Suicide in New Mexico

How many people in New Mexico died by suicide in 2017?
◇ 491 New Mexicans died by suicide, an age-adjusted rate of 23.2 deaths/100,000 residents.
   ◇ Suicide accounted for 8.7% of all years of potential life lost before 75 years in NM
   ◇ Suicide was the 9th leading cause of death among New Mexico residents. Among NM residents 10-34 years, suicide was the second leading cause of death by age group and among those 35-44 years, it was the fourth leading cause.
   ◇ New Mexico had the fourth highest suicide rate in the U.S. in 2016

What is the trend in suicide rates over the past decade?
◇ Suicide rates have been increasing in New Mexico and the U.S. over the past decade.
   ◇ New Mexico’s rate has consistently been more than 50% higher than the U.S. rate
   ◇ New Mexico suicide rates increased by 28.2% from 2009-2017.
   ◇ Rates among Whites increased 35%; rates among Hispanics increased by 28.7%
   ◇ Rates among those 65+ years increased significantly – by 60.9% – while rates among those 10-24 years increased by 37.9%

Who dies by suicide in New Mexico?
◇ In 2017, Whites and American Indians had the highest rates of suicide — 29.7 and 21.1 deaths per 100,000 persons, respectively.
   ◇ For Whites, the suicide rate was highest among those 45 years and older
   ◇ For American Indians, the rate was highest among those 15-24 years
   ◇ The suicide rate for men was three and one-half times that for women.
   ◇ The rate was highest for males 85 years and older and for females 45-54 years old
   ◇ Rates among residents 10-24 years showed the largest increase among age groups from 2016-2017, with the steepest increase seen among those younger than 20 years of age.
   ◇ 53% of those who died by suicide in 2017 used a firearm
      ◇ Suicide rates by firearm have increased by 28.6% over the past decade
      ◇ The male firearm suicide rate in 2017 was more than six times higher than the female firearm suicide rate
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Why is suicide a public health issue?

◊ Suicide is associated with having a mental illness and/or substance use diagnosis, psychosocial trauma or conflict, recent loss, family history of suicide and personal history of suicide attempt.

◊ Most suicides have multiple precipitating conditions such as depression, intimate partner problems, physical health conditions, financial challenges and legal problems.

◊ Comprehensive strategies incorporating all levels of government, healthcare providers, schools, community-based organizations, and community members can prevent suicides.

Warning Signs of suicide include:

⇒ Talking about wanting to die
⇒ Looking for a way to kill oneself
⇒ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
⇒ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
⇒ Talking about being a burden to others
⇒ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
⇒ Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
⇒ Sleeping too little or too much
⇒ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
⇒ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
⇒ Displaying extreme mood swings

The more of these signs a person shows, the greater the risk. Warning signs are associated with suicide but may not be what causes a suicide.

What To Do if someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

⇒ Do not leave the person alone
⇒ Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt
⇒ Call the New Mexico Crisis Line at 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474) or the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
⇒ Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional


For more information about mental health data in New Mexico, please contact: Carol Moss, Mental Health Epidemiologist, Epidemiology & Response Division, New Mexico Department of Health at Carol.Moss@state.nm.us