

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **New Data Reinforce Need for Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Efforts**

*Two new national reports also underscore the critical role of data in identifying high-risk populations*

*A collective statement prepared by the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention \(Action Alliance\)](#) and its public and private partners. For media inquiries, or to connect with experts in the field, please contact Maureen Iselin ([miselin@edc.org](mailto:miselin@edc.org) or 703-919-4906).*

Two newly released reports show that suicide rates have increased significantly over the last two decades, across both gender and race/ethnicity. These findings reinforce the need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to suicide prevention that engages all sectors of society to reach individuals in their own communities where they live, work, and learn.

The [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) (Action Alliance)—the nation’s public-private partnership with more than 250 partners—is committed to reducing the suicide rate 20 percent by 2025. In order to achieve this goal, robust data and investment in research are needed to inform and support comprehensive prevention efforts and strategies.

A study released earlier this week in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) found that suicide rates for adolescents and young adults reached their highest levels in nearly two decades in 2017, the latest year for which data are available. Utilizing data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the researchers conducted a more detailed analysis of suicide rates for those ages 15- to 19-years old and 20- to 24-years-old. In particular, the study found a notable increase in suicide rates among males, ages 15- to 19-years-old. As was highlighted in [a recent survey](#) by The Trevor Project, nearly 40 percent of youth who identify as LGBTQ had seriously considered suicide in the past year.

“We know that youth, particularly LGBTQ youth, continue to be at high-risk for suicide,” said Amit Paley, CEO and Executive Director of The Trevor Project. “Through our programming, we are working tirelessly to provide LGBTQ youth with the support and resources they need to feel hope, and know that they are not alone.”

Data released today by the CDC’s [National Center for Health Statistics](#) found that, when compared to 1999 rates, suicide rates for both males and females in 2017 were higher for all race/ethnicity groups, except for non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islanders. The largest increase occurred among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations, who have long been identified as being at high risk for suicide. Through the Action Alliance’s [AI/AN Task Force](#), the field of suicide prevention continues to

work in partnership with AI/AN populations to provide messages of hope and recovery, as well as [tools and resources](#) to these communities.

“We know that connectedness and feelings of belonging are important protective factors for anyone,” said Kimberly Fowler, PhD, Director of Technical Assistance and Research, National Council of Urban Indian Health, and Action Alliance AI/AN Task Force Member. “However, we’ve found that for the AI/AN population, feeling a connection to one’s culture and community are critical to preventing suicide. We must work together with communities to promote cultural resiliency and community transformation.”

In an effort to advance the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention \(National Strategy\)](#), the Action Alliance and its partners are working together to reach all individuals through a number of community-based efforts. For example, through its [Faith Communities Task Force](#) and [Faith.Hope.Life](#) campaign, the Action Alliance is taking steps to engage all faith communities, regardless of denomination, in suicide prevention efforts.

“Oftentimes individuals turn to their faith communities, and particularly their faith leaders, when they are experiencing a crisis,” said Brandon Johnson, Public Health Advisor, Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Action Alliance Faith Communities Task Force Public Sector Co-Lead. “We are working to engage with every faith community in the U.S. around suicide prevention and the role they can play in providing support and comfort to those who may be struggling.”

The new data also underscore the need for investments in research and access to high quality data. The [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Implementation Assessment](#) report, released in 2018, highlights that, while there has never been more suicide prevention activity in our nation, there is still no one state implementing a robust, comprehensive suicide prevention response to one of the nation’s leading causes of death. We must do more to ensure states and communities are involved in suicide prevention, and that efforts are scaled up throughout the country.

“These reports further underscore the critical role data and research play in helping to both identify and reach those populations who are at highest risk of suicide but also underscores the need to significantly scale up suicide prevention efforts nationwide; because if we are to be successful in reducing suicide in our nation, it is going to take all sectors and all communities working together to address this issue,” said Colleen Carr, director of the Action Alliance. “The Action Alliance and its partners are committed to ensuring there is adequate investment in research to identify who may be at increased risk for suicide in order to develop and implement comprehensive suicide prevention approaches throughout the country that reach those populations.”

Suicide is a national problem that needs a national response. The reports highlighted above further reinforce the need for innovative, comprehensive community-based approaches to reach everyone in the places where they live, work, and learn in order to save lives.

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**FOR NEWS MEDIA PARTNERS:**

Research shows that the media may influence suicide rates by the way they report on and depict suicide. Evidence suggests that when the media tell stories of people effectively coping with thoughts of

suicide, more suicidal behaviors and deaths by suicides can be prevented. We urge all members of the media working on these stories to refer to the [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#) for best practices for safely and accurately reporting on suicide (such as including the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK \[8255\]](#)). For stories of persons with lived experience of suicidality and finding hope, refer to [www.lifelineforattemptsurvivors.org](http://www.lifelineforattemptsurvivors.org).

**NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

*The [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) is the public-private partnership working to advance the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) and make suicide prevention a national priority. The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) provides funding to [EDC](#) to operate and manage the Secretariat for the Action Alliance, which launched in 2010. Learn more at [theActionAlliance.org](http://theActionAlliance.org), and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following the Action Alliance on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).*