

fact sheet

Suicide in Colorado



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The 1999 *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide*, introduces a blueprint for reducing suicide.¹ The first step outlined in the blueprint is awareness. The purpose of this fact sheet is to promote awareness of the problem of suicide in Colorado.

Suicide Deaths: Colorado 2000 Vital Statistics Data

Overall, suicide is Colorado's eighth leading cause of death. There were 612 suicide deaths reported in Colorado in 2000, an average of 51 suicides per month.

- ☛ Since 1995, the suicide rate has ranged from a high of 18.1 deaths per 100,000 in 1996, to a low of 13.6 deaths per 100,000 in 1999
- ☛ Among all injury deaths occurring in Colorado, suicide is the second leading cause of death, just below motor vehicle fatalities
- ☛ Suicide is the leading cause of intentional injury deaths in Colorado
- ☛ Suicide death rates vary by age group, sex, and race/ethnicity in Colorado:
 - ➔ The suicide rate increases with age and is highest for those 65 and older (averaging 24.6 per 100,000 between 1996 and 2000)
 - ➔ The suicide rate is over 4 times higher for men compared to women (24.2 per 100,000 and 5.9 per 100,000, respectively)
 - ➔ At 17.2 per 100,000, white/non-Hispanics have the highest suicide rate by race/ethnicity, while Asians have the lowest (5.3 per 100,000)
- ☛ The age-adjusted rate of suicide death in Colorado is consistently above the national average
- ☛ 57 percent of suicide deaths in Colorado involve the use of a firearm

1-800-SUICIDE You can help save a life.

Suicide Ideation and Suicide Attempts: Survey Results

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is the largest ongoing telephone health survey in the world. It is conducted in all 50 states, 3 territories, and the District of Columbia. Adults ages 18 and older are selected using random digit dialing sampling techniques. The Colorado BRFSS started in 1990.

Questions about suicide ideation and suicide attempts were added to the Colorado BRFSS in 1996, 1997, and 1998. The results show that the characteristics associated with suicide ideation and suicide death differ. Among the findings:

- An estimated 87,500 (3 percent) Colorado adults seriously considered suicide in the past year
- Suicide ideation prevalence among adults is highest among those ages 18 to 24, and lowest among those ages 65 and above
- Women are 50 percent more likely than men to contemplate suicide
- Colorado adults with annual household incomes less than \$15,000 are over 3 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than those with annual household incomes \$25,000 or higher
- Suicide ideation among adults who are married or partnered is estimated at 2 percent, compared to approximately 6 percent for those who have never been married, or who are separated, divorced, or widowed
- 11 percent of unemployed adults seriously considered suicide in the past year, compared to 3 percent of those employed
- Of those adults who thought about suicide, 8,200 (9 percent) attempted suicide
- According to the Colorado Health and Hospital Association, 2,469 patients were discharged following suicide attempts in 2000

Additional Information

For more information about suicide in Colorado, contact the Office of Suicide Prevention, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at 303-692-2560, or www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/Suicide/suicidehom.asp.

For more information about Colorado Vital Statistics or the Colorado BRFSS, visit the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Web site at www.cdphe.state.co.us and click on *Health and Disease Statistics*, or contact the Health Statistics Section at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 303-692-2160

References

¹ U.S. Public Health Service, *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide*. Washington, DC: 1999.