



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

Steven L. Beshear
Governor

Division of Communications
275 E. Main Street, 4C-A
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-6786
Fax: (502) 564-0274
www.chfs.ky.gov

Janie Miller
Secretary

Statewide News Release

Media Contact: Gwenda Bond or Beth Fisher
(502) 564-6786, ext. 3325 and 4012

CHFS to Kick Off Suicide Prevention Campaign

FRANKFORT, KY (Aug. 22, 2008) - To help end the stigma and silence associated with suicide, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group (KSPG) and the Department for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addiction Services are launching a public awareness campaign about one of the most preventable, yet common, forms of death.

The "Let's Talk: Kentuckians Affected by Suicide End the Silence" awareness campaign will launch at an event at 2:30 p.m. on Sept. 4 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort. The event, which will feature a new educational video, is designed to educate Kentuckians about the warning signs of suicide; make people more aware of the prevalence of suicide in society; and help people discuss suicide.

"The 'Let's Talk' campaign is truly a courageous effort in our continued work to prevent suicide in Kentucky," said CHFS Secretary Janie Miller. "Far too many Kentuckians are suffering in silence, and warning signs are being overlooked. By training our communities to be proactive and teaching our loved ones, friends and neighbors how to communicate about suicide, we can reduce the number of suicide deaths in Kentucky."

According to a 2007 study, 64 percent of Kentucky adults knew at least one person who had attempted or died by suicide. The "Let's Talk" campaign takes a closer look at what it's like to be personally affected by suicide, and features several Kentuckians who will share their personal stories, as well as what they've learned from the experience.

"Keeping suicide a secret perpetuates suicide," said Jenny Jones, chair of the KSPG steering committee who lost her mother, grandmother and other family members to suicide and is featured in the "Let's Talk" video. "For many struggling with mental health issues or experiencing thoughts of suicide, there is no outlet. We have to change that."

In addition to Jones, other stories in the video include the friend of a young Marine who died by suicide after returning to Kentucky from war and a parent discussing youth suicide contagion (one suicide becoming the trigger for other suicides). The video also includes information on suicide on college campuses, suicide among select ages or populations, and suicide among Kentuckians affected by HIV/AIDS.

The "Let's Talk" event will be emceed by WHAS radio talk show host Francene Cucinello and will be broadcast to locations across the state via satellite through the assistance of WLEX-TV in Lexington. Participants will receive community action materials to use in their hometowns.

Seating for the general public at the "Let's Talk" kick-off is limited, and reservations are required by contacting Cheryl Ligon at (502) 564-4456 or Cheryl.ligon@ky.gov.

For more information about how to save a life, visit www.kentuckysuicideprevention.org or call (502) 564-4456.

-30-

