

Proclaim September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Los Angeles County

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and while the Los Angeles County (County) Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Public Health (DPH) have the responsibility to take every measure possible to prevent suicides and treat people who experience suicidal ideation, it is important to uplift the role that everyone in the County plays in suicide prevention. Suicide is a complex problem that requires collaborative solutions at multiple levels, including by individuals, families, communities, and systems of care. Too many people are impacted by suicide – suicide is the leading cause of death among all age groups in LA County, and in 2022, suicide was the 14th leading cause of death among all residents in LA County and the 3rd leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 24. For each suicide death in 2022, there were six people medically treated for a suicide attempt. Suicide attempts and suicide deaths also impact the health of others, including family, friends, colleagues, and the community. When an individual dies by suicide, those close to them and the surrounding community often experience the effects of sudden loss, such as sadness, anger, guilt, and depression. The healing journey for those who have experienced this kind of loss

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often requires a unique treatment approach called suicide postvention for loss survivors.

Suicide Prevention Month helps raise awareness and promote education, training, and engagement for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in the County. DPH works to improve the identification of youth suicides and suicide attempts in hospitals and emergency rooms, with the goal of using the data to develop, strengthen, and expand local crisis response programs that provide support after a young person's suicide death or attempt. DPH also works to increase community knowledge of warning signs and intervention strategies. Over the last two years, DPH has trained over 100 individuals on Mental Health First Aid and delivered mental health education to over 500 youth who attended the Rise, Reclaim, Restore Youth Mental Health Summits. This past April, DPH launched a [firearm safety campaign](#) to highlight the importance of keeping firearms locked and unloaded, especially in the home. As part of this campaign DPH is distributing [60,000 free gun locks via mail or pick up](#). Recognizing the barriers that many face in removing firearms from a loved one in crisis, DPH has also hired Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) System Navigators to assist community members with filing petitions to remove a firearm from the home during moments of danger or concern.

Throughout the year, DMH works to raise awareness about suicide prevention by providing Suicide Prevention and Postvention education and trainings to the community through various programs such as the Partners in Suicide Prevention (PSP) and workshops led by Promotoras/es who have together reached more than 10,100 participants. Additionally, the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center, funded by DMH, provides Suicide Prevention trainings and crisis services to thousands of people each year. Didi Hirsch is also the 9-8-8 suicide crisis lifeline provider for the County,

responding to calls, chats, and texts from community members who are in the midst of a mental health crisis. September 8, 2024, is being recognized as 988 Day to spread awareness about the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and to emphasize the importance of mental health and suicide prevention. On September 10 and September 11, 2024, the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Networks and DMH are hosting the 14th annual Suicide Prevention Summit, which brings together over 600 attendees from across the county who will participate in learning about new suicide prevention and postvention research, interventions, and safe messaging strategies. DMH also provides emotional support services, substance abuse referrals, and veteran support services that are available to county residents via the Los Angeles County Help Line for Mental Health and Substance Use Services (800-854-7771) where caring listeners provide support, referrals, and resources to the community.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim September 2024 as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Los Angeles County to increase awareness of suicide prevention in order to help reduce the number of suicide deaths in Los Angeles County;
2. Proclaim September 8, 2024, as [988 Day](#); and
3. Direct the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Public Health to:
 - a. Promote awareness of suicide prevention resources including 988 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Line, Teen Line, and California Department of Public Health's Never a Bother Campaign.
 - b. Identify opportunities to support and coordinate ongoing suicide prevention activities for adults and youth and improve the collection and sharing of

suicide and suicide attempt data.

- c. Report back in 120 days on existing suicide prevention activities and potential opportunities.

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