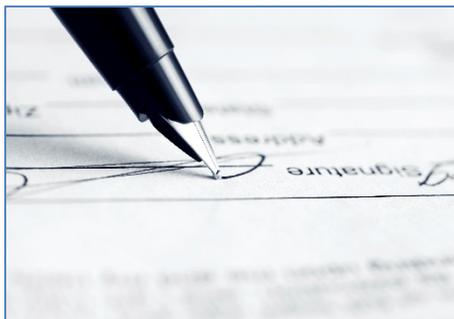




Suicide Prevention Policy and Legislation



Federal and state laws can have a major impact upon suicide prevention activities. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, for example, cites the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act of 2004 and the Joshua Omvig Veterans Suicide Prevention Act of 2007 as critical to furthering suicide prevention among two important groups at risk for suicidal behaviors—youth and veterans.

State laws can provide resources for prevention, open doors to collaboration, encourage training, and help increase awareness and knowledge. Types of state laws that impact suicide prevention include the following:

- **Training:** Some states require suicide prevention training for the licensing or continued employment of teachers, school counselors, health care and behavioral health care personnel, and law enforcement officers and other first responders.
- **Policies:** Several states require school districts or colleges and universities to adopt policies concerning preventing and responding to suicidal behaviors. These laws often require a state agency (e.g., the department of education) to develop model policies that can be adopted at the local level.
- **Data collection:** Requiring health care, behavioral health care, public health, vital statistics, and law enforcement organizations to collect suicide-related data can help states understand the scope and patterns of suicide in a state and evaluate suicide prevention efforts. Several states require that suicide data from several state sources be combined and analyzed. Some states have laws that require local authorities to report suicides to the state public health department.
- **Suicide prevention programs:** Several state legislatures have established suicide prevention programs or coordinators within the state government—usually within the public health or mental health departments—and/or suicide prevention hotlines and crisis response or postvention teams.

Resources

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)

<http://SPRC.org>

The [News & Highlights](#) section of the SPRC website includes summaries of new state laws that have implications for suicide prevention activities. They are part of SPRC's From the Fields series.

Congress.gov State Legislature Websites

<https://www.congress.gov/state-legislature-websites>

Congress.gov allows users to can track proposed and pending legislation, search the U.S. Code for existing federal laws, and locate state legislative websites.

National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL)

<http://www.ncsl.org/>

The NCSL website provides another option for tracking state legislation as well as a Health Innovations State Law Database [<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/health-innovations-database-2015.aspx>] for researching state laws that will effect health system reform and policy innovation.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

<https://afsp.org/>

The AFSP tracks proposed and pending federal and state legislation that will impact suicide prevention.

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Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Web: <http://www.sprc.org> • E-mail: info@sprc.org • Phone: 877-GET-SPRC (438-7772)