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“Tuscarawas County Leaders Announce Plans to Combat County’s Suicide Rates”

NEW PHILADELPHIA—During a joint news conference today, Tuscarawas County leaders announced plans to combat the County’s suicide rates and save lives. In 2024, 21 Tuscarawas County residents lost their lives to suicide, which reflected an increase of 3 over the previous year. Tuscarawas County is experiencing a suicide completion rate that is higher than the State average, with 22.9 suicides completed per 100,000 population in Tuscarawas County, compared to 15.5 suicides completed per 100,000 population in Ohio in 2024. (Rates are calculated as deaths per 100,000 population, and the Healthy People 2030 National goal for suicide is 12.8 or less per capita.)

Tuscarawas County Sheriff Orvis Campbell, Tuscarawas County Coroner Dr. Jeff Cameron, ADAMHS Board Executive Director Natalie Bollon, and Tuscarawas County Health Commissioner Katie Seward are encouraging the public to join the fight to prevent suicides by engaging in community initiatives to reduce suicide rates and save lives. “We are incredibly concerned that suicides are increasing in Tuscarawas County,” explained Bollon. “It’s only through community-wide efforts, like attending the upcoming QPR trainings, that we’ll be able to decrease the number of people dying by suicide. If you or someone you know is struggling, call the free and confidential support lines at 988 or 330-343-1811 or visit with walk-in behavioral health Rapid Care in New Phila. Support is available.”

Dr. Cameron noted a marked increase in the number of suicide cases investigated by his office in Tuscarawas County over the past few years. “We’ve been seeing a shift to the male gender. All of our last 23 suicide cases were in males.”

Seward stated that in response to rising suicide rates, the Tuscarawas County Suicide Fatality Review Committee was formed in 2024 to analyze suicide data and lead collaborative efforts to reduce suicide deaths. Of the 21 completed suicides among Tuscarawas County residents in 2024, 100% were males, and 67% were men over age 50. Further, some of the men had experienced a recent relationship issue or significant health

concern as contributing factors. “Suicide is a tragedy that impacts the lives of our families, friends, co-workers, and even our entire communities,” noted Seward. “According to a study published by the National Institutes of Health in 2019, each suicide impacts 135 people who knew the person, which is a large group of people who may need support after losing a friend or loved one. We must make improvements in suicide prevention and mental health support to help our Tuscarawas County neighbors know that their lives matter and it’s normal to seek help.”

Sheriff Campbell stated, “Every Tuscarawas County resident can help reduce suicide in our communities every time we remind someone that help is available and they are not alone. Together, we can save lives.”

The following projects are already underway to reduce suicides in Tuscarawas County:

- **Suicide Prevention Videos:** As of today, two YouTube videos were released to encourage those who are thinking about suicide to seek help. One video features Sheriff Campbell, and the other video features Bollon and Campbell. The videos share common suicide warning signs and highlight how to get help. Video links will be shared through social media and YouTube and can be found at <https://youtu.be/6kr8aX0Mf4U> and <https://youtu.be/dupFHns89zs> .
- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Trainings Scheduled:** Community members are encouraged to attend a QPR training. QPR is a suicide prevention training to help participants learn three simple steps to help save a life from suicide. Trainings last approximately 2 hours and will be offered at no charge to the public on Thursday, April 10th from 12 pm to 2 pm and again at 6 pm to 8 pm at the ADAMHS Board office, 119 Garland Dr. SW, New Philadelphia. Registration is required, and registration information will be available at the Empower Tusc and ADAMHS Board websites and Facebook pages (<https://empowertusc.com/> or <https://adamhtc.org/>) .
- **Man Therapy.org:** This free website offers a non-threatening approach to help men struggling with anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, or just not feeling like themselves. Posters to promote Man Therapy.org are in place across Tuscarawas County.
- **Suicide Prevention Task Force:** The ADAMHS Board and Empower Tusc are working collaboratively with local organizations. Four subcommittees have been developed to address the 2024 trends: suicide deaths in men over the age of 50; the use of firearms in suicide deaths; suicide deaths coinciding with partner relationship issues; and suicide deaths in men with a life-altering diagnosis.

For more information about suicide prevention efforts in Tuscarawas County, call the ADAMHS Board at 330-364-6488.

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