

INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH SAVES LIVES AND MONEY

# Suicide

Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States. In 2017, someone died by suicide every 11 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Tragically, statistics like this seem to be getting worse, not better, as the number of suicides rises across the country.<sup>2</sup> Nationwide, researchers are working to better understand the causes of suicide, develop new tools to identify and assist at-risk individuals, and in other ways address this growing public health problem.

## TODAY

**47,173**

Americans died by suicide in 2017.<sup>3</sup>

Suicide rates have gone up

**30%**

or more since 1999 in half of all U.S. states.<sup>4</sup>

Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** among Americans aged 15-24.<sup>5</sup>

## COST

Suicide costs the U.S. almost

**\$70 billion**

per year between lifetime medical expenses and lost work.<sup>1</sup>

Nationally, non-fatal suicide attempts cost

**\$5.25 billion**

in medical costs and indirect economic costs.<sup>7</sup>

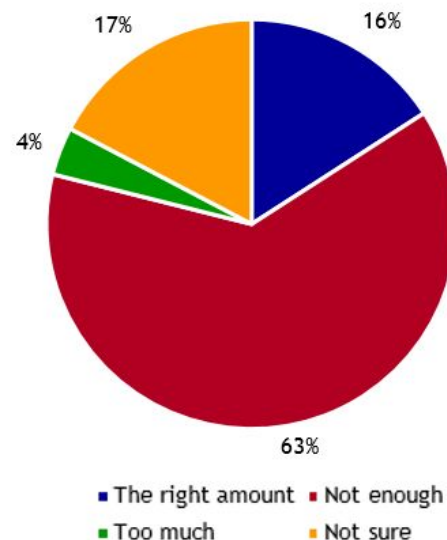
## Research Delivers Solutions

Research has explored whether there are differences between people who **think** about suicide and those who **attempt** suicide. One study compared these groups in a **cognitive task** that measured **inhibition**, or the ability to stop an impulse. Based on the brain activity measured, the researchers found that participants who attempted suicide were less able to detect the need for inhibitory control.<sup>8</sup>

In 2017, other researchers examined data from numerous studies and found that “**thwarted belongingness**” (feelings of isolation, of not belonging), and “**perceived burdensomeness**” (feelings of being “dispensable,” more of a burden than of worth), were the two most consistent emotions among individuals contemplating suicide and among those who attempt it.<sup>9</sup>

Additional research examined the effectiveness of a **family based cognitive therapy** called **Safe Alternatives for Teens and Youths (SAFETY)**, which teaches both youth and their parents how to safely deal with potential triggers and harmful thoughts or behaviors. The researchers enrolled adolescents who had self-harmed or attempted suicide and their parents in the SAFETY program and found reduced suicide attempts compared to those not in SAFETY therapy. For every three enrollees, researchers estimated one possible attempt was prevented.<sup>10</sup>

The U.S. spends about 5 cents of each health dollar on research to prevent, cure and treat disease and disability. Do you think that this is too much, the right amount, or not enough?



Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2019

# Suicide

## Then. Now. Imagine.

### THEN

A lack of data and difficulty in identifying predictive risk factors made recognizing patients at risk for suicide challenging for clinicians.<sup>11</sup>

### NOW

Social media posts offer researchers large amounts of data, allowing them to pinpoint patterns in suicide language online and protect those at risk.<sup>12</sup>

### IMAGINE

A world without suicide.

Though more men die by suicide than women, the rate of

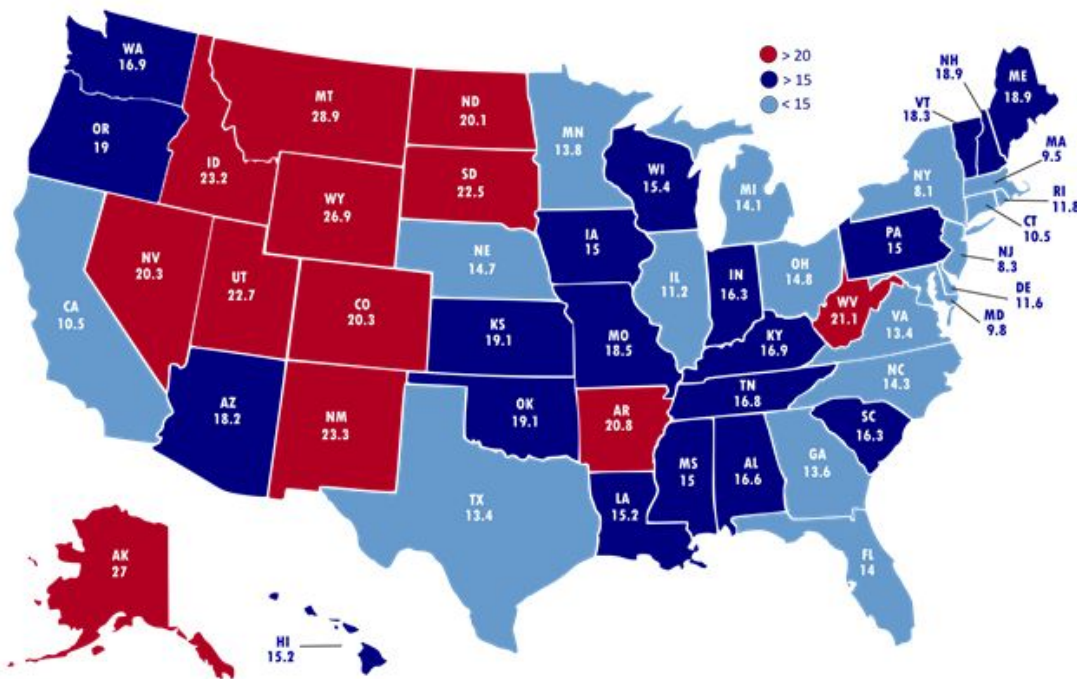
# women

who died by suicide increased

# 53%

between 1999-2017, compared to 26% for men.<sup>2</sup>

## Number of Deaths by Suicide per 100,000 Residents in 2017



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Center for Disease Control

1. "Preventing Suicide", CDC, 2019.
2. "Suicide Mortality in the United States 1999-2017", CDC, 2018.
3. "Suicide Statistics", American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2017.
4. "Suicide Rates Rising Across the U.S.", CDC, 2018.
5. "Deaths: Leading Causes for 2017", National Vital Stats Report, 2018.
6. "Does Depression Increase the Risk for Suicide?", HHS.gov.
7. Shephard et al. "Suicide and Suicidal Attempts in the U.S.: Costs and Policy Implications" *Jrnl of the American Association of Suicidology*, 2015.
8. Albanese et al. Impaired Conflict Detection Differentiates Suicide Attempters From Ideating Nonattempters: Evidence From Event-Related Potentials" *Biological Psychiatry*, 2019.
9. Chu et al. "The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of a Decade of Cross-National Research" *Psychol Bull*, 2017.
10. Rosenbaum et al. "Cognitive-Behavioral Family Treatment for Suicide Attempt Prevention: A Randomized Controlled Trial" *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*, 2017.
11. Hughes "Can the Clinician Predict Suicide?" *Psychiatric Services*, 1995.
12. Jashinsky et al. "Tracking Suicide Risk Factors Through Twitter in the U.S." *Crisis*, 2014.

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