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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Governor Burgum Proclaims September Suicide Prevention Month**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor Doug Burgum proclaimed September as Suicide Prevention Month in North Dakota. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) encourages residents to take advantage of the many awareness events and survivor speakers scheduled across North Dakota throughout September.

According to the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota lost 134 residents to suicide in 2016. For each life lost to suicide, 25 people attempt suicide.

“Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people, ages 10 to 24 and the tenth leading cause of death for all age groups combined nationwide, so suicide prevention is a top priority for the NDDoH,” says Alison Traynor, Suicide Prevention Director with NDDoH. “Studies have shown that suicide is commonly preceded by one or more warning sign(s). North Dakota residents can help prevent suicide by recognizing the signs and taking action.”

Warning signs include:

- A history of depression or other mental illness
- Past attempts, talking about death or wanting to die
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- A family history of suicide or violence
- Physical illness or chronic pain
- Loneliness or feelings of being a burden to others
- Giving away possessions

Take action if you see the following:

- Any significant changes in behavior, reckless or withdrawn behavior
- Changes in mood or substance use
- Comments about suicide, self-harm or ambivalence about life

*-continued-*

Tips for what to avoid:

- Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad.
- Don't lecture.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't appear shocked or upset as this could prevent further disclosure.
- Don't offer glib reassurance.
- Don't promise to keep any secrets about suicide. Seek help.

Effective Suicide Prevention Includes:

- Communicate and ask direct questions.
- Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Listen attentively without judgment. Allow them to express their feelings.
- Offer hope that help and services are available.
- Take action. Remove lethal means, such as guns, or stockpiled pills.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Get help from someone specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. Help is available by calling **1.800.273.TALK (8255)**, a free and confidential 24/7 suicide prevention lifeline.

For information about suicide prevention, local suicide prevention programs, or to join the Suicide Prevention Coalition, contact Alison Traynor, NDDoH, at 701.328.4580.

Support local families that have lost loved ones to suicide and raise funds for awareness by joining the Out for the Darkness Walk put on by the North Dakota Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The walk raises funds for scientific research, education, treatment programs, as well as programs to support those who have lost loved ones to suicide. "The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide," shares Mary Weiler, Board Chair AFSP ND Chapter. "The ND Chapter's goal is to reduce the number of suicide deaths in North Dakota by 20 percent by 2025.

Join the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention this year in six "Out of the Darkness" Community Walks scheduled throughout North Dakota to raise funds for suicide prevention and awareness.

- **Bismarck/Mandan, State Capitol Grounds – Friday, Sept. 8**
- **Minot, Roosevelt Park – Saturday, Sept. 9**
- **Fargo/Moorhead, North Dakota State University – Sunday, Sept. 10**
- **Dickinson, West River Ice Center – Saturday, Sept. 23**
- **Williston, Harmon Park – Saturday, Sept. 23**
- **Valley City, Lokken Stadium – Saturday, Sept. 30**
- **Beulah, Riverside Park – Saturday, Oct. 7**

For more information about locations and starting times, contact Samantha Bruers at [abruers@afsp.org](mailto:abruers@afsp.org) or visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

*Please note: Proclamation follows.*

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State of  
**North Dakota**

*Office of the Governor*

Doug Burgum  
*Governor*

PROCLAMATION  
**SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH**  
SEPTEMBER 2017

**WHEREAS**, in the United States, one person dies by suicide every 11.9 minutes, with 44,193 deaths by suicide in our country during 2015; and

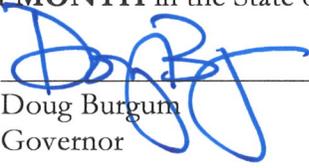
**WHEREAS**, in the U.S., suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds, and is the tenth leading cause of death for people of all ages; and

**WHEREAS**, the impact of suicide extends further than the individual's life that is lost, and it is estimated each person's death by suicide intimately affects at least six other people, with sadly over 250,000 newly bereaved each year; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016, 134 North Dakotans died by suicide, and several thousand friends and family members were changed forever by losing those people; and

**WHEREAS**, far too many North Dakotans die by suicide each year, and most of these deaths are preventable.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim September 2017, **SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH** in the State of North Dakota.

  
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Doug Burgum  
Governor

ATTEST:

  
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Alvin A. Jaeger

Secretary of State

  
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Acting Deputy