

# 2021-2022

# State Public Policy Priorities

## Lead

Issues on which AFSP will play a leadership role – developing the policy position, marshaling support, and generating advocacy activity:

- Implement and support funding for comprehensive K-12 school mental health and suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention initiatives
- Uniformly implement and enforce Mental Health Parity laws and regulations, and include reporting and oversight provisions within state laws
- Increase the number of health professionals who receive regular trauma- and evidence-informed education and training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management \*
- Increase and sustain adequate state and local funding for crisis lines and crisis services, and expand the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network of local crisis intervention centers in all states
- Implement risk-based firearm removal laws when voluntary removal is unsuccessful or impossible and suicide risk is imminent (e.g., extreme risk protection orders, gun violence restraining orders, and related court orders)\*
- Increase funding for, and assist in the implementation and evaluation of, state suicide prevention initiatives and plans to prevent suicide across the lifespan

## Collaborate

Issues on which AFSP will work as part of a coalition or group, providing active support to achieve these important policy objectives:

- Support higher education policies and programs that promote mental health and provide suicide prevention tools and resources to students, faculty, and staff
- Oppose the use of conversion therapy or sexual orientation change counseling as treatment for LGBTQ individuals
- Expand the behavioral healthcare workforce and address provider shortages in underserved areas through loan forgiveness and related programs
- Minimize barriers to telehealth access for mental health care and ensure coverage for those services
- Promote the construction of and funding for barriers to prevent suicide from bridges and other jumping sites
- Promote policies and programs to improve access to mental health care and prevent suicide in correctional facilities\*

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- Promote policies that seek to identify Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI) suffered by a first responder as a compensable injury or occupational disease, and establish employee assistance programs and training programs related to job-related stress management and suicide prevention
- Implement and support funding for policies and programs that include suicide prevention education as a basic component of firearm safety\*
- Train law enforcement officers and other first responders on mental health and suicide prevention awareness, including recognizing mental health conditions and behavioral health disorders, techniques for crisis de-escalation, and knowledge of appropriate community services and resources
- Promote initiatives for Veteran and Servicemember suicide prevention, including increased data collection, access to care, and public education and training
- Improve access to culturally informed, evidence-based quality mental health care for diverse and minority populations and underserved communities

## Support

Issues related to AFSP's mission that will advance public understanding of suicide prevention:

- Increase access to effective mental health and suicide prevention resources for farming and rural communities
- Increase funding for and dissemination of Mental Health First Aid programs
- Fully implement the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) in all 50 states and the District of Columbia
- Increase funding to address substance use disorders, including opioid and alcohol use, through research, education, prevention, and treatment
- Support bullying prevention legislation, policies, and programs that promote safe messaging around bullying and suicide

## Explore

Issues that require further exploration or policy research/analysis and are not yet AFSP policy proposals:

- The role peer support programs can play in reducing suicide risk and attempts
- Research and policies on assisted death (other common terms include physician assisted suicide or Death with Dignity laws)
- Firearms policies as a means to mitigate suicide risk and reduce suicide including safe storage, temporary transfers, and waiting periods\*
- Policies and programs that promote mental health and prevent suicidal behavior in the workplace

Please note: Issues within each category are not listed in priority order

\*Indicates a policy related to the four critical areas within AFSP's Project 2025, see [afsp.org/project2025](https://afsp.org/project2025)