



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH


Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Mental Hygiene Administration • Spring Grove Hospital Center • Dix Building
55 Wade Avenue • Catonsville, Maryland 21228

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein M.D., Secretary
Brian M. Hepburn, M.D., Executive Director

September 9, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: MHA Management Committee
MHA Facilities
CSA Directors
MH Providers

From: Brian Hepburn, M.D.
Executive Director 

RE: National Suicide Prevention Week

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September 8 – 14th is National Suicide Prevention Week. I would like to encourage everyone to take this opportunity to join us in the National campaign to help save lives.

Partnering with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Mental Hygiene Administration will be participating in and sharing links to encourage a social media campaign to strengthen community support in prevention efforts. (See attached Press Release). I encourage your participation in our efforts.

If you would link and/or post information on your various social networks and Web pages that highlight activities during the week, highlight warning signs and risk factors, and provide referral information and /or hotline numbers we encourage individuals to connect to needed services and interventions. Posting or linking Maryland's hotline number 1-800-422-0009 and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800273-TALK during the week and throughout the year would be one effective way to reach individuals that fail to speak out and fear to seek help. Doing whatever we can on our social networks, both professionally and personally, may save a life -- a friend, a family member, a neighbor. Let's use this week as a platform to continue the national effort to prevent suicide.

As part of this year's prevention efforts, there will be a Candle Lighting ceremony on September 10th at 8:00 pm. If you are able to safely participate, we encourage your participation and then posting a photo on your Web page and at the Lifeline Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/800273TALK>.





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DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DHMH JOINS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

Statewide initiative encourages Marylanders to strengthen their connections
to family and community through social media activities

Candle lighting at 8 p.m. tonight on Facebook

BALTIMORE (September 10, 2013) – The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) joins the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in recognizing National Suicide Prevention Week, September 8th – 14th. This year's campaign encourages people to reach out through their community circles on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms to highlight prevention efforts and link to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at <http://www.facebook.com/800273TALK>.

"We encourage people to participate in this campaign designed to educate and save lives," said Dr. Gayle Jordan-Randolph, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health and Disabilities. "Suicide is preventable with knowledge and resources."

As part of the national effort, a Candle-Lighting ceremony is planned for TONIGHT, September 10th at 8 p.m. Individuals are asked to light a candle or flameless candle at 8:00 p.m. and to post a photo on the Lifeline Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/800273TALK>.

"We applaud this social media initiative that also includes an activity - Badge Bingo - designed to help boost support networks," said Dr. Brian Hepburn, Director of DHMH's Mental Hygiene Administration. "The educational game rewards players who earn 10 badges."

Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death in Maryland. Risk factors do not predict a suicide but are characteristics that make it more likely that an individual will consider, attempt, or die by suicide.

Risk factors may include: hopelessness, impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies, isolation, alcohol and/or other substance use, financial loss, and family history of suicide. Warning signs of someone at risk of suicide may include: talking about wanting to die, talking about no reason to live, talking about being a burden to others, increasing use of alcohol and drugs, withdrawing, displaying extreme mood swings, and sleeping little or too much.

Spread the word. Post prevention activities, play Badge Bingo, and post or add a link to suicide hotline numbers: Maryland's hotline network 1-800-422-0009 and the National Suicide Hotline number 1-800-273-TALK.

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