



## Alaska Division of Behavioral Health Report to SSPC

By James Gallanos, DBH Program Coordinator  
 Dated August 22nd, 2013

*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 recently completed year two of our three year grant cycle. Most of the grantees have submitted evaluation results. Here is an updated summary of activities, identified outcomes and results for the bi-annual reporting period Jan-June 2013.

<i>"Juneau Suicide Prevention Task Force", Juneau Youth Services</i>		Suicide Funds \$ 286,512 Total Grant Award \$286,512
<u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public awareness/training "Understanding Suicide" and other public awareness activities in the Juneau community.</li> <li>• Maintains websites, <a href="http://www.juneausuicideprevention.org">www.juneausuicideprevention.org</a> and <a href="http://www.juneamentalhealth.org">www.juneamentalhealth.org</a>.</li> <li>• Implements Signs of Suicide (SOS) and depression/suicide ideation screenings in high schools/alternative school and booster curriculum for 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders.</li> <li>• Sources of Strength curriculum in high and middle schools.</li> <li>• Provides behavioral health support/counseling to at-risk students in all middle and high schools.</li> <li>• Community-wide postvention outreach and support.</li> </ul>	<u>Outcomes</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the ability of students to identify their self-harm risk and seek services to reduce the risk of suicide.</li> <li>2. Increase the ability of school personnel to meet the personal safety needs of middle and high school students.</li> <li>3. Increase the awareness of the general community and targeted audiences regarding suicide prevention and intervention services.</li> <li>4. Increase the ability to respond to families and community members impacted by a suicide</li> </ol>	
<u>Summary of Results: (Jan-June 2013)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the <b>69 Sources of Strength Peer Leaders</b>, <b>94%</b> agreed or strongly agreed that "group of peer leaders can change things for the better".</li> <li>• <b>88% of high school students</b> and <b>77% of middle school students</b> reported that it is a good idea to ask someone if they are suicidal if you are worried that they might be. This is a <b>15% and 7% increase</b> respectively as a result of the Signs of Suicide program. This also shows that the gains are sustained across ninth grade students who participate.</li> <li>• <b>1,594 "unique page hits"</b> of individuals accessing <a href="http://juneausuicideprevention.org">juneausuicideprevention.org</a> and <b>2,663 "unique page hits"</b> of individuals accessing <a href="http://juneamentalhealth.org">juneamentalhealth.org</a>. This is an <b>13% and 16% increase</b> respectively since January showing improvement of the awareness of the general community.</li> </ul>		
<i>Youth Advisory Group. Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council, City of Mountain Village</i>		Suicide Funds \$ 65,000 Total Grant Award \$65,000
<u>Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building capacity grant to identify suicide prevention needs, resources, capacity and community prevention plan.</li> </ul>	<u>Outcomes</u> <p>Community prevention plan has been drafted and is in various stages of implementation.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate multi-community men’s and women’s groups fostering inter-generational, cultural connection, and belonging.</li> <li>Alternative, meaningful and cultural activities that support Alaska Native values.</li> <li>Traditional healing groups.</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluation plan is in progress.</p>
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Summary of Results: (Jan-June 2013)

**NOTE:** UAF Center for Alaska Native Health Research is the new grantee administering the Mountain Village suicide prevention grant utilizing the Qasgiq model, Qungasvik (Toolbox) to engage cultural practices as vehicle to teach Yup’ik values and promote protective factors that foster reasons for life and well being with youth and their families.

*"Nulato Life Project"* City of Nulato Suicide Funds \$ 33,158  
Total Grant Award \$ 55,263

<p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth mentoring.</li> <li>Teen center activities.</li> <li>Traditional Athabaskan cultural activities</li> <li>Subsistence life skills.</li> <li>Outdoor and other recreational activities.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase healthy lifestyle choices for youth</li> <li>Prevent self-destructive behaviors including suicide.</li> <li>Reduce teen substance abuse by engaging them in alternative activities.</li> <li>Increase cultural retention through skills development.</li> </ol>
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Summary of Results: (Jan-June 2013)

**NOTE:** Nulato has been without a community project coordinator for the past year until recently they hired someone to coordinate and monitor activities. Activities were being organized by the tribe, however were not consistent and were based on available people and resources. New efforts are underway to get the program on track.

*Petersburg Mental Health Services, Petersburg* Suicide Funds \$ 36,505  
Total Grant Award \$73,01

<p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized suicide prevention coalition</li> <li>Implements Prime for Life, a drug and alcohol prevention education program for middle school students and parents.</li> <li>Suicide awareness activities, media/radio.</li> <li>Alaska Gatekeeper Training and will conduct screening, identification and referral for suicide.</li> <li>Participates in Community Action Planning team to provide postvention resources for both survivors of suicide loss and the community as a whole.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase community’s knowledge of signs and symptoms of suicidal individuals.</li> <li>Increase awareness of social attitudes and beliefs that encourage high risk substance use community wide.</li> </ol>
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Summary of Results: (Jan-June 2013)

- 52% of those trained** in the “Understanding Suicide “curriculum report an increase their knowledge of signs and symptoms of suicidal individuals including asking the person, “Are you thinking of killing yourself” as the most appropriate response to a suicidal person.
- As a result of the “Prime for Life” curriculum , participants reported a **77% increase** in knowledge about high risk substance use behavior.
- Coalition member trained in the *Alaska Gatekeeper Training: A QPR Approach*.
- Monitoring court and District Attorney enforcement drug and alcohol laws and ordinances including tracking adults sentenced to restricted access to bars and restraints serving alcohol.

Strategies

- Develop wellness teams with the region’s Alaska Native villages.
- Will be implementing suicide prevention and postvention protocols, provide training among key leaders, health aids and in schools to include adult advisors and peer leaders.
- Will implement digital storytelling with youth.
- Develop and implement peer led media/awareness campaign “Hope, Help and Strength”.
- Wellness team training in new Alaska Gatekeeper QPR Approach, MHFA, SafeTALK and ASIST

Outcomes

1. Increase knowledge of suicide prevention and how to help at-risk peers.
2. Decrease “codes of silence” that may inhibit help-seeking behavior.
3. Increase connectedness between at-risk youths and caring adults.

Summary of Results: (Jan-June 2013)

- There are now **11 communities** that have a Sources of Strength (SoS) Peer Leader (PL) teams.
- Peer leaders showed a **14% decrease** in understanding that people who are suicidal can’t be stopped. However, **12% and 29 %** increases were found in students who disagreed that people should keep feelings of depression to themselves or that suicide is a possible solution to ones’ problems,
- Peer leaders responses indicated a **decrease of 36%** saying they turned to a **trusted adult** about a problem in the past 3 months. However, they indicated a **20% increase** in connecting a friend to an adult who may be suicidal and also a **42% increase** in their ability to identify an adult who could help.

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

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

FY14 Suicide Funds \$ 144, 057  
Postvention Funds \$ 100,000  
Treatment Funds \$ 55,943  
GLS Text funds \$50,000  
Total Award \$350,000

*Careline answered 1,474 calls this past quarter (April-June 2013). This is slightly below last two quarters and appears that the call volume has leveled out from the cal volume we observed in 2012. A new media and information campaign promoting the Careline“4help” text line has been launched. Currently the text line receives approximately 20 text s a month which is low, however it is slowly increasing as text promotion increases especially as schools start up in the fall. DBH is working with Careline to better centralize and coordinate with our partners all the public information, logos, and media based campaign.*

**Garrett Lee Smith, Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project SAMHSA grant**

We completed our first year 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.

### Summary of Activities:

- Revision of the Alaska Gatekeeper QPR Training Model (2 hr) is now complete.
- Two training of trainers were completed, one in July with clinical and supervisory staff from the Division of Juvenile Justice, and one in early August with a variety of trainers from Anchorage, Bethel and Fairbanks. Agency representatives include Alaska Youth and Family Network, Alaska Peer Support Consortium, McCann Treatment Center, Frontier Safety, Alaska Children's Services, and Volunteers of America.
- Future trainers will include staff from Tanana Chiefs Conference, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, 4H, Nenana School District, and Central Peninsula Health.
- Careline utilization and promotion of texting services, Text "**4help to 839863**", to increase access of youth oriented services. Pilot of promotional material continues including development of a school engagement package that will be made available for the fall.

### **Alaska Postvention Project**



### Summary of Activities:

- **Connect Postvention Training:** Training occurred on June 25-28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Anchorage and trained 16 new participants with a focus on school and clergy/faith based postvention.
- **Postvention DVD:** Currently reviewing two proposals for a media development firm to produce, direct and film media based materials to address suicide *postvention* in Alaska. The 30 minute DVD will include postvention resources tailored for specific audiences, both rural and urban 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 moved ahead to early December. Invite 6-8 survivors of suicide loss, ad hoc group to review postvention in Alaska and made recommendations to DHSS based on the goals and strategies of the suicide prevention plan. Will also use the opportunity to work with DVD media development firm as a focus group to support and guide the DVD content.

### In Progress:

- **The Alaska Postvention Resource Guide, Helping Our Communities Heal:** The Alaska Postvention Toolkit which includes the guide and suicide survivor resource packet are currently being produced and printed. Revisions 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.

- ***Doorway to a Sacred Place*** : Request for seeking a contract with ANTHC has been submitted and awaiting approval. Three pilot communities will be identified for the first year of a three year contract. The manual is currently being finalized for print and efforts to seek support for evaluation from the Native American Center for Excellence, Services to Science Initiative has begun.