

2017 – 2018

AFSP Public Policy Synopsis

Lead

Issues on which AFSP will play a leadership role – developing the policy position, marshaling support and generating advocacy activity:

Federal

- Maintain mental health and substance use coverage as an essential health care benefit
- Preserve and increase Medicaid and Medicare funding
- Preserve coverage of pre-existing conditions, access to care, preventive health coverage, and no annual or lifetime caps
- Ensure Mental Health Parity laws and regulations are uniformly implemented
- Maintain suicide prevention for military personnel and veterans as a national priority
- Increase funding for suicide prevention research
- Expand the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) to all fifty states

State

- Support comprehensive school suicide prevention legislation and policies, to include mandated training for school personnel and mandated policies on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- Increase funding for, and assist in, implementation and evaluation of state suicide prevention initiatives and plans to prevent suicide across the lifespan
- Assist in the creation of a national brain tissue donor bank and amend existing state laws to include brain tissue within existing organ donation policies and procedures
- Ensure Mental Health Parity laws and regulations are uniformly implemented

Collaborate

Issues on which AFSP will work as part of a coalition or group, providing active support to achieve these important policy objectives:

Federal

- Support the review, reform, and evaluation of mental health standards, policies and service delivery, as well as programs like Mental Health First Aid
- Support funding for suicide prevention authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act, including the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (GLSMA) program and a new adult suicide prevention program
- Increase funding to address the opioid epidemic through research, education and treatment
- Utilize our knowledge of the relationship between alcohol and substance use and suicidal behavior to develop innovative suicide prevention policies and programs

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- Promote policies and programs to improve access to mental health care and prevent suicide in correctional facilities
- Increase funding for crisis intervention centers to expand their infrastructure in order to handle growing call volume, including the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)
- Increase funding for American Indian and Alaskan Native youth suicide prevention and education programs
- Promote policies to prevent LGBTQ+ suicide, including integrating LGBTQ+ populations into existing data collection tools on suicide mortality and safe schools indicators
- Support the construction of barriers to prevent suicide from bridges and other jumping sites
- Authorize and appropriate funds for bullying prevention programs and projects
- Authorize and appropriate funds for Depression Centers of Excellence

State

- Increase funding to address the opioid epidemic through education and treatment
- Support the funding and dissemination of Mental Health First Aid Programs
- Increase the number of health professionals who receive regular education and training in suicide, assessment, treatment and management
- Support bullying prevention legislation, policies and programs, and promote safe messaging around bullying and suicide
- Support the construction of barriers to prevent suicide from bridges and other jumping sites
- Promote policies and programs to improve access to mental health care and prevent suicide in correctional facilities
- Oppose the use of conversion therapy or sexual orientation change counseling as treatment for LGBTQ+ individuals

Mission

Mission-related issues on which AFSP will advance public understanding of suicide prevention:

State

- Support higher education legislation and policies that give college and university students, faculty, and staff the knowledge and tools to prevent suicide

Explore

Issues that require further exploration or policy research/analysis but have not yet become AFSP policy proposals:

Federal

- Investigate workplace policies and programs to promote mental health and prevent suicidal behavior among employees

State

- Develop an updated AFSP policy position on assisted death (other common terms include physician assisted suicide or Death with Dignity Laws)