



## Press Release: 6/2/2021

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## Governor Signs Historic Legislation to Ensure Clinicians Get Training in Suicide Prevention

### Help Is Available

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, help is available. Call 800-273-8255 to reach free, confidential support 24/7 from Lines for Life. [Visit the Lines for Life website](#) for a full list of help services. En español: 888-628-9454. TTY: 800-799-4TTY (4889).

Youthline, a service of Lines for Life, is a peer crisis and help line for those 21 and younger. Teens are available to help daily, 4 to 10 p.m. Pacific Time (off-hour calls answered by adult call counselors). Call 877-968-8491, text teen2teen to 839863, or chat online at the [YouthLine website](#).

Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 with the message Home for support any time, night or day.

See [Crisis Services by Oregon County](#) and a list of crisis lines on OHA's website at [https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/REVENTIONWELLNESS/SAFELIVING/SUICIDEPREVENTION/Pages/crisislines.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/SAFELIVING/SUICIDEPREVENTION/Pages/crisislines.aspx)

Gov. Kate Brown signed HB2315 yesterday, requiring Oregon counselors, therapists, peer support professionals, and others in the Oregon's behavioral health workforce to receive training on how to assess and treat suicide. As of 2019, Oregon had the 9<sup>th</sup> highest suicide rate in the nation, underlining the urgent need for a behavioral health workforce prepared to help people who are struggling with despair.

Even though one in two psychiatrists and one in five psychologists will experience losing a patient to suicide (Oordt, et al., 2005), "there are no nationally set standards or guidelines requiring mental health professionals to be trained to address and treat suicidal ideation and behavior in their clients, either during education and certification or during their professional career." *American Foundation Suicide Prevention Issue Brief State Laws: Training for Health Professionals in Suicide Assessment, Treatment, and Management*

Too often, when a person struggling with thoughts of suicide seeks a therapist, they have difficulty finding someone who knows how to support them and help them through a suicidal crisis. Many have compared this gap in education to sending someone to a doctor who doesn't know how to assess for a heart attack and provide CPR.

This legislation, sponsored by the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Lines for Life, and introduced by **Rep. Andrea Salinas**, will ensure that every Oregonian receiving care from a behavioral health specialist sees a professional competent in suicide risk assessment, treatment and management (practitioners would take a minimum of 2 Hours Every 2 Years, or 3 Hours every 3 Years, as Determined by Licensing/Certifying Board.)



## Provide the Right Help at the Right Time to Save Lives

During testimony at the Oregon House Behavioral Health Committee, several people described how, despite years of seeking help, they were never asked by clinicians about their thoughts of suicide. They also described the relief they felt when they finally visited a clinician with the skills and insight to support them.

"As someone who lives with chronic suicidal ideations, the passage of this piece of legislation allows me and others who live with mental health conditions to no longer have to question whether or not a provider is educated with the skills it takes to address suicidal thoughts and actions. It is a gigantic leap forward in regards to preventing and ultimately lowering the suicide rate in Oregon." *Angela Perry, Board Chair of the Oregon chapter of the American Foundation to Prevent Suicide*

"As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and concerned citizen, I recognize that my colleagues in the behavioral health workforce are often unprepared to give 'the right help at the right time' to people who are thinking about ending their lives. The good news is that when counselors, peer providers, therapists, psychologists and social workers are trained to identify the signs of suicidality and how to support people through one or more suicidal crises, they Literally Save Lives." *Galli Murray, LCSW, Chair Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide*

### Who We Are

The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide is working to prevent youth suicide and strengthen suicide intervention and postvention policy and services across the state. It was established as an advisory to the Oregon Health Authority in 2016 when the [Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan](#) (YSIPP) was submitted to the legislature by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Members are appointed by OHA and include leaders from the public and private sectors, legislators, subject matter experts, suicide attempt and loss survivors, and young people from across the state of Oregon.

### It's An Essential Part of Oregon's Suicide Prevention Strategy

A workforce of behavioral health providers that are confident, competent and equipped to provide the best care to those who experience suicide ideation is an essential part of Oregon's suicide prevention strategy. "To ensure Oregon's workforce is meeting the needs of people most at-risk, the law should require suicide prevention education in professional training programs and continuing education for key professions." *Suicide-related training for medical and behavioral health providers, Data Report to the Legislature, Oregon Health Authority, October 2020*