STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

September 17, 2021

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

In the United States, someone dies by suicide approximately every 11.1 minutes, and in Arkansas, on average, every 16 hours.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10–34 and the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

The overall suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 35% since 1999.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. It is a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized and often taboo topic. In addition to shifting public perception, this is also a time to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

During the most recent legislative session, the General Assembly passed Act 802. This legislation created the Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health. The act directs the Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committee to assess the strengths and weaknesses of mental and behavioral health resources and care currently available in Arkansas. The committee will study several related topics, including the utilization of crisis stabilization units, transportation of mental and behavioral health patients, and mental health screenings and suicide prevention measures for students.

In 2017, the legislature passed an act that ensured Arkansans were answering calls made from Arkansas to the Suicide Prevention Hotline. Now when someone calls the hotline, they are speaking to someone with knowledge of local resources available.

In this session, we strengthened that law when we passed Act 640. This act ensures that the Suicide Prevention Hotline employs individuals who have experience working with veterans.

Links to more information regarding suicide prevention, including warning signs and risk factors can be found HERE.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately. If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the **National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255).**