

RESOLUTION NO. R-023- 090

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, COLORADO**

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING
September 2023 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**

Whereas, suicide is a serious public health issue in the United States, with a record high 49,500 people dying by suicide in the U.S. last year; and

Whereas, nationally, for every person who dies by suicide, millions more seriously consider suicide, make a plan or attempt suicide; and

Whereas, suicide ranked as the 9th leading cause of death in Colorado in 2022, decreasing by 6.1% from 2021, but remains the number 1 cause of death among adolescents and young adults in Colorado aged 15-24 years old; and

Whereas, people experiencing a mental health crisis, including contemplating suicide, can now call 988 to reach the statewide Colorado Crisis and Support Line run by Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners. Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners is also the local National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provider. Switching to an easy-to-remember 988 as the ‘911’ for suicide prevention and mental health crisis services will make it easier for Americans in crisis to access the help they need and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health issues. People can also call 1-844-493-TALK or text TALK to 38255 to reach the Colorado Crisis Line; and

Whereas, suicide is a complex issue, and not only the result of illness, but also impacted by societal conditions that stigmatize certain groups or mental health itself; and

Whereas, Douglas County recognizes certain disproportionately vulnerable and at-risk groups based on state and local assessments, including middle aged men, pre- and postnatal mothers and families, LGBTQIA+ youth, older adults and Veterans; and

Whereas, LGBTQIA+ youth in Douglas County are up to 10 times more likely to attempt suicide, five times more likely to make a plan, and four times as likely to seriously consider attempting suicide compared to their straight peers; middle-aged men represent the largest group in number who die by suicide in Douglas County; older adults in Douglas County have the highest rate of suicide per 100,000 residents; and Douglas County veterans, while approximately 5% of the Douglas County population represent 16% of the county’s suicides between 2004 and 2022; and

Whereas, suicides were declining in Douglas County from 2018 to 2020, with an uptick in 2021 and decreasing again in 2022 with 53 total deaths, with the highest number in the 45-64 age group, predominantly men; and

Whereas, the Douglas Arapahoe Suicide Prevention Alliance merged with the Douglas County Mental Health Initiative (DCMHI) in 2021, and the DCMHI subsequently published a Roadmap for Suicide Prevention in Douglas County outlining strategies and protective factors known to impact suicide risk; and

Whereas, programs of the DCMHI, like the Community Response Team Co-Responder program has responded to hundreds of calls for suicidal ideation since program inception in 2017, and through their response to crisis mental health calls paired with follow-up and resource navigation has saved lives; and

Whereas, the DCMHI and the Douglas County Health Department are approaching suicide prevention as a joint venture, and will work in alignment together with community partners; and

Whereas, Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) identified injury prevention, including suicide related injury and death, as a priority in its public health improvement plan; and

Whereas, DCHD created a goal of reducing suicide related injury, morbidity, and mortality among all douglas county residents by 2026 through the development of a suicide prevention workgroup in partnership with DCMHI; and

Whereas, the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners has dedicated \$9,060,800 of the County's \$68.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to mental and behavioral health programming, \$137,500 of which was designated for 9-8-8 implementation in Colorado, and \$1.5 million designated for suicide prevention programming in Douglas County; and

Whereas, the DCMHI and DCHD encourage:

- Early identification and treatment, which can make a difference in successful management of mental health conditions and recovery;
- Maintenance of mental well-being and learning the symptoms of mental distress in order to get help when it is needed;
- Engagement of every citizen and community in ending the silence and stigma that surrounds suicide and mental health, and discouraged people from getting help; and
- Public education and civic activities, which can encourage mental health through positive connection, and help improve the lives of individuals and families affected by suicide.

NOW WHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Douglas, Colorado do hereby proclaim September 1 through September 30th, 2023 as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month to shine a light on mental health conditions and fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equitable access to care.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this 12th day of September 2023, in Castle Rock, Douglas County, Colorado.

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, COLORADO**

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Abe Laydon
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BY: ABE LAYDON, Chair

DocuSigned by:
Roberta Nelson
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ATTEST: ROBERTA NELSON, Deputy Clerk

