



**Cuyahoga County
Community Mental Health Board**

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Cuyahoga County Launches Suicide Prevention Awareness Campaign

CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO - "Suicide is Preventable. Its Causes are Treatable," explains William M. Denihan, Chief Executive Officer of the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board (CCCMHB), as he highlights the slogan that is the center of the CCCMHB's suicide prevention awareness campaign.

The campaign will officially launch on February 14, 2005, and will run for three months throughout Cuyahoga County. Placards on 60 RTA buses, posters on the interior of 350 RTA buses, and 33 billboards and five mall kiosks will carry the slogan along with the phone number for the CCCMHB's 24-Hour Suicide Prevention, Mental Health Crisis, and Information and Referral Line for Adults and Children – 216-623-6888.

According to the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States, with over 30,000 deaths by suicide each year. There are more than four male deaths by suicide for every female suicide, but twice as many females attempt suicide. Elderly males have the highest suicide rate that increases with age, most significantly after age 65. The suicide rate for women peaks between the ages of 45-64, and again after age 75. Suicide is also the third leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults ages 15-24, and is the fifth leading cause of death among 5-14 year olds.

"Suicides affect everyone in the community and everyone can play a role in prevention," stated Denihan. "Our goal is to let every person know that there is help available to prevent the tragedy of suicide. It is also important for youth to know that being a good friend means telling an adult if a friend is talking about suicide. In fact, friends of all ages should be willing to listen and encourage their friend or loved one who might be at risk of suicide to seek professional help."

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Dr. Kathryn A. Burns, CCCMHB Chief Clinical Officer, says that the most effective way to prevent suicide is to learn how to recognize the warning signs of someone at risk and take them seriously. Friends, family, co-workers, and teachers, should also know who to contact for help.

Here are some suicide crisis warning signs to look for:

- Recent depressing event, such as loss of a loved one, job or financial security.
- Depression, anguish, anxiety, guilt, hopelessness, sense of abandonment or isolation.
- Changes in behavior and statements indicating thoughts of suicide, such as “My family would be better off without me.”
- Talking or acting as if saying goodbye.
- Actions ranging from buying a gun, to putting one’s affairs in order, to disposing of belongings.
- Deteriorating functioning at work, school or socially, increasing use of alcohol, and other self-destructive behavior.

There are also risk factors, such as a past or family history of attempted suicide, mental illnesses like depression or schizophrenia, substance abuse, severe physical illnesses, or a past of trauma or abuse, which can make a person more susceptible to suicide.

If you are thinking about suicide, tell someone and get help immediately. If you suspect that a friend or family member is thinking about suicide, or you need additional information, please call the CCCMHB’s suicide prevention 24-Hour Suicide Prevention, Mental Health Crisis, Information and Referral Line for Adults and Children – 216-623-6888.

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***To obtain copies of the billboards and RTA placards,
or to arrange interviews with Mr. Denihan and/or Dr. Burns
contact Scott Osiecki at 216-241-3400, ext. 361, or osiecki@cccmhb.org.***

Suicide is Preventable. Its Causes are Treatable.

For Immediate Help Call: **216-623-6888**



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