



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2004-061

ESTABLISHING THE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, New Mexico historically has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the nation;

WHEREAS, nearly one in eight adolescents said they had attempted suicide, and one in five had seriously considered killing themselves in the previous 12 months;

WHEREAS, New Mexico's current youth suicide rate for youth 10-19 years is twice the national rate;

WHEREAS, nationally, more youth die from suicide each year than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, and chronic lung disease combined;

WHEREAS, the mental health problems that underlie suicide also underlie homicide and accidents—the two leading killers of New Mexico's youth;

WHEREAS, the State of New Mexico has recognized that youth suicide is a public health tragedy linked to underlying mental health problems and has identified youth suicide early intervention and prevention activities as priorities outlined in the State Comprehensive Health Plan;

WHEREAS, national data show that having been a victim or witness of abuse and violence increases risk for suicide in youth;

WHEREAS, nearly half of all youth suicides in New Mexico occurred in the presence of drugs or alcohol;

WHEREAS, suicide has a disparate impact among New Mexico's cultural and ethnic communities;

WHEREAS, ready access of firearms to youth increases the lethal nature of suicide attempts;

WHEREAS, youth suicide early intervention and prevention have been listed as urgent public health priorities by the President's New Freedom Commission in Mental Health (2002), the Institute of Medicine's Reducing Suicide: A National Imperative (2002), the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action (2001), and the Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent Suicide (1999); and

WHEREAS, different communities in New Mexico have reduced access to culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Governor Bill Richardson do hereby establish a Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force to: 1) advise me, the legislature, and the New Mexico Departments of Health, Human Services, Children, Youth and Families, and Public Education, along with the local school districts, tribal governments, and local community coalitions/taskforces on ways to decrease the number of attempted and completed suicides and improve the overall mental health systems serving our state's youth; 2) develop and present a plan with action steps directed toward these purposes by December 31, 2004; and 3) recommend and support legislative initiatives to reach these goals.

The Council shall be appointed by the Governor, shall be chaired by the Secretary of Health and shall consist of youth and family members who have dealt with the issue of suicide, leaders from the business community, behavioral health providers who work directly with youth, health educators and councilors, statewide suicide coalition representatives, and providers who represent the Native American communities. All members serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

Staffing for the Council shall be provided by the Department of Health in conjunction with the Children Youth and Families Department, the Human Services Department, the Health Policy Commission and the Public Education Department

THIS ORDER supersedes any other previous orders, proclamations, or directives in conflict. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until such time as the Governor rescinds it.

ATTEST:


REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE THIS
THIS 25TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2004

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT SEAL
OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO


BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

