

## Clackamas County Inspires Hope for Suicide Prevention Month

September 20, 2023

Today, Clackamas County hosted a Signs of Hope Sign Planting to inspire hope and recognize Suicide Prevention Month in September. Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith also applauded the community efforts that led to a recent decline in suicides statewide, as well as announced a new Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan to expand this important work to save lives.

“When we connect, even just to one person, we feel seen, less isolated and more likely to reach out for help. We want to remind our community that connection fosters hope,” said Chair Smith. “The important work to prevent suicide remains a top priority for Clackamas County, and we encourage anyone interested to join the Clackamas Coalition to Prevent Suicide.”

The pandemic created unique challenges for suicide prevention efforts, but coalitions and partners across the state quickly adjusted to the needs of local communities. This resulted in a decrease in the number of suicides in Oregon from 908 in 2019 to 835 in 2020. This ongoing work at the state level paved the way for Clackamas County to develop and implement its own suicide prevention strategic plan which was released earlier this year.

As a result, Clackamas County experienced a 24% decrease in the number of deaths by suicide from 2021 to 2022, according to the county’s first-ever Suicide Fatality Review Annual Report. The report was created by the Suicide Fatality Review Committee, a multidisciplinary group of local professionals and community members that meets to evaluate the circumstances leading to and causing suicides in order to improve community and service systems and to take action to prevent suicide.

“While a decreasing trend is encouraging, still far too many Clackamas County families and communities experience the devastating loss of a loved one to suicide. Our work is not done,” said Galli Murray, Clackamas County Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

The Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan focuses on four key priority areas and includes action steps for each: youth and young adults, means safety, health care and community. It provides a blueprint for expanding a comprehensive and collective approach to meeting diverse needs of the community and to preventing suicide and its devastating consequences.

If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out to the Clackamas County Crisis and Support Line at 503-655-8585 or call/text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.