With suicide rates consistently among the highest in the country, Montana aims to use surveillance data to inform its suicide prevention efforts. The Montana Suicide Mortality Review Team has recently released its second annual report, which includes data on suicide deaths by age, sex, and ethnic group, and among populations at increased risk for suicide such as veterans, American Indians, and adolescents. It also contains data on factors such as educational attainment, relationship status, and mental health issues. "Access to lethal means (firearms), alcohol, a sense of being a burden, social isolation, altitude, undiagnosed and untreated mental illness, lack of resiliency and coping skills, and a societal stigma against depression, all contribute to the long-term, cultural issue of suicide in Montana," the report stated. Based on its findings, the review team has made policy recommendations that include mandatory depression screening, primary care physician training in suicide risk assessment, and the implementation of prevention programing in schools. The review team has also drawn up a Strategic Suicide Prevention Plan that outlines a framework for increasing public awareness and knowledge of suicide prevention over the long term. According to the plan, effective suicide prevention will require "a cultural shift in thinking that starts with our young people, giving them the tools and skills necessary to cope when they reach the high-risk ages between their mid-20s through their 50s."

Spark Extra! Read the 2016 Montana Suicide Mortality Review Team Report [2].

Links within this resource

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