

# Saving Lives in the Tri-State

Facts about Suicide and Learning QPR for Suicide Reduction: Part 1 of a Series

In 1998, David Satcher, MD Surgeon General of the United States, stated that “Suicide is a national health problem.” Today, ten years later, suicide is a national and local concern.

In 2007, Vanderburgh County experienced 40 deaths by suicide, which is the largest number of suicides that have occurred in recent years.

To increase awareness and provide education to the community, the Southwestern Indiana Suicide Prevention Coalition was formed by local hospitals, mental health organizations, universities, youth service agencies and the coroner’s office to reduce death by suicide.

The task force devotes time to educating our community about suicide. A training program called Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is being used to train individuals on how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, know how to offer hope and know how to get help and save lives.

## Important Facts

- Over 90% of all people who die by suicide are suffering a major psychiatric illness.
- Firearms are used in 6 of every 10 suicides.
- Suicide rates are highest among Americans 45-54 years old.
- In the month prior to their suicide, 75% of elderly persons had a visit with a physician.
- Males are four times more likely to die by suicide than females.
- Over half of all suicides in America occur in adult men aged 25-55, and most of these men are employed.
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia and influenza, and chronic lung disease, COMBINED.

On average, 89 suicides occur each day in the United States. This equates to a suicide occurring every 17 minutes and more than 32,000 individuals dying by suicide annually. Of these suicides, 4,316 are people between the ages of 15-24 years old who died at a rate of one suicide every two hours.

In 2004, 810,975 known suicide attempts took place in the United States and 704 Hoosiers completed suicide in this same year. Suicide has become the 11<sup>th</sup> ranking cause of death among Americans. Homicide is the 13<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death which means that 77.6% more people killed themselves than were murdered by others.

We hope these facts give you an understanding that mental illness and suicide are serious issues and motivate you to learn more about suicide prevention.

In three coming reports, we will explore myths and facts about suicide, teach you ways to recognize warning signs of suicide and then give you ways you can save a life through QPR by questioning, persuading, and referring people for help.

If you or someone you know is in need of medical treatment for a mental illness or are having suicidal thoughts, please call our 24 hour emergency/suicide hotline at 812.423.7791.

If you know of an organization interested in saving lives from suicide, we offer a free one-hour course on QPR. Classes can be arranged by calling Rebecca R. Glines, Director, Communications at 812.436.4221.