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Zero Suicide Academy Offers Health Care Organizations Approach to Care to Dramatically Reduce Suicides

First-ever Academy focuses on the Zero Suicide approach

Washington, DC – This week, the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) will conduct a first-ever [Zero Suicide Academy](#) for a select group of health care organizations to transform these systems to dramatically reduce suicides among patients in their care. In this two-day training, sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), these sixteen health care organizations, selected from a larger pool of applicants, will learn how to incorporate best and promising practices to improve care and safety for those at risk for suicide and collaborate with the Zero Suicide Academy faculty to develop their own action plans.

“The Zero Suicide Academy grew out of a rising interest by health care organizations to learn how to provide better care for those at risk for suicide. The tools exist to improve care for those struggling with suicide and there is evidence that a comprehensive approach works,” said Julie Goldstein Grumet, Director of Prevention and Practice, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and part of the leadership team for the Action Alliance’s Zero Suicide priority. “Suicide is preventable and health care systems need to embrace and work towards the aspirational goal of preventing ALL suicide deaths for their patients in care.”

Through the competitive application selection process, 16 health care organizations and systems were selected to attend the inaugural Zero Suicide Academy: Adanta Behavioral Health (KY), Care New England Health System (RI), Coleman Professional Services (OH), Community Health Network (IN), Community Reach Center (CO), Comunilife (NY), Group Health Cooperative (WA), Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services (CA), Lehigh Valley Hospital-Muhlenberg (PA), Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (MD), Missouri Suicide Prevention Project (MO), Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OK), Sweetser (ME), Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TN), Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (UT), and WestCare (NV).

[Zero Suicide](#) is a commitment to suicide prevention in health and behavioral health care systems and also a specific set of tools and strategies. It is both a concept and a practice. Its core proposition is that suicide deaths for people under care are preventable and that the bold goal of zero suicides among persons receiving care is an aspirational challenge that health systems should accept. The Zero Suicide approach aims to improve care and outcomes for individuals at risk of suicide in health care systems. It represents a commitment to patient safety – the most

fundamental responsibility of health care – and also to the safety and support of clinical staff who treat and support suicidal patients.

The Action Alliance promotes the adoption of “zero suicides” as an organizing goal for clinical systems by providing support for efforts to transform care through leadership, policies, practices, and outcome measurement. This Action Alliance priority builds on the momentum of the 2011 report released by the Action Alliance’s Clinical Care and Intervention Task Force, [*Suicide Care in Systems Framework*](#).

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

(www.ActionAllianceforSuicidePrevention.org) is the public-private partnership working to advance the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and make suicide prevention a national priority. Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) operates the Secretariat for the Action Alliance, which was launched in 2010 by former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates with the goal of saving 20,000 lives in five years.

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