California Mental Health Services Authority Launches Statewide Suicide Prevention Campaign

As part of its comprehensive Suicide Prevention Initiative, the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) has launched a mass media campaign intended to prepare Californians to prevent suicide by encouraging them to know the warning signs for suicide, find the words to offer help to someone they are concerned about and reach out to resources.

San Diego, CA (PRWEB) December 12, 2012 -- As part of its comprehensive Suicide Prevention Initiative, the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) has launched a mass media campaign intended to prepare Californians to prevent suicide by encouraging them to know the warning signs for suicide, find the words to offer help to someone they are concerned about and reach out to resources.

In 2010, 3,823 Californians took their own lives, and 16,425 people were hospitalized for self-inflicted injuries.

“These facts are a grim reminder of the need for prevention and early intervention programs in California,” said Stephanie Welch, Senior Program Manager for CalMHSA. “The Know the Signs campaign serves as a way for us to educate our communities how to play a role in the prevention and early intervention process by reaching out to loved ones who may be at risk for suicide.”

It’s often difficult for individuals who might be at risk for suicide to reach out for help. Therefore, the campaign speaks directly to individuals who are most likely to see the signs of suicide and respond appropriately, such as family and friends.

“While the signs for suicide can be subtle, they are there,” said Anara Guard, suicide prevention advisor to the campaign. “The campaign goals are to educate people on what those signs are, to recognize them when they are present, and how to intervene early before the situation becomes critical.”

The mass media campaign includes TV, radio, outdoor billboards, online, mobile and print advertisements and is running across the state through January. Most campaign materials are available in both English and Spanish. Campaign materials are also available for download on www.YourVoiceCounts.org, the campaign’s online forum that encourages dialogue and participation for suicide prevention.

“By leveraging the power of existing Counties suicide prevention and mental health programs, we are aiming to lend a level of sustainability and community awareness that we cannot achieve alone, said Welch. “Each County plays a role in extending the reach of our campaign by implementing it in their own backyard.”

The campaign is funded by counties through the voter approved Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) (Prop. 63) and administered by CalMHSA, an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

This suicide prevention social marketing campaign is one of several contracts awarded to realize the goals and objectives of the Suicide Prevention Initiative. Other statewide initiatives funded by the MHSA include Stigma and Discrimination Reduction and Student Mental Health.
The 3 year campaign is funded from September 2011 through June 2014, and aims to achieve the following goals:

• Prepare more Californians to prevent suicide by increasing knowledge of warning signs, how to offer help and local resources.
• Provide individuals who are going through tough times with resources, hope and reassurance that help is available.
• Work with the news media to increase reporting about suicide in ways that are consistent with national recommendations.

For more information on the Know the Signs campaign, visit www.suicideispreventable.org. Para Español, visite www.elsuicidioesprevenible.org.

The Know the Signs Campaign encourages anyone who is in crisis to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to speak with an experienced crisis counselor 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

About Know the Signs

Funded by counties through the voter approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), Know the Signs is a statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign built on three key messages: Know the signs. Find the words. Reach out. The campaign is intended to prepare Californians to prevent suicide by encouraging them to know the warning signs for suicide, find the words to offer help to someone they are concerned about and reach out to resources. Find out more at www.suicideispreventable.org or be a part of the campaign and other statewide suicide prevention efforts by joining the Your Voice Counts online forum at www.yourvoicecounts.org.

About CalMHSA

The California Mental Health Services Authority is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. CalMHSA operates services and education programs on a statewide, regional and local basis. For more information on CalMHSA visit: www.calmhsa.org
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