



Arkansas House Newsletter

September 11, 2020

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



Every year thousands of Americans die by suicide, leaving behind friends and family to navigate the tragedy of loss. In 2019, more than 500 Arkansans died by suicide.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. This is a time to share resources and stories in an effort to shed light on this stigmatized topic.

In 2017, the legislature passed Act 811 which mandated that calls made from Arkansas to the National Suicide Prevention be operated by the Arkansas Department of Health. This has allowed callers in crises to be able to speak to someone who has a strong understanding of resources available nearby. There are an average of over 1,000 calls made to the lifeline each month.

In the 2019 Regular Session, the legislature passed Act 551 which requires the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs to examine veteran issues within Arkansas, including the occurrence of suicide among the veteran population in Arkansas. The committees will file a written report with their findings and

recommendations to Legislative Council by December 1.

This General Assembly also passed Act 962 which creates the offense of encouraging the suicide of another person and makes the offense a Class D felony.

No one organization or piece of legislation can tackle suicide prevention alone. To save lives, multiple systems must work in a coordinated way to reach those in a suicidal crisis where they are.

If you are in crisis now, please call 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Veterans can access the Veteran Crises line by calling the number and pressing 1.

Anyone can also text the crisis line by sending TALK to 741741 or chat online at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/.