

# HONORING NATIVE LIFE

NM Clearinghouse for Native American Suicide Prevention



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National Academies

*Sciences Engineering Medicine*

Suicide Prevention in Indigenous Communities

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# Background on Creation of Clearinghouse

- Clearinghouse was legislatively created after several youth suicide clusters occurred in NM Tribal communities in 2009/2010.
- Recognition that while NM's 22 tribes are unique in their cultures and communities, there might be some benefit to create a central site to provide suicide prevention and post-vention information, data, training and other support.
- At the time of the second cluster, a statewide workgroup was initiated between the Tribes, the UNM Center for Rural and Community Behavioral Health (CRCBH), The State of New Mexico's Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and The NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (BHPC), and the Indian Health Service (IHS) to begin coordination of information and support statewide.



# Background on Creation of Clearinghouse

- In March 2011, New Mexico's State Legislature passed legislation establishing a Clearinghouse for Native American Suicide Prevention (Senate Bill 417).
- In consultation with New Mexico's Indian Affairs Department and New Mexico's interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative, the "Clearinghouse" was created to provide culturally appropriate suicide prevention, intervention, and post-event assistance statewide a statewide resource for tribal agencies and communities to access culturally appropriate information, technical assistance and training for prevention, intervention, and/or post-intervention efforts to address suicide.
- Senate Bill 417 passed both NM legislative houses unanimously, however, all funding was stripped from the bill including funds budgeted for "start-up".
- The agreed upon home for the Clearinghouse was the Native American Behavioral Health Program at Community Behavioral Health Division (CBH) within UNM's Psychiatry Department because of CBH's clinical, research, and systems experience with tribes across the entire state.



# Creation of Honoring Native Life Program

The “Clearinghouse” Initiative evolved into the Honoring Native Life Program (HNL). Staff and stakeholder believed “Honoring Native Life” was a more appropriate and culturally relevant name for the program given the difficult and often taboo topic for Tribal communities.

The HNL project team of Native American professionals with multidisciplinary backgrounds, works with a Tribal Advisory Council to prioritize Tribal suicide prevention efforts throughout the state. HNL has developed three focus areas based in public health approaches: 1) Tribal leadership and youth engagement to support protective factors; 2) Tribal community support through education and programmatic technical assistance; and 3) Build tribal capacity for crisis intervention and postvention services.



# New Mexico Suicide Facts

- NM has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest suicide age-adjusted rates for suicide in the nation
- The American Indian population historically has had the highest rates of suicide per 100,000 population in NM consistently over the last 10 years or more
- Suicide rates for the period 2011 to 2020 indicate a 58% increase for American Indians
- American Indian ages 25-34 have the highest suicide rates

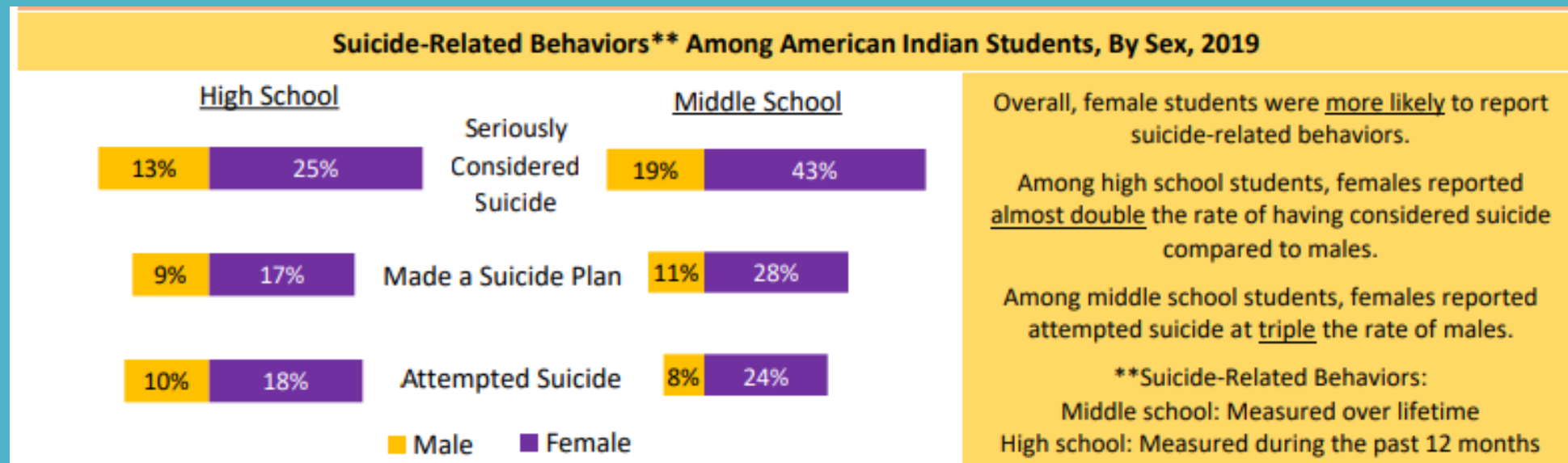
Source: New Mexico Department of Health 2022 Suicide Fact Sheet



The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NM-YRRS) is a classroom-based survey used to assess health risks and protective factors among NM high school and middle school students.

Source: Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center; 2019 NMYRRS Suicide Factsheet.

- Since 2015, attempted suicide has remained higher among AI students compared to NM students overall.
- Between 2013 and 2019, attempted suicide among AI middle school students increased from 9% to 15%
- Between 2013 and 2019, attempted suicide among AI high school students remained relative the same with an increase of 13% to 14%



# Honoring Native Life Mission

Honoring Native Life is a multidisciplinary team of UNM faculty and staff with Native American behavioral health and organizational expertise, and deep cultural connections to our Tribal communities as American Indian professionals in the field.

The mission of the project is to provide a centrally based resource and support to improve health and wellbeing among Native American populations in order to achieve our overall aim of suicide reduction through capacity building, community-based program support, and youth engagement.

Our approach is to conduct all activities in consultation and in partnership with communities and agencies serving Native American populations throughout New Mexico.

HNL has developed *direct* relationships with each of the 23 Tribal nations and their health and wellness programs that encompass behavioral health and continues to increase outreach and direct community support.

HNL also works to leverage clinical experience and knowledge within the Department to support and provide guidance to Tribes to reduce suicide and suicide risk.



# Honoring Native Life Community Based Training

- Partnership with NM Department of Indian Affairs and the Indigenous Youth Council
  - Hosted the Inaugural Indigenous Youth Council Youth Summit in June of 2021.
  - Upcoming youth summit session planned for June 17-18, 2022
- Annual Honoring Native Life Youth Summits
- Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
- Youth Training; Yellow Ribbon curriculum
- Alliance-building for Suicide Prevention and Youth Resilience (ASPYP) clinical training
- Breaking the Silence Curriculum adaptation
- Tribal Opioid Summit
- Tribal Suicide Prevention Summit and Crisis Response Team development summit.





# Honoring Native Life Annual Youth Summits

Annual Youth Summits since 2016 hosting over 1,000 participants aged 14-25. The Summits provide skill building and leadership development activities as well as presentations to address topics like bullying, emotion regulation, and awareness for mental wellness.

Established a partnership with NM Department of Indian Affairs and the Indigenous Youth Council

Hosted the Inaugural Indigenous Youth Council Youth Summit in June 2021.

Upcoming youth summit session planned for June 17-18, 2022



# Honoring Native Life Policy and Advocacy

## New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition – American Indian Suicide Prevention Workgroup

- In late 2018 and 2019 the New Mexico Department of Health, Office of Injury Prevention, Epidemiology and Response Division began efforts to revitalize the NM Suicide Prevention Coalition.
- In 2019 a Statewide Coalition meeting facilitated a meeting of the New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition comprised of about 60 individuals from across the state involved in suicide awareness, prevention, intervention, postvention, crisis services, and data surveillance.
- Stakeholders present facilitated the generation of a list of specific activities and strategies designed to meet aspects of four strategic planning goals identified at earlier SP Coalition meetings held in Spring 2019 and late 2018 and goals of the Department of Health's 2020 State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)



# Honoring Native Life Policy and Advocacy

- The American Indian Suicide Prevention (AISP) Workgroup appointed Dr. Rachell Tenorio, AAIHB to Chair the group. The Workgroup is now housed within the Honoring Native Life Program
  - Since its inception, the AISP has worked to develop a guidance document for the workgroup mission and vision
  - Advocated for the reestablishment of a BHSD Tribal Liaison
  - Participated in a Strategic Planning session to identify priorities for the group for the calendar year 2022.
    - *Key Priority Areas include:*
      - Community Centered Approaches Grounded in Indigenous Knowledge
      - Connecting Systems and Building Capacity
      - Addressing Mental Health Taboo and Suicide
      - Engaging Youth and LGBTQ2S population

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