



Year Two Highlights: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP) was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 2112 in July 2021.

Mission Statement and Guiding Principles — In Year Two, the OSP established the following mission statement and guiding principles, as part of internal strategic planning efforts:

OSP Mission Statement: The mission of the OSP is to address the root causes of suicide and self-harm injuries through strong partnerships, dissemination of data, and promotion of evidence-informed public health prevention strategies that create safe and healthy communities across California.

OSP Guiding Principles: As we strive to prevent suicides and self-harm injuries using a public health approach, the OSP:

- Connects our partners with suicide prevention information, resources, expertise, and each other.
- Utilizes data to understand current conditions that contribute to or reduce suicide, and to inform program and policy planning, decision-making, and action.
- Focuses on population-specific risk and protective factors to prevent suicides and self-harm from happening in the first place.
- Promotes evidence-informed best practices to prevent suicide.
- Applies an equity lens to data collection, research, education, and programs.
- Promotes a primary prevention approach within communities and systems of care.

Partnership Building — In Year Two, the OSP continued to build and establish partnerships with internal programs and external partners to identify opportunities to collaborate and coordinate suicide prevention efforts taking place throughout California, and to ensure focus on groups disproportionately impacted by suicide, including youth, Tribal populations, older adults, veterans, and LGBTQ individuals. For example:

- The OSP collaborated with the CA Department of Aging to strengthen efforts to achieve goals of the CA Master Plan for Aging focused on reduction of suicide among older adults.
- The OSP participated in monthly Tribal Information Sharing Meetings hosted by CDPH's Office of Health Equity and the CA Health and Human Services Agency to provide data, resources, and opportunities to address suicide among Tribal populations.
- The OSP consulted with the CA Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) and their partner, Your Social Marketer, to coordinate training and technical assistance and statewide suicide prevention efforts. For example, the OSP and

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MHSOAC/Your Social Marketer co-hosted trainings for local health jurisdictions and county behavioral health departments focused on use of data to guide program planning. The OSP also participated in a site visit to the Sacramento Gun Range hosted by the MHSOAC to learn about culturally sensitive methods to promote lethal means safety among firearm users. The OSP also consulted on the development of and later promoted the MHSOAC's [StrivingForSafety.org](https://www.strivingforsafety.org) website, which provides information about a range of strategies to promote safety in times of crisis.

- The OSP collaborated with relevant partners focused on suicide prevention among students through participation in the CA Department of Education's Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup, the monthly Suicide Prevention Partners Meeting, which is hosted by County Offices of Education, and via presentations provided to the statewide County Offices of Education Mental Health & Wellness Collaborative.

Please reach out to the OSP team if you would like to discuss partnership opportunities related to suicide prevention efforts in California: Suicide.Prevention@cdph.ca.gov.

CDPH OSP Partner Survey —In May and June of 2023, the OSP surveyed California's community-based organizations, behavioral health divisions, state partners, County Departments of Public Health, and school districts about their recent successes, challenges, lessons learned, and ongoing needs regarding preventing suicide and self-harm. Over 80 partners across the State responded, representing 74 organizations. Of those organizations, 65% consisted of local government and 29% consisted of community-based organizations. The OSP followed up this effort with 19 in-depth interviews to better understand current strengths and challenges of Suicide Prevention programs throughout California. The OSP will share the survey results in Year Three.

Data Dissemination/Reports — The OSP produced and released several suicide and self-harm data resources and reports, which can be found on CDPH's website under the [Suicide Prevention Program](#). Listed below are titles and links to those recently published reports:

- [Preliminary Monthly Statewide Violence Related Death Counts](#)
- [Veteran Suicide in 2020 Data Brief](#)
- [Older Adult Suicide in 2020 Fact Sheet](#)
- [California Violent Death Reporting System \(CalVDRS\) Fact Sheet: Suicide in California, 2020](#)
- [California Violent Death Reporting System \(CalVDRS\) Infographic: Suicide in California, 2020](#)

Lock Box Distribution —The OSP purchased and distributed approximately 4,870 lock boxes to ten local health and behavioral health departments in counties with higher rates of suicides and self-harm than the State overall. The OSP also provided an informational flyer, created in collaboration with the UC Davis [BulletPoints Project](#), to be distributed along with the lock boxes. The flyer encouraged help-seeking behavior for those in crisis and encouraged lock box recipients to store firearms and medications safely in the lock boxes so that children/youth and adults in crisis are less

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likely to gain access to these lethal means. Counties that received lock boxes include: Amador, Butte, Humboldt, Kern, Lassen, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, and Tehama.

Mental Health Thrival Kits — The OSP purchased 44,659 English and Spanish [Mental Health Thrival Kits](#) (developed by the Directing Change Program) to distribute to California youth. A total of 35,539 kits were distributed to middle and high schools throughout the State, and an additional 9,120 kits were distributed to counties with disproportionate rates of suicide and self-harm via local health and behavioral health departments. These kits can be used to celebrate wellness and promote positive coping skills for youth with easy-to-follow activities to enhance basic skills for social emotional wellness, and journaling exercises to promote reflection and self-expression. The inside cover also includes grounding and breathing techniques to help cope with stressful moments and includes crisis resources and hotlines. The following counties received Thrival kits: Amador, Butte, Humboldt, Lassen, Sacramento, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, and Tehama.

Technical Assistance — The OSP responded to 13 data requests from partners and stakeholders including those representing the Governor’s Office, the CDPH Director’s Office, and local health offices/agencies. Technical assistance focused on using data to guide decision-making and program planning related to suicide prevention was provided to San Bernardino, Humboldt, Butte, and Tuolumne counties. In addition, nine presentations were provided to inform various groups, such as local offices of education, state agencies, and stakeholders about OSP activities and suicide and self-harm data trends in California.

CDPH Social Media Shareables —The OSP created 13 shareable Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts to help promote and highlight May as Mental Health Awareness Month. The social media shareables were disseminated via the general stakeholder listserv in May and are available on the CDPH [Suicide Prevention web page](#).

CDPH Suicide Prevention web page updates — The CDPH [Suicide Prevention](#) web pages were recently redesigned and updated and now include new pages focusing on the [Crisis Hotlines](#), [Warmlines and Resources](#), [Youth Suicide Prevention Projects](#), and [Social Media Shareables](#). The new web pages are designed to be user-friendly and comprehensive, as well as provide more information on the function and activities of the CDPH suicide prevention efforts and programs.

Youth Suicide Prevention Projects - Updates

The CDPH’s OSP spent substantial time in Year 2 beginning to administer the following two new youth suicide prevention projects as part of the California Health and Human Services (CalHHS) Agency-sponsored Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI):

- **Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign** — In July of 2022, the OSP began developing a data-driven, and community-based youth suicide prevention media and

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outreach campaign to be implemented through 2025. The goal of the campaign is to reduce suicide ideation, attempts, and deaths by increasing awareness and utilization of resources, services, and supports among California youth up to age 25 who are disproportionately impacted by suicide. There are three components to the project: a media campaign co-created with youth; grants to community-based and tribal organizations to amplify and reinforce the campaign and implement youth led suicide prevention activities; and comprehensive project evaluation. Campaign audiences include youth who are Black/African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native youth, and Hispanic and Latinx youth, as well as their peer and adult allies. As part of an intersectional approach to health equity, the campaign is also inclusive of youth from the primary audience who identify as having been impacted by the foster care system, having substance use and/or mental health challenges, and 2-spirit/LGBTQ+ youth. Civilian has been selected as the media/communication contractor, with an anticipated media campaign launch in Spring 2024. The Sierra Health Foundation's Center for Health Program Management has been selected as the implementation partner to oversee the community-based and tribal organization projects and program evaluation is being led by University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

- **Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program** — The OSP is also implementing a pilot program focused on county-level approaches to rapid reporting and responding to youth suicide and suicide attempts. Funded counties will develop and test models for making youth suicide and attempted suicide reportable events that initiate rapid and comprehensive responses (i.e., crisis response) within schools and community-settings. The goal of the pilot program is to strengthen reporting and crisis response systems so that further suicides and attempts can be prevented. Ten counties were selected for participation: Alameda, El Dorado, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Joaquin, and Solano. The Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS) will provide training and technical assistance to counties and UCLA is also the external evaluator for this program.