and provided administrative support to the Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC), a public/private, multidisciplinary stakeholder group comprised of many of the individuals who participated in the strategic planning process in 2018. SPP collaborated with ISPAC to determine the scope of work to be conducted with the funds appropriated to SPP for SFY23, including setting priorities for the program and determining budget amounts to be spent within each priority area.



SPP serves as the facilitator for ISPAC, provides leadership and guidance to ISPAC, and supports coordination and implementation activities of ISPAC and the stakeholder teams that manage and implement the six Key Performance Areas (KPA) of the Suicide Prevention Plan 2019-2023. SPP staff serve as facilitators and support staff for each of the six KPA teams. SPP and ISPAC operate with a coordinated and common vision of achieving Idaho's goals of reducing suicide.

SPP facilitates monthly meetings with ISPAC along with annual planning retreats to evaluate progress on the statewide Suicide Prevention Plan and discuss annual work plan priorities. Along with reviewing impact and annual progress, ISPAC identified the following priority areas for the SFY23 work plan:

- Create, coordinate, and monitor prevention, intervention, and postvention activities in each local health district.
- Improve state, tribal, and local capacity to use data to identify and address equity and risk disparities in higher suicide risk population segments. SPP data analysis identified the following high-risk segments in Idaho: military service members and veterans, rural residents, tribal community members, those affected by disability and/or chronic illness, and youth/adolescents.



Following input from ISPAC to align activities with the state plan priorities for SFY23, the SPP budget was allocated as follows:

Staff Salaries	\$318,700
General Operating Expenses	\$30,000
Youth Education and Prevention	\$423,000
Idaho Crisis and Suicide Hotline	\$448,000
Training and Technical Assistance	\$20,000
Suicide care model/Zero Suicide	\$54,000
Local Collectives, Public Health Districts (7)	\$315,000
Idaho Suicide Prevention Action Collective (ISPAC)	\$70,000
Communications and Outreach	\$105,100
Total State General Funds Budgeted	\$1,783,800

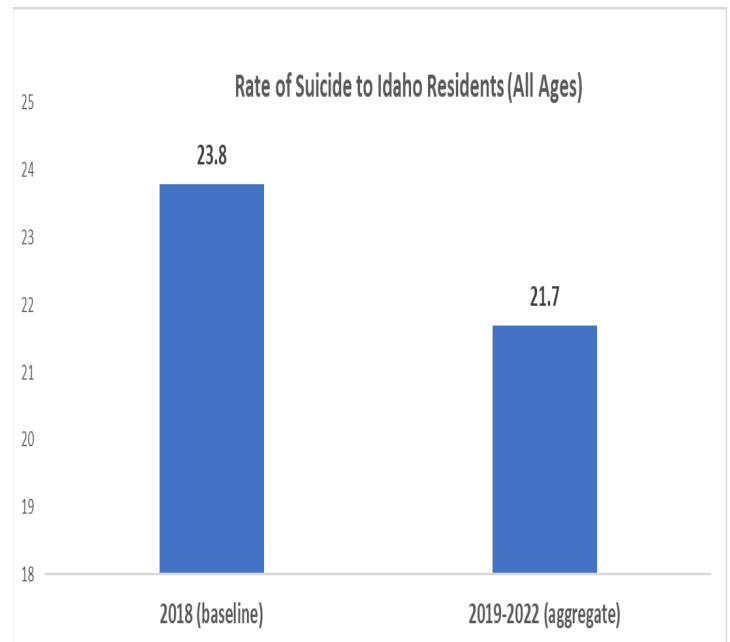
suicide rate in 2018. A 20% reduction in the baseline 2018 Idaho suicide rate of 23.8 per 100,000 residents equates to a rate of 19.0 or lower as the goal for 2025.

During the four-year period (2019-2022) since implementation of the Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan, the Idaho suicide rate improved to 23.8, a reduction of nearly 9% since the 2018 baseline. The 2022 rate increased from the prior year, which is largely attributed to a concerning increase in suicides among older (age 65+) adults. Still, measurable improvement during a period that brought unanticipated pandemic related stressors and plan disruptions is a hopeful sign that ISPAC's goal is in reach through continued statewide efforts and investments.

KPA tasks are outlined within the SFY 2023 suicide prevention action plan. KPA team areas of focus were as follows:

- Capacity Building and Infrastructure
- Suicide Care and Zero Suicide
- Communication and Outreach
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Data and Evaluation
- Advocacy and Policy

With support from SPP, each of the six KPA teams was responsible for directing activities that help accomplish the state plan goal of reducing the Idaho suicide rate by 20% by 2025 compared to the baseline statewide



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of Idaho Resident Suicide Deaths	418	365	421	387	441
Annual Suicide Rate	23.8	20.4	22.9	20.4	22.7

Rate: Number of deaths per 100,000 population
Source: Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, Division of Public Health, September 2023



The following is a summary of SPP's scope of work and notable accomplishments of ISPAC in support of the Idaho State Suicide Prevention Plan in SFY23, as well as continuing efforts in SFY24.

Capacity Building and Infrastructure

- SPP assisted the KPA team in collecting stakeholder input for Suicide Prevention Resource Center's state infrastructure survey. Results allow Idaho to compare our suicide prevention systems, programs, and approaches to that of other states and identify best practices and opportunities for improvement.
- SPP developed a suicide-prevention training packet for degree-seeking students in behavioral health disciplines attending Idaho colleges and universities.
- SPP promoted SafeSide® Prevention training professional and student clinician associations.

Suicide Care Models and Zero Suicide

- ISPAC selected the Zero Suicide model to equip health care systems with the tools and mechanisms needed for suicide safe care. This program promotes and implements effective clinical and professional practices for assessing and treating patients at risk for suicidal behaviors.
- In Year 2 (SFY23) the goal to establish four (4) Zero Suicide pilot sites in Idaho by the end of 2024 was achieved. As of November 2023, the following healthcare providers have committed to full program implementation:
 - St. Luke's Health System
 - Kootenai Health, Behavioral Health Department (Coeur d'Alene)
 - Kootenai Tribal Health Clinic (Bonners Ferry)
 - Lost Rivers Medical Center (Arco)

- SafeSide® Prevention training was completed by over 75 medical providers and interns at two rural healthcare agencies: Shoshone Medical Center (Kellogg) and Snake River Community Clinic (Lewiston). SafeSide® provides training for health and community organizations that aspire to Zero Suicide implementation.
- All Patients Safe training was completed by over 30 medical professionals throughout Idaho.
- Thanks to continued Joint Finance and Appropriation Committee funding to SPP, the ISPAC's Zero Suicide goals will be expanded in SFY24. The program extended an agreement with Education Development Center's Zero Suicide Institute for implementation of the core components of the Zero Suicide Framework. The contract scope covers project consulting and training for healthcare organizations piloting the Zero Suicide model in SFY24. Ongoing objectives for SFY24 are focused on recruiting additional pilot healthcare organizations and sponsoring Zero Suicide Institute programming and training workshops. SPP has allocated \$65,000 in SFY24 for Zero Suicide model recruiting, training, and professional facilitation.

Communications and Outreach

- DHW's marketing agency, RIESTER Mountain, updated outdoor advertising and social media campaign materials. Along with suicide prevention messaging, the campaign utilized national marketing materials offered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to promote the national 988 crisis lifeline and Idaho's lifeline partner, Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline.
- The placement of 10 outdoor (billboard) ads on Idaho roadways in August-October



2022 garnered 3,696,408 impressions. The Facebook and Instagram campaign garnered another 3,072,872 impressions.

- A separate statewide marketing campaign sponsored by DHW's Division of Behavioral Health promoted 988 lifeline awareness with messaging on outdoor, social media, and television during the first half of 2023.
- SPP sponsored four updated (4) "Rock Your Role" radio spots in English and Spanish on local stations throughout the state. Suicide awareness messages are tailored for Idaho's high priority population segments including rural residents, older adults, first responders, and youth.
- Suicide prevention educational and crisis support publications were distributed by SPP to partners and individuals around the state, at no charge to them via the Division of Public Health's *Health Tools* website.
- SPP has allocated \$105,100 to support messaging campaigns as well as for publication production and distribution in SFY24.

Training and Technical Assistance

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training® (ASIST) courses developed by LivingWorks were implemented throughout Idaho and were supported and promoted by SPP and the KPA team.
- Through the Dougy Center suicide support group training, twelve new Idaho facilitators were certified to lead grief/loss support groups.
- A list of trainers and training sessions across the state is regularly updated and accessible to the public on the SPP website.



- SPP supported a media training led by the Speedy Foundation and the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline to promote responsible and accurate portrayals of suicide in media reporting. More than 135 media professionals registered for this live remote training session in January 2023.
- SPP will continue to provide funding and staff support in SFY24 to expand access of evidence-based trainings such as postvention training created by the Dougy Center, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training®, and Crisis Intervention Team training.

Data and Evaluation

- SPP funded data collection and analysis through the Idaho Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to identify the prevalence of suicide attempts as well as sources of follow-up care. Data analysis identified Idaho adult segments at higher risk of suicide attempts as well as factors contributing to suicide attempts.



- SPP shared Idaho's Violent Death Reporting System data dashboard (www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/idaho-vdrs) at monthly stakeholder meetings, trainings, via newsletters and information briefings. The dashboard allows public access to official Idaho Vital Statistics suicide mortality data. Demographic detail is provided along with monthly updates on suicide counts in Idaho. These data summaries are instrumental in monitoring frequency of suicide, identifying priority population segments and measuring progress toward state plan goals.
- SPP is pursuing new data sources for Idaho youth mental health measures to replace the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which was discontinued in 2021.
- SPP has allocated \$20,000 in SFY24 to support Idaho data systems that will inform and evaluate suicide prevention programming.

Advocacy and Policy

- Governor Brad Little issued a Proclamation to promote National Suicide Prevention and Recovery Month by conveying the message "Connecting Help, Finding Hope, Building Recovery." SPP assisted the KPA team in organizing the signing event with local partners in Coeur D'Alene on September 10, 2022.
- ISPAC's KPA team defined advocacy and policy objectives to implement per the strategic initiatives outlined in the state plan.
- ISPAC assisted with legislation proposed during 2022 and 2023 sessions to provide support for transition to the national mental health crisis support lifeline (988).

Youth Suicide Prevention

SPP and State Department of Education updated an annual service agreement to deliver youth suicide prevention programming statewide.

The Jason Flatt Act (Idaho Title 33-136) requires the state board of education to: 1) adopt rules supporting suicide awareness and prevention training each year for public school personnel; 2) develop a list of approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of the statute; 3a) requires each public school district to adopt a policy on student suicide prevention; and 3b) requires the state department of education to develop and maintain a model policy to serve as a guide for schools.

SPP and State Board of Education worked collaboratively to research and identify programs for suicide prevention training in schools to share as approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of the Jason Flatt Act. This list of approved programs was finalized with representation from State Board of Education, SPP, and other ISPAC stakeholders with an interest in youth suicide prevention.

State Board of Education routinely engages third-party evaluators to ensure that school suicide prevention programming is evidence-based and that it effectively achieves performance objectives. The State Board is currently developing "Suicide Safer Idaho: A One-Stop Guide for Schools" to help school districts consolidate information and easily access support materials.

The Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program (IYSPP) is a partnership between the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) and DHW. IYSPP is funded by a subgrant from SPP and two federal grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). Federal funding granted to DHW's Maternal Child and Health



Program (MCH) provided additional support for statewide youth suicide prevention programs and training for Idaho's K-12 school communities including district and school staff, students, families, and community organizations that support other youth services. This partnership prioritizes opportunities to help districts and schools actualize their suicide safer prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. Programming and training are offered to youth and adults (i.e., teachers, school counselors, and school administration) at no or low cost to them.

During the 2022-23 academic year, IYSPP regional coordinators directly engaged with 70 Idaho secondary schools and 28 elementary schools (for a total of 98 schools) delivering support resources and prevention trainings.

Sources of Strength is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention and wellness program. Approximately **1,909 students** in grades 6-12 were trained as Peer Leaders in the Sources of Strength program. An additional **2,026 adults** received Suicide Prevention Fundamentals Instruction (SPFI)[™] gatekeeper training. Approximately **767 adults** were trained in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training, another evidence-based suicide prevention gatekeeper training.

Youth prevention priorities for SFY24 include continued support for K-12 schools that have previously implemented Sources of Strength programs. Sustainability and fidelity of trained schools will be achieved through Sources of Strength Booster trainings and grants for school district staff to become certified trainers. A planned partnership in SFY2024 with the University of Idaho's Project ECHO (Extension for Community Health Outcomes) will offer a customizable learning series on youth suicide prevention and provides continuing education credits for school district personnel. The IYSPP will collaborate with SPP to ensure that curriculum is tailored for and

aligned with statewide and local collectives' suicide prevention goals.

Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline Support

SPP has provided financial support to the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline since the program's inception. In SFY23, the availability of federal grants resulted in a substantial increase in subgrant funding to support staffing and training requirements related to the national crisis line transition to 988. Federal funding sources managed by partners in DHW's Division of Behavioral Health combined with the SPP state general fund allocation (\$448,000) allowed SPP to provide a total of \$3,687,139 in funding to the hotline in SFY23.

988 Transition

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 designated 988 as "the universal telephone number for reaching a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system" operating through the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline (ICSH) is the state's call center responding to Idaho's 988 calls and a member of the national Lifeline's network of over 200 crisis call centers across the country. In July 2022, 988 became the national calling code for behavioral health crisis support and is intended to be the mental health emergency equivalent to 911. Help seekers may reach the hotline by calling, texting, or through internet chat. As of May 2023, ICSH also responds to all crisis calls routed by DHW's Division of Behavioral Health.

The essential promise of 988 was defined by stakeholders as "someone to call, someone to respond, and a place to go." Fulfilling that promise requires ongoing collaboration and support from national and state agencies including Substance Abuse and Mental Health



Services Administration, Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Public Health, and Division of Medicaid, as well as our Idaho Legislature.

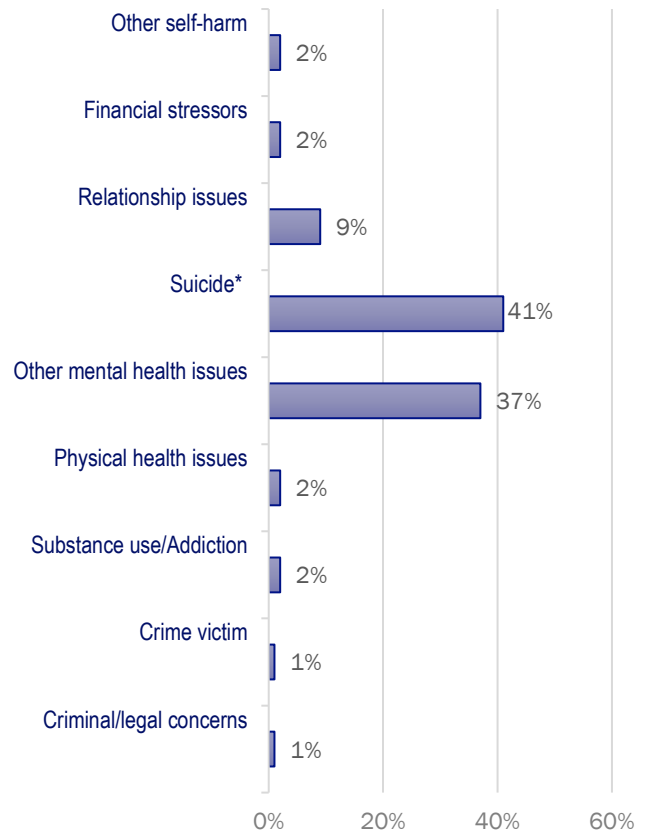
In the first week following the 988 rollout in July 2022, ICSH experienced a 36% increase in contacts from help seekers and call volume has remained steady since. In the last quarter of SFY23 (April-June), ICSH responded to 5,247 calls, texts, and chats in all regions of Idaho, ICSH has successfully managed the higher call volume through upgrades to staffing, training, and technology.

ICSH performance standards are monitored by SPP and SAMHSA. Following increases to call volume, intermittent technical difficulties, and staff capacity challenges, the in-state response rate fell to 82%, slightly below the goal of 90%. Calls that are not answered by an Idaho hotline operator are routed to the National Lifeline call center network for immediate support.

DHW programs promoted public awareness of 988 and ICSH services through continuous marketing campaigns in SFY23, including outdoor advertising on Idaho roadways, social media campaigns, and television and radio spots. ICSH promoted 988 by widely distributing wallet cards and bookmarks, and through community events such as a Military Veterans Suicide Awareness Ride & Rally (April 2023) and Idaho Gives Park Party (May 2023).

In April 2022, SPP was awarded a two-year federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Thanks to Year 2 spending approval granted by the Idaho Legislature, \$324,000 in new federal funds were directed to ICSH operations to support higher demand for crisis support services in SFY24. Sustained funding is essential to allow ever-growing numbers of Idahoans to receive the lifesaving support they seek.

Reasons for Contacting the Hotline¹



¹ Reasons were self-reported

*Suicide includes callers who mentioned current ideation, current suicide plan, concerns for a third-party, attempt or loss survivor, and past ideation

Highlights from the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline 2nd Quarter Report (April-June 2023)

- In compliance with National Suicide Prevention Lifeline protocol and evidence-based clinical practices, protocols, crisis responders use the Columbia Suicide Severity Risk Scale (C-SSRS) to assess the severity of suicide risk.



- During the second quarter, there were 2,755 contacts screened, resulting in 365 callers assessed as high risk for suicide or suicide in progress. ICSH dispatches 911 welfare checks and makes referrals to mobile crisis teams and local crisis for those at imminent risk.

Funding for Local Suicide Prevention Collectives

SPP awarded subgrants to all seven (7) public health districts in SFY23 to establish and support local suicide prevention collectives. The subgrants allow each district to build local capacity to develop and implement suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities. Funds support a part-time suicide prevention coordinator in each district who is responsible for organizing and coordinating a local collective of individuals and organizations to develop local goals that are aligned with the Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan. Local coordinators attend monthly Learning and Action Network meetings led by SPP staff to share best practices, solve problems, and connect with resources.

The subgrant scope of work requires each local collective to conduct a local analysis to assist the district and local counties in identifying gaps in their resources, policies, training, and services related to prevention, intervention, and postvention which will be used to inform and guide suicide prevention efforts; work with local school districts and State Department of Education to ensure suicide prevention plans are in place and active; develop a data collection plan to ensure timely local suicide data; and support and evaluate local suicide prevention outreach events.

As part of their local suicide prevention plans, each Public Health District distributed loss survivor support packets, promoted lethal

means safety (by disseminating prescription lockboxes, drug deactivating pouches, and gun trigger locks), facilitated support groups, and participated in outreach events to provide suicide prevention education and share resources. Local collectives promoted Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month in September 2022 through social media and Public Health District websites. Many hosted local events such as remembrance walks and survivor dinners to build community and encourage healing conversations.

Highlights of recent accomplishments:

- **Panhandle Health District** held suicide awareness and prevention walks in Bonner, Shoshone, Kootenai, and Benewah counties. The Kootenai County walk had over 440 attendees and raised over \$12,000, almost all of which was donated to the Veterans Outreach Center in St. Maries to support a veterans center where past and current service members can receive fellowship, help, and resources. Kootenai Health's Behavioral Health department is a pilot site for Zero Suicide and has committed to integrating the model's approach into their clinical practice.
- **North Central Health District** promoted Drug Take Back events led by Lewiston Police Department. The local collective participated in National Prescription Drug Take back day, organizing drop-off sites at Lewiston Police Department, Cottonwood City Hall, Troy Lions Club, and local businesses. They distributed more than 200 gun trigger locks at community tabling events, gun stores/ranges, and other local sites. The district sponsored Nez Perce County residents' enrollment in Dougy Center postvention training, which led to the creation of an adult suicide support group in Lewiston.
- **Southwest District Health** collaborated on a district wide grant application to fund development of a Safe Teen Assessment Center and Youth Crisis Center. They



promoted awareness and utilization of the Western Idaho Community Crisis Center among community residents, law enforcement agencies and healthcare organizations. In addition to providing gun locks and suicide prevention materials at local drug take-back day events, the local coordinator partnered with the Idaho Harm Reduction Project to install the first harm reduction vending machine in Southwest Idaho.

- **Central District Health** updated their Suicide Prevention website with content on risk factors, protective factors, 988/Crisis & Suicide Lifeline promotional messaging, and to provide support resources. The district engaged Peppershock Media to create a marketing campaign promoting the Veteran's Crisis Lifeline on local billboards, television, print, and social media. They offered several community trainings including QPR, ASIST, and Mental Health First Aid for priority populations such as youth, clinicians, and faith leaders.
- **South Central District Health** supports three local suicide prevention coalitions and two mental health work groups. The teams work collaboratively to pool resources in fulfillment of their collective's unified suicide prevention plan goals. Recent community events included gatekeeper trainings, loss survivor support groups, and Mental Health Night at Chick-fil-A. In September, the collective organized the "Bands on the Bridge" awareness event where survivors and other advocates tied ribbons imprinted with hopeful messages to the railing of Perrine Bridge. Their website offers suicide awareness and prevention materials including "Know the Warning Signs of Mental Distress."
- **Southeastern Idaho Public Health** collaborated with Eastern Idaho Public Health to sponsor an annual conference titled, "Connecting Communities to Save Lives." Headlined by internationally

recognized suicidologist Dr. Thomas Joiner, the conference offered continuing education credits (CEU/CME) to healthcare practitioners. Learning objectives included clinical practices for assessing and treating those at risk for suicidal behaviors. The district coordinator delivered informational packets to each school in their district. Packets contained Idaho Crisis and Suicide Hotline (988) wallet cards, QPR training resources, school postvention policy documents, and other suicide prevention education materials. Among many other notable achievements, the coordinator assembled nationally endorsed safe media reporting guidelines and disseminated to local media outlets.

- **Eastern Idaho Public Health** sponsored and promoted suicide prevention trainings (including QPR, ASIST, Sources of Strength and Mental Health First Aid) with a goal of reaching residents in some of Idaho's most geographically remote regions. The district partnered with College of Eastern Idaho and Blue Cross of Idaho to offer local prescription drug take back events. Their promotion of the annual suicide prevention conference sponsored jointly with Southeastern Idaho Public Health resulted attendance by 230 health professionals and two local news media outlets. Also notable, the district supported the 2023 launch of Idaho's first Youth Crisis Center in Idaho Falls.

Question, Persuade, and Refer Training

SPP contracted with Whistle Communications to provide Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) gatekeeper training workshops via DHW Learning Hub employee training portal. Virtual trainings were offered to all DHW employees (full time, part time, and temporary). The goal of training at least 1,000 employees to recognize signs of suicide risk and learn how to intervene and refer individuals for care was exceeded. As of December 2022, 1,320



employees (or 47% of DHW workforce) completed this life-saving training. This was achieved through ongoing promotion through DHW internal communications channels including DHW Connection employee newsletter, banner ads on Inside DHW (the Department's intranet portal) plus periodic updates from the Director and Human Resources staff.

Whistle Communications provided a complete evaluation on QPR training effectiveness. Pre-training surveys found that nearly all workshop participants have known someone who was struggling with thoughts of suicide. Prior to completing the training, fewer than 1-in-4 knew how to recognize signs of suicide risk or how to appropriately respond. Following the training workshop, 9-in-10 reported being aware or extremely aware of recognizing signs. Similar numbers (nearly 9-in-10) reported knowing what to say and what to do when someone shows signs of suicide risk after completing the training.

Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

SPP staff is supporting Idaho's participation in the Governor's Challenge, ensuring alignment with Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan goals. Co-led by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and SAMHSA, and championed by Idaho's veteran and military affiliated organizations, this initiative is focused on strategies for reducing suicide risk among service veterans, service members, and their families.

In alignment with the national effort, priority areas for the four year-project period are:

1. Identifying Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) and screening for suicide risk.
2. Promoting connectedness and improving care transitions.
3. Increasing lethal means safety and safety planning.

Future Direction

Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan 2024-2028 and Governor's Executive Order

In September 2023, ISPAC convened a special meeting at the Idaho State Museum in Boise to review progress toward the current Idaho Suicide Prevention Plan (2019-2023) and to update the plan for 2024-2028. Nearly 60 stakeholders from across Idaho, including past, present, and future ISPAC members participated and contributed input to the next five-year strategic plan. ISPAC will finalize the updated five year Suicide Prevention Plan and annual workplan by early CY2024.

Governor Brad Little joined the retreat to sign Executive Order 2023-04 and a proclamation to further support suicide prevention in Idaho. The executive order ratified ISPAC as an entity that is accountable to the Governor's Office and further formalizes membership. The proclamation declared September as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Idaho and publicized the message, "Connecting Help, Finding Hope, Building a Life Worth Living." DHW issued a press release, and the event was covered by several Idaho news media outlets, further promoting public awareness of statewide suicide prevention efforts.