



State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of the Secretary

April 4, 2014

The Honorable John A. Alario, Jr., President
Louisiana State Senate
P.O. Box 94183, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9183

The Honorable Charles E. Kleckley, Speaker
Louisiana State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 94062, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9062

The Honorable Conrad Appel, Chairman
Senate Education Committee
P.O. Box 94183, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9183

The Honorable Stephen F. Carter, Chairman
House Education Committee
P.O. Box 94062, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9062

Dear President Alario, Speaker Kleckley and Honorable Chairs:

In response to the reporting requirements set forth in Louisiana Revised Statute 17:282.4, the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) offers the following information:

Grant Background

The Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) implemented the Louisiana Partnership for Youth Suicide Prevention (LPYSP) from 2006-2013 through funds awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) under the Garret Lee Smith Memorial Act. The goal of LPYSP was to reduce youth suicides and suicidal behavior in Louisiana. This statewide project targeted approximately 15,000 youth and young adults ages 10-24 and the professionals that work with them since youth of that age group are at increased risk for suicidal ideation. The objectives of the LPYSP were to:

- 1) Promote awareness that youth suicide is a public health problem;
- 2) Create local leadership and sustainability through the development of local coalitions;
- 3) Increase high quality peer support programs;
- 4) Expand gatekeeper trainings (suicide alertness for everyone – safeTALK);
- 5) Expand Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST); and
- 6) Expand and improve data collection systems.

The ASIST and safeTALK trainings are evidence-based programs and their use is encouraged and supported by SAMSHA. The ASIST program workshop is for caregivers who want to feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide, and the safeTALK program is a training that prepares anyone over the age of 15 to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.

2012 School Year

ACT 219 of the 2008 Regular Legislative Session requires that all public school teachers, school counselors, principals and other school administrators participate annually in at least two hours of in-service training in suicide prevention. In an effort to assist schools in implementing this training, OBH funded an eight-hour ACT 219 Training for Trainers for 40 teachers, principals, and school counselors in the summer of 2012. These activities cost approximately \$26,000 and were funded via the SAMHSA grant for the LPYSP. Participants were then asked to return to their regions and provide the ACT 219 required two-hour face-to-face training with their colleagues.

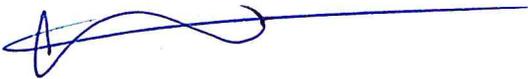
Peer helper support programs with 15+ members were formed at 21 high schools. Other activities from the LPYSP from September 30, 2011, until September of 2012 included 34 gatekeeper trainings with 891 participants. Additionally, general awareness and education training was provided to over 43,500 individuals.

Current Status of OBH Suicide Prevention

The LPYSP Grant ended on September 29, 2013. OBH did apply for a SAMSHA Cooperative Agreements for State-Sponsored Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Grant in June of 2013 but did not receive funding. When the LPYSP grant was ending, OBH used unspent funds to purchase materials to continue the gatekeeper trainings, safeTALK and ASIST. OBH was able to purchase enough materials for approximately 875 individuals to be trained in the 3-hour safeTALK training and 170 individuals to be trained in the two-day ASIST training. While there is no specific OBH appropriation dedicated to Suicide Prevention, OBH worked diligently to build a sustainable trainer network during the term of LPYSP Grant. OBH developed a cadre of OBH staff (State and Field) who can be mobilized to conduct safeTALK and ASIST trainings statewide.

I hope you have found this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact my office at 225.342.2540 should you have any further questions or require additional clarification of DHH suicide prevention activities.

Sincerely,



Courtney Phillips
Deputy Secretary

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee
The Honorable Members of the House Education Committee
David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library