



Alaska Division of Behavioral Health Report to SSPC

By James Gallanos, DBH Program Coordinator
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Below is a summary of suicide prevention projects, programs and services that the DBH, Prevention and Early Intervention Services is coordinating throughout the state.

Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention Grants

We are getting close to wrapping up year two within our three year grant cycle. Our next grantee evaluation results will be submitted to DBH in January. Here are some current updates.

Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition, Juneau Youth Services

Suicide Funds \$ 286,512
Total Grant Award \$286,512

The coalition has been busy with several projects one of which is the implementation of the Sources of Strength peer led initiative. The youth leaders chosen are moving much quicker than anticipated to develop their ideas and activities to promote their school and community strengths. Schools, teachers and parents are buying into the approach and the team is excited to transition into the next phase of the project in the fall with additional training and school resources. Unfortunately there has also been several suicides in the Juneau area and the postvention team has been active and responsive as they develop their survivor resources and protocols.

Mountain Village, Youth Advisory Group, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Suicide Funds \$ 65,000
Total Grant Award \$65,000

This grant has been reissued with the University of Alaska, Center for Alaska Native Research taking on the community's grant management and coordination responsibilities. Unfortunately Mountain Village had yet another suicide last month and a recent tragic shooting of a 5 year old girl. The community requires a lot of support right now and the grant will require more time, energy and assistance in the near future. Past men's and women's regional gatherings have had great turnouts from area villages and plans are to continue these in the future.

Nulato Life Project, City of Nulato

Suicide Funds \$ 33,158
Total Grant Award \$ 55,263

The City of Nulato is working closely with the Tribe and more recently with Tanana Chiefs Conference. This grant has primarily been activity based activities with children and requires additional supports to address many of the community's concerns with drug and alcohol use and also suicide. Due to a recent suicide death, TCC has provided some training as well as held recent Sources of Strength presentation hoping to introduce the model into the community. Plans are to collaborate with TCC more closely to support community outcomes that address these more serious behavioral health issues.

Petersburg Mental Health Services, Petersburg

Suicide Funds \$ 36,505
Total Grant Award \$73,01

“Choose to Live” Task Force has adopted the Understanding Suicide: Building Intervention Skills Presentation for first responders in February. They are also working closer with the school district in providing suicide prevention awareness presentations and the Prime For Life course which is alcohol prevention curriculum designed for youth and adults.

We Are All in this Together, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks

Suicide Funds \$ 37,500
Total Grant Award \$150,000

TCC is moving much of their efforts with village wellness teams in the Sources of Strength model, digital storytelling, and other youth led initiatives. More recently, youth have created posters that support community “Hope, Help, and Strength”. They have also incorporated the American Indian Life Skills curriculum and have adapted it for their region,. The curriculum is promoting a youth engagement approach that teaches cultural values and life skills. They recognize that youth leadership is strongly needed to build a generational approach towards community wellness.

Alaska Careline 1-877-266-HELP (4357)

In January, DBH awarded Careline a contract amendment for an additional \$125,000 for implementing and maintaining their “4help” text service option for the next three years. The text platform will enhance call center services and increase the current contract with the Interior Center for Non-Violent Living, Alaska Careline FY 2013-2015.

“Alaska Careline”, Interior Center for Non-Violent Living

Suicide Funds \$ 144, 057
Postvention Funds \$ 100,000
Treatment Funds \$ 55,943
GLS Text funds \$25,000
Total Award \$325,000

Careline answered 1,664 calls this past quarter (Jan-March 2013). This is slightly below last quarter and appears that the call volume has leveled out since increase we observed in 2012. A new media and information campaign promoting the Careline “4help” text line has been developed (enclosed). Prevention Pays is a program from Educational Messaging Services out of California and have developed similar campaigns have shown to be effective in increasing youth help-seeking behaviors in other states including Nevada and New Jersey. We plan to pilot the materials among interior villages during the Winter Bear tour in the Fairbanks region. Future plans are to redesign the materials after the pilot period this fall in time for the new school year.

Garrett Lee Smith, Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project SAMHSA grant

We are now through our first nine months of the Garrett Lee Smith, Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project FY2013-FY2015. As described in earlier reports, the program will shift resources towards suicide prevention training, coordination and technical assistance to community groups, agencies and health providers that demonstrate a need for as well as commitment to suicide prevention training. This will allow increased capacity for agencies, groups and coalitions that have been newly formed or who are currently working to enhance a variety of community based suicide prevention trainings.

Key Activities:

- Revision of the Alaska Gatekeeper QPR Training Model is almost complete. We will be concentrating our efforts on the 2-4 hour version that will now have standardized training criteria while also allowing for customization for diverse groups which has traditionally been the strength of the model.
- Contract with Trust Training Cooperative (TTC) to work directly with groups/communities to help tailor training needs and resources utilizing the “broker” model. Planning is taking place to work with Division of Juvenile Justice to begin implementing the model with juvenile probation staff and school resource officers.
- Careline utilization and promotion of texting services, *Text “4help”*, to increase access of youth oriented services. Pilot of promotional material underway.

Alaska Postvention Project



Key Activities:

- ***Connect Postvention Training:*** Next training of trainers for this model will occur on June 25-28th, 2013 in Anchorage and will focus on school and clergy/faith based postvention. The contract with Trust Training Cooperative (TTC) also included a provision for Connect training which will help to support trainers and communities (sub-contracts) in delivering these needed resources.
- ***Healing Words:*** This will be an evening event held in Anchorage on June 26th. Will be open to the public and media. Will include a survivor of suicide loss speaker “*Survivor Voices*” and also a presentation by NAMI on how to talk about suicide safely to best promote healing and suicide prevention. Options to include ceremony such as dancing, drumming or other memorial activity or private talking circle after the event.
- ***Postvention DVD:*** The purpose of this project is to seek a media development firm to produce, direct and film media based materials to address suicide *postvention* in Alaska. *Postvention*, for the purposes of this project, is defined as those actions or interventions that occur AFTER a suicide death. The proposed materials will include several mediums for the purposes of offering a menu of postvention resources tailored for specific audiences and will encompass three formats, 1) reproducible DVD , 2) broadcast ready TV and or radio programs 3) training clips. The media firm must have or be able to guarantee state-wide broadcast, webcast or radio distribution of the programs appropriate for general audience.
- ***Survivors of Suicide Loss Ad Hoc Group:*** A 1 ½ or 2 day gathering in or around late August. Invite 6-8 survivors of suicide loss (only survivors will be invited) ad hoc group to review postvention in Alaska and made recommendations to DHSS based on the goals and strategies of the suicide prevention plan.

In Progress:

- Last year, DBH worked with an advisory group as well as SSPC staff to develop the Alaska Postvention Resource Guide, *Helping Our Communities Heal*, and the Alaska Postvention Toolkit which included a suicide survivor resource packet. These materials are currently being revised to include new look and design, how to use the guide, new information from Alaska Troopers and Medical Examiner's office, and concrete information on what to expect in the first 72 hours e.g., a timeline with concrete examples of how Alaskan communities have effectively responded. New design work from PIT was to be released late summer/early fall to include revised community resource guide and brochure. Currently delayed due to other PIT projects.
- We still need help in developing performance measures so we know how effective postvention resources are. Ideas are under consideration, however is very challenging to learn how we are being effective unless a very strategic and sensitive approach can be used. Examples include: How many agencies/providers are engaged in postvention planning? How many agencies/groups are entering into MOA/MOU on postvention protocol agreements? To what degree are families getting needed help for bereavement counseling, support for suicide clean up and decontamination, help with funeral and or memorial services that follow safe messaging guidelines?
- DBH recently received word that the Alaskan Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) will be completing the *Doorway to a Sacred Place*, culturally based traditional healing model for full implementation by the end of this year. Initial development of this model started approximately three years ago and has experienced significant delays.