



*“To protect and improve  
the health and environment  
of the people of Colorado.”*

# NEWS

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of Public Health  
and Environment

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## **2009 Marks Colorado’s Highest Suicide Rate in More Than 20 Years**

DENVER—In 2009, 940 Coloradans died by suicide, more than in any previous year, according to suicide prevention experts with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Jarrod Hindman, program manager of the department’s Office of Suicide Prevention, said the 2009 deaths represent a suicide rate (18.4 deaths per 100,000 residents) that is the highest Colorado has seen since 1988 (18.9/100,000 residents).

“The impact of suicide in Colorado is statewide, and it touches all ages of Coloradans, from children and adolescents to older adults,” said Hindman. “In 2009, there was a significant increase in suicide deaths among those ages 25 to 44 and 85 and older.”

Hindman cited high unemployment rates, less access to crisis mental health services, the ongoing recession, current conflicts in the Middle East and continued societal stigma as possible contributors to the increase.

Mental health and suicide prevention experts agree there is a year-to-year fluctuation in the suicide rate, and an increase in a single year does not signify a trend. However, Colorado annually has a suicide rate that is approximately 40 percent higher than the U.S. rate, according to Hindman.

“The 2009 data serve as a reminder that suicide prevention must be a priority public health issue in Colorado,” he said. More Coloradans die by suicide each year than those who die in motor vehicle crashes or by homicide. Yet suicide continues to be viewed as an individual issue rather than a public health issue,” said Hindman.

Hindman stressed that suicide is preventable, and there is help and hope for those who are suicidal. “Mental and physical health should be viewed and addressed equally,” he said.

World Suicide Prevention Day is Friday, Sept. 10, and community leaders are joining the global effort to raise public awareness about suicide and suicide prevention.

Working statewide, the Department of Public Health and Environment's Office of Suicide Prevention, [www.coosp.org](http://www.coosp.org), the Depression Center at the University of Colorado, [www.coloradodepressioncenter.org](http://www.coloradodepressioncenter.org), the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado, [www.suicidepreventioncolorado.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncolorado.org), and Mental Health America of Colorado, [www.mhacolorado.org](http://www.mhacolorado.org), are dedicated to promoting suicide prevention and intervention efforts to decrease the burden of suicide in their communities.

For more information about suicide prevention and intervention, or to find out more about the listed organizations' efforts, visit their websites or contact Jarrod Hindman, program manager of the Office of Suicide Prevention at [jarrod.hindman@state.co.us](mailto:jarrod.hindman@state.co.us).

For more information about World Suicide Prevention Day, access [www.Take5ToSaveLives.com](http://www.Take5ToSaveLives.com).