

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Awards Grants for Suicide Prevention**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recently awarded \$500,000 to several suicide prevention programs throughout the state. The grants are part of a \$1.2 million appropriation maintained by Governor Doug Burgum and the North Dakota State Legislature during the 2017 session.

North Dakota's suicide rate is above the national average, with suicide as the second leading cause of death among the state's youth. A report released by the CDC found that suicide rates have been steadily increasing across the nation, but rural communities are seeing a more rapid increase. "Suicide cuts across economic, social and racial lines. It devastates families across North Dakota," says Alison Traynor, Suicide Prevention Director with NDDoH. "But there is hope. Every day more and more people are finding effective programs and treatments, and they are getting better."

Proven suicide prevention programs do exist, and North Dakota is supporting those programs. This year's awardees include:

- **Spirit Lake and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa** received funding for their cultural digital storytelling and Sources of Strength programs. Sources of Strength is a culturally relevant prevention program shown to prevent risk for suicide, bullying, and substance use disorder. "Sources of Strength saves lives by building adult-youth relationships, teaching coping skills and promoting help-seeking behaviors," says Claudette McLeod, Turtle Mountain's Suicide Prevention Coordinator.
- **Six Regional Education Associations (REAs)**, Great Northwest, Mid-Dakota, Missouri River, Northcentral, Northeast, and Roughrider, received funds to provide proven, evidence-based suicide prevention programs like Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) and Sources of Strength.

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- **FirstLink** was awarded \$100,000 in funding from the NDDoH to support their 24/7 service of the National Suicide Lifeline as well as their evidence-based “Follow-up” program. Firstlink is a key service provider for North Dakota, providing 24/7 telephone support for 211 and the National Suicide Lifeline as well as a variety of evidence-based training statewide.
- **PATH Inc.** received a grant to continue their “Zero Suicide” Initiative across therapeutic foster homes and clinical sites. Grants were also awarded to community clinics and Family Planning clinics across North Dakota to provide depression screening and referrals to patients
- **Other recipients included** the Native American Development Center, Mayors Community Coalition, Northern Plains Chaplaincy, Southwestern District Health Unit, and Minot State University North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities. A multidisciplinary advisory committee consisting of school, health, and tribal representation selected the grant recipients.

For more information on the suicide prevention fund and free training opportunities, contact Alison Traynor, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4580.

Visit <http://www.ndhealth.gov/suicideprevention/> for information about suicide and suicide prevention.

*If you are thinking about suicide, call someone. If you think someone you know is considering suicide, ask. Call the hotline to break the silence and to receive confidential help from local professionals anytime, day or night. Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.*

The National Suicide Lifeline is answered locally by FirstLink.

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