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AGENDA COVER MEMO

AGENDA DATE: November 7, 2007

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Health & Human Services

PRESENTED BY: Rob Rockstroh



AGENDA TITLE: ORDER / _____ IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING
NOVEMBER 17, 2007 AS "SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY" IN
LANE COUNTY

I. MOTION

In The Matter Of Proclaiming November 17, 2007 As "Survivors of Suicide Day"
In Lane County.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Health & Human Services suicide-prevention staff propose that Lane County ally
itself with the national effort to promote depression screening and to proclaim a
local "Survivors of Suicide Day".

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The Board has previously lent its support to Resolutions promoting public/mental
health (Public Health Week via BO 07-3-21-4, Mental Health via BO 07-5-16-5)
issues and/or those designed to raise public awareness related to a specific
issue (Nonviolence, BO 07-2-7-1).

The Board Order adopting the Public Health Financial Assistance Award from the
State of Oregon/DHS (BO 07-6-27-3) included \$77,000 for FY 08 for Suicide
Prevention (PE 35) and \$84,000 was added to the FY 07 financial assistance
award via amendment 4, effective 20 October, 2006.

Lane County Health & Human Services/Community Prevention and Health
Promotion was chosen as one of only four trial sites in Oregon to support the
development and implementation of statewide youth suicide prevention and early
intervention strategies. Oregon is one of only 14 States sponsoring youth suicide
prevention programs. These programs are funded under the Garrett Lee Smith
Memorial Act (P.L. 108-355), named in memory of Oregon Senator Gordon
Smith's son, who committed suicide in September, 2003.

The Lane County project was initiated last year and has focused on outreach to clinicians, crisis response workers, school staff and youth. The outreach in Lane County has also sought to emphasize the need for additional support for the "survivors of suicide," the family members who have lost loved ones to suicide.

The national "Survivors of Suicide Day", which is always commemorated the Saturday before Thanksgiving, was created via U.S. Senate Resolution through the efforts of Senator Harry Reid (Democrat/Nevada, current Democratic Leader), who is himself a survivor of suicide, his father having taken his own life. The purpose of this day of remembrance is to provide the survivors of suicide with a means to connect with other survivors and to promote healing from the emotional scarring related to survivorship. The keynote annual activity is a national teleconference, which is simulcast via the Internet. (on-line registration is at: http://www.limelightdc.com/clientarea/afsp_telecon_11_07/afspreg07.htm)

B. Policy Issues

Approval of this Resolution presents an opportunity to:

- Focus community attention on the threat suicide represents for youth, in particular, in our community
- Alert local families to the suicide/depression indicators
- Promote more positive attitudes toward the seeking of mental health preventive services and the need to develop better models for care
- Recognize the seminal work being done by Lane County Health & Human Services/Community Prevention and Health Promotion in this program area.

C. Board Goals

Meets Board objective of promoting public health.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

There are no costs associated with the Board's endorsement of this Resolution. H&HS will request assistance from the County's Public Information Office to promote recognition of the dangers associated with suicide, to disseminate the Board-approved Resolution and the work being carried out by the Lane County Suicide Prevention Coordinator in this program area.

E. Analysis

Both suicide and depression are significant health issues in Lane County. Although suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the U.S., in Lane County it is the second leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24. Half of youth who commit suicide are substance abusers.

A strong link between depression and suicide has been established. It is

estimated that depression increases the risk of a first suicide attempt by at least 14-fold. Half of all youth who suffer from depression will attempt suicide at least once.

F. Alternatives / Options

1. To approve the attached Resolution
2. To decline to lend Board support

IV. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

If approved, the Lane County Suicide Prevention Coordinator will immediately include the Board's Resolution in his outreach materials; which are provided to schools, non-profits addressing this issue and other public agencies.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

To approve option number one above.

VII. FOLLOW-UP

If the Board concurs with the attached Resolution, Lane County Health & Human Services/Community Prevention and Health Promotion staff will work with Administration staff to promote recognition of the County's work in this area by contacting the local media and press and to encourage participation in the November 17, 2007 interactive broad/webcast.

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

Board Order

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION) ORDER _____ / IN THE MATTER OF
AND ORDER:) PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 17, 2007 AS "SURVIVOR
) OF SUICIDE DAY" IN LANE COUNTY

WHEREAS, the suicide death rate in Oregon consistently ranks in the highest tenth percentile in the nation; and

WHEREAS, suicide among youth aged 15 to 24 in Lane County is the second leading cause of death; and

WHEREAS, although the overall suicide rate in the U.S. decreased slightly in recent years, the suicide rate for those aged 15-24 has more than doubled over the past five decades; and

WHEREAS, the scourge represented by suicide not only affects our youth, but also impacts the 5 million U.S. citizens who have lost loved ones to suicide, called the survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS, the highest suicide rate in the U.S. is among those aged 75 and older; and

WHEREAS, the stigma associated with mental illness and suicide works against prevention education and programming by discouraging those at-risk from seeking life-saving help and further traumatizes the survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS, statewide and local suicide prevention efforts should be encouraged and publicized to the maximum extent possible; and

WHEREAS, organizations such as the Lane County Suicide Prevention Steering Committee, local non-profit organizations, dedicated local practitioners, the American Association of Suicidology and the National Foundation for Suicide Prevention, are committed to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths, and the resultant long-term suffering of the survivors of suicide, by means of educational programs, research projects, intervention services, and bereavement services urge that we encourage initiatives based on the goals contained in the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, including the following:

1. Recognize suicide as a national, state and local public health problem, declare suicide prevention to be a priority and acknowledge that this is a preventable health issue.
2. Develop broad-based support for suicide prevention, while acknowledging that no single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities.
3. Encourage strategies designed to reduce the stigma associated with accessing mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services.
4. Promote community-based suicide prevention programs.

5. Promote community-based suicide bereavement support services.
6. Promote efforts to reduce access to lethal means and methods of self-harm.
7. Implement training for the recognition of at-risk behavior and for the delivery of effective treatment.
8. Develop and promote effective clinical and professional practices.
9. Increase access to, and community linkages with, mental health and substance abuse services.

WHEREAS, the mission of the Lane County Department of Health & Human Services is to promote and protect the health and well-being of individuals, families and our communities;

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners encourage residents to work to reduce suicide in Lane County, especially among youth, by proclaiming November 17, 2007 to be "Survivors of Suicide Day"; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners designate that this "Survivors of Suicide Day" should also represent a time for families and members of our community to reflect on the benefits of identifying behavior that places people at-risk for suicide; and

IT IS ORDERED that the Board of County Commissioners direct the County Office of Public Information assist with efforts to impart the information contained in this Resolution to the residents of Lane County.

DATED this _____ day of November, 2007.

Faye Stewart, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM
Date 10/29/07
Lane County [Signature]
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL