Virginia Department of Health

Program Name: The Virginia Youth Suicide Prevention Program
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith State
Grant Status: Active
Year Awarded: 2017
State: Virginia

The Virginia Youth Suicide Prevention Program, coordinated by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), will employ a public health approach focusing on policy and systems change to implement statewide strategies targeting youth ages 10-18 attending Virginia public schools and youth ages 18-24 attending Virginia colleges and universities reaching 1,290,970 youth annually. Multiple efforts supporting a comprehensive suicide prevention approach will be engaged at the local level to enhance screening and treatment services provided to high risk children receiving services funded by the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families (CSA) and twelve colleges/universities. There are three primary goals associated with this project.

Youth at-risk of suicide attending Virginia public schools will be identified and receive appropriate treatment. To reach this first goal 75% of middle and high school educators statewide will receive evidence-based gatekeeper training to identify, approach and refer students who are exhibiting signs of psychological distress; 75% of local CSA systems will include suicide prevention strategies, means restriction and/or treatment services as part of the service plans for youth who are at-risk of suicide as identified through the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment tool; and 100% of Virginia Community Service Boards will demonstrate improvement in screening, identification and treatment of youth at-risk of suicide as compared to levels identified in the needs assessment.

The second goal is that youth at-risk of suicide attending Virginia colleges and universities will be identified and receive appropriate treatment. This will be met as 100% of public and private colleges and universities will receive outreach and resources to support campus-based suicide prevention efforts on a regular basis; 100% of target colleges and universities will demonstrate the establishment of policies and procedures in alignment with a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention; and 75% of target colleges and universities will demonstrate community-clinical partnerships through the regional suicide prevention councils supporting the provision of mental health services.

Finally, Virginia will have a comprehensive, coordinated statewide youth suicide prevention system. To meet this goal, the Virginia Suicide Prevention Interagency Committee will demonstrably support this type of system and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services will align with the efforts of this proposal in southwest Virginia.