



# A Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention Among Rural Tennesseans

# Statements of Acknowledgement

- **Content warning: This presentation contains references to themes of suicide and self-injurious behavior which some people may find distressing. In response, we encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include stepping away while some or all of this content is being presented.**



**Call 855-274-7471**

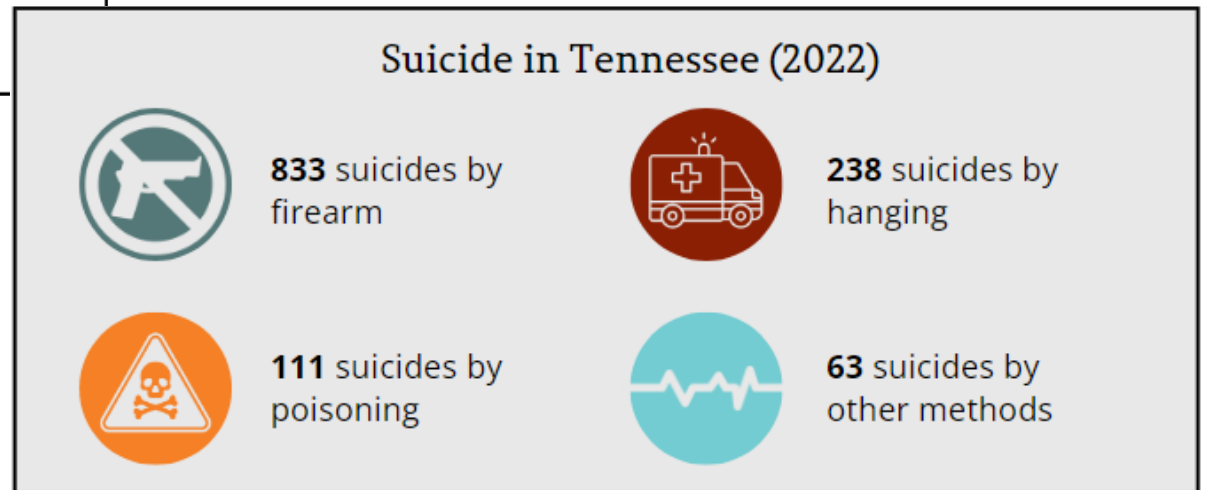
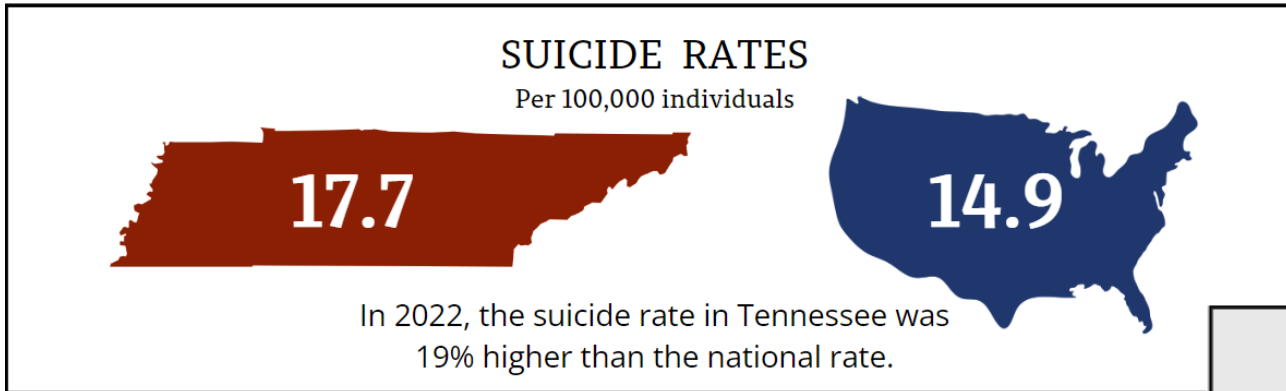


**Text TN to 741741**

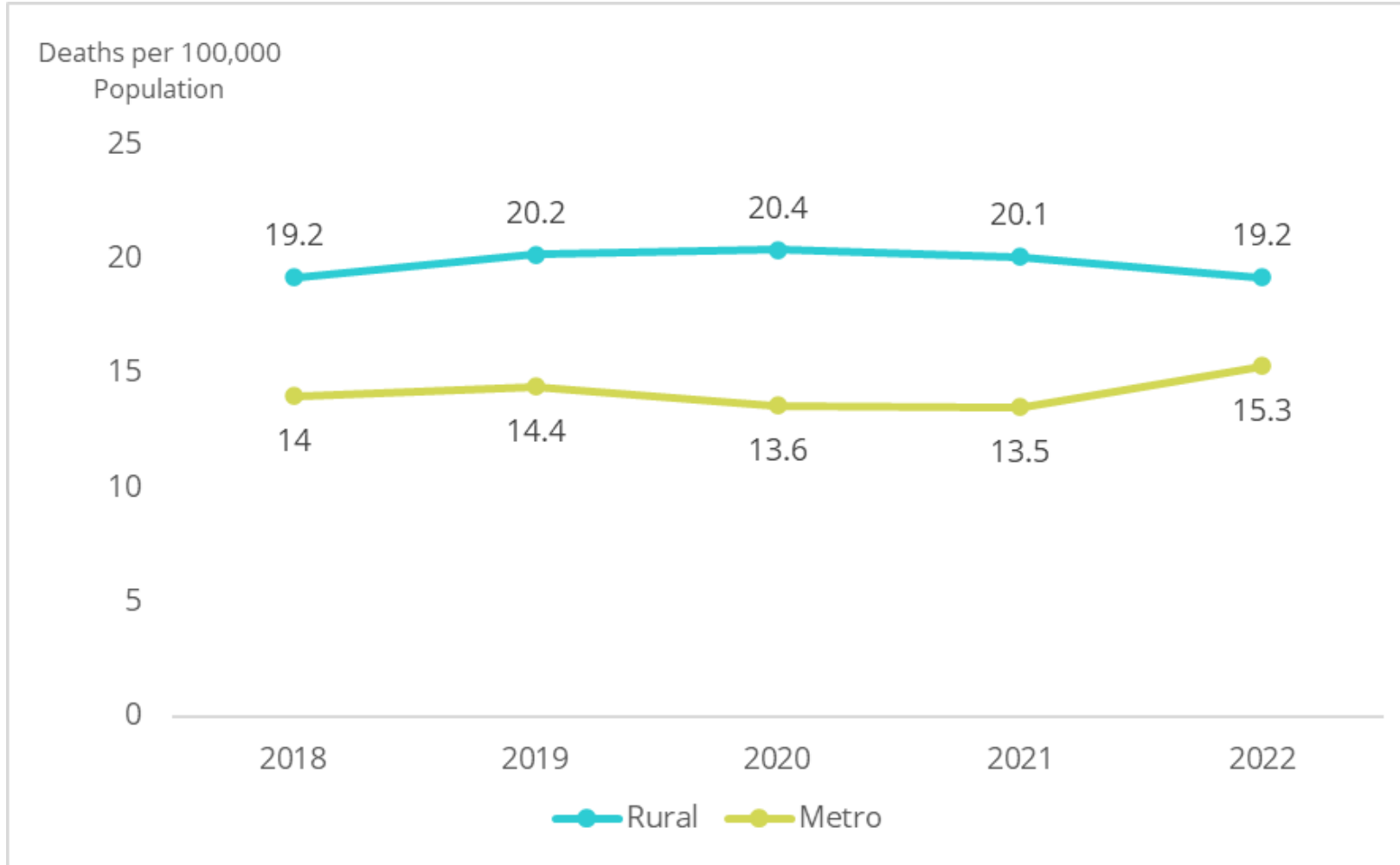
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# Suicide in Tennessee

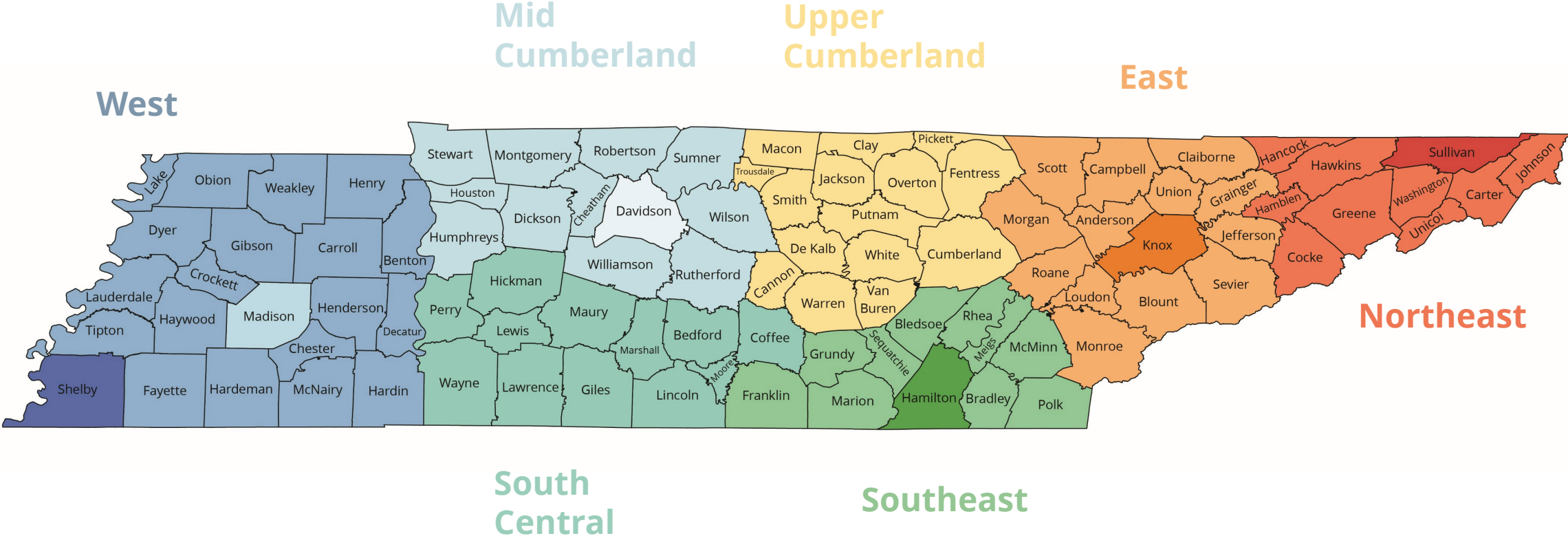
- In 2022, **1,245** Tennesseans died by suicide.



# Suicide Among Rural Tennesseans



# How Do We Define "Rural?"



# Suicide-Related Syndromic Surveillance: ESSENCE

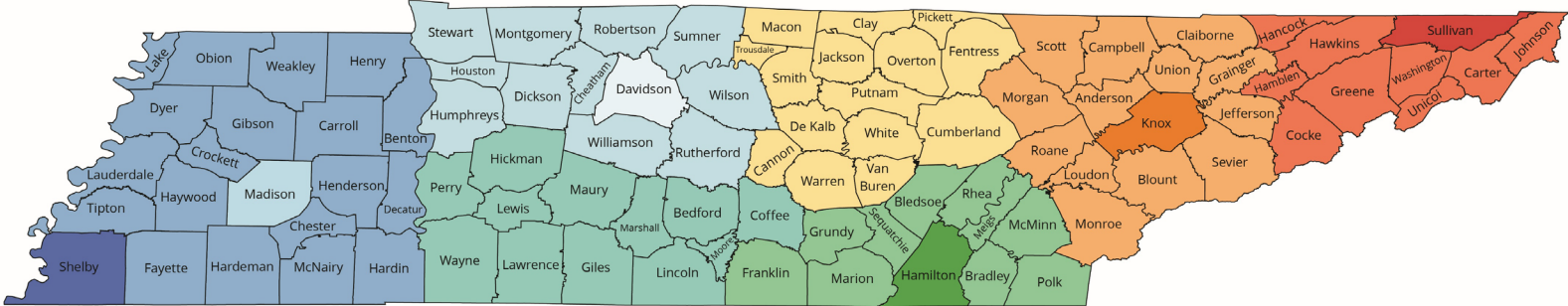
- In Tennessee, 100% of non-federally funded hospitals with emergency departments report into ESSENCE.
  - TDH receives weekly data on all suicide-related emergency department visits.
- Epidemiologist then reviews chief complaints, triage notes, and provider diagnoses.
- If a county reports an above-average number of suicide-related emergency department visits for a set age group, an ESSENCE alert is triggered for that county and age group.
  - ESSENCE alerts include trends in demographics that were noticed, and any risk factors noted during reported visits.

**E**lectronic  
**S**urveillance  
**S**ystem for the  
**E**arly  
**N**otification of  
**C**ommunity-based  
**E**pidemics



# 2023 Suicide-Related Emergency Department Visits

Region	Number of Visits	Rate (per 100,000 residents)
Davidson*	7,298	1,030.6
Upper Cumberland	3,222	866.0
Knox*	4,211	851.4
South Central	3,439	785.4
Sullivan*	1,229	764.2
Hamilton*	2,711	723.6
Southeast	2,484	712.3
East	5,564	697.7
Mid-Cumberland	9,919	686.2
Madison*	626	630.8
Northeast	2,094	574.3
West	2,712	510.46
Shelby*	4,076	444.8

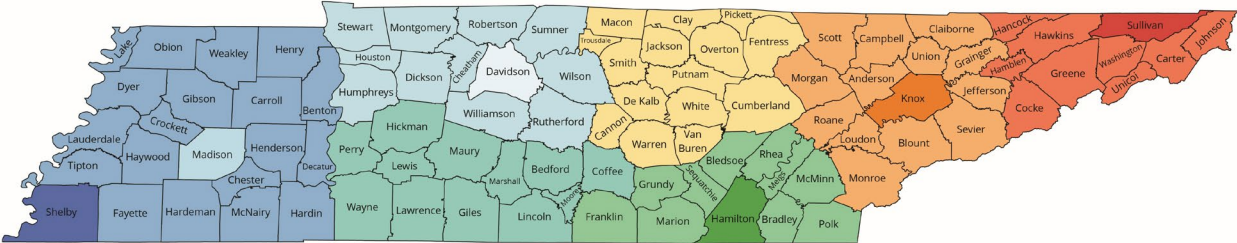


\* Metro Regions

# 2023 Suicide-Related Emergency Department Visits

- **Upper Cumberland** was the rural region with the most suicide-related ED visits in 2023.

Age	Number of Suicide-Related ED Visits
5-17	651
18-24	732
25-44	1,013
45-64	647
65+	179
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,222</b>







# Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program

# Suicide Prevention in Tennessee: Program History

## Suicide Prevention Act of 2018

- Recognized suicide as a serious public health issue in Tennessee
- Provided the Commissioner of Health authorization to create a suicide prevention program within the Department of Health
- Formally sunset on June 30, 2021

## January 2019

- TDH Suicide Prevention Program was established to increase the department's capacity to provide data-driven recommendations and support the implementation of statewide suicide prevention strategies and programs.

## 2020

- TDH received award funding through a 5-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement a comprehensive public health approach to suicide prevention across Tennessee.

# Program Statement of Purpose

*To enhance, support, and strengthen Tennessee's suicide prevention infrastructure through implementation of data-driven approaches (including community-based, health-care related, and upstream interventions) to achieve a 10% reduction in suicide morbidity and mortality by 2025.*

## Populations of Focus:

- Residents of rural counties
- Men in rural counties
- Individuals aged 15-64 in rural counties

## Funding Source: CDC

- 5-year grant awarded in 2020
- Totaling \$3.75M

# Our Approach

## Community-Based Interventions

- Identify and support people at risk

## Healthcare-Related Interventions

- Identify and support people at risk
- Strengthen delivery and access to care

## Upstream Interventions

- Teach coping and problem-solving skills
- Strengthen delivery and access to care

# Community-Based Interventions

- Gatekeeper trainings
  - Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR)
  - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
  - Be the One
- What is a Gatekeeper?
  - **“Someone in a position to recognize a crisis and the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide.”** (*QPR Institute*)
- **Who can become a Gatekeeper?**
  - Teachers and school staff
  - Ministers/clergy
  - Caretakers
  - Neighbors
  - Supervisors/managers
  - Community leaders
  - First responders/law enforcement
  - Caseworkers
  - Friends
  - Parents
  - Anyone!

# Healthcare-Related Interventions

- Gatekeeper trainings for health and behavioral healthcare providers in rural areas
  - Doctors, nurses, therapists, etc.
- Expansion of safe suicide care through systems change
  - Recruit and support health and behavioral healthcare agencies in implementing the Zero Suicide Framework



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# Upstream Interventions

- Improve access and delivery of suicide care
  - Provide **trainings on best practices for utilizing telehealth** to licensed and pre-licensed behavioral health providers and professionals
  - Education on Tennessee's Mental Health Parity laws

A young boy with dark hair is shown in profile, looking out over a vast ocean. He is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and has his right hand resting on a white railing. The background is a bright, hazy sky over the water, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

The Department of Psychology at the University of California, San Diego, has been instrumental in the development of the field of cognitive psychology. The department's research has led to a better understanding of the human mind and its processes. This research has been applied in a variety of fields, including education, medicine, and law. The department's work has also led to the development of new theories and models of human cognition. The department's research has been published in a wide range of journals and books, and has been cited by other researchers in the field. The department's work has been instrumental in the development of the field of cognitive psychology, and has led to a better understanding of the human mind and its processes.



# Upstream Interventions

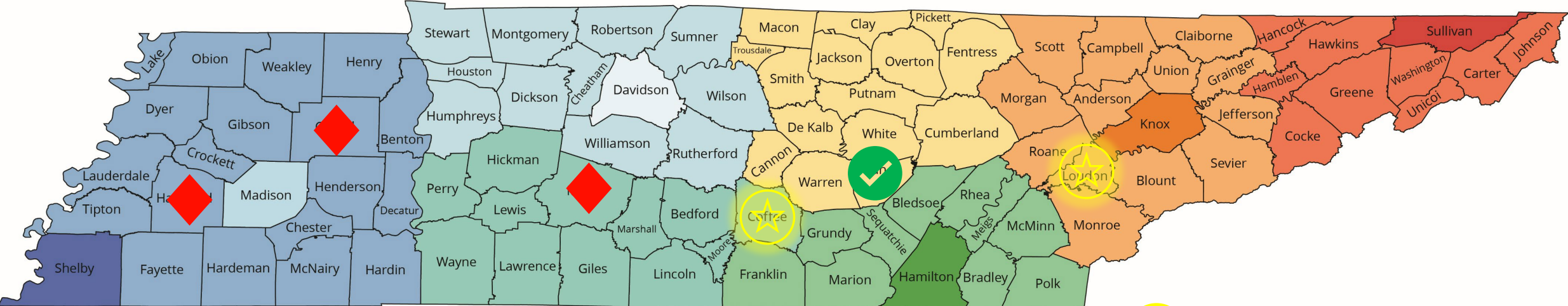
- Improve access and delivery of suicide care
  - Provide **trainings on best practices for utilizing telehealth** to licensed and pre-licensed behavioral health providers and professionals
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- Teach coping and problem-solving skills through social-emotional learning programs
  - Sources of Strength is our school-based youth suicide prevention initiative designed to **enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide at the school population level** and provide communities with the resources and skills they need to live healthy and full lives.




# Upstream Interventions

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# Sources of Strength Implementation



-  Active implementation
-  Training Scheduled
-  Interest expressed

# 988 PSA Campaign

This month, TDH launched a multi-media suicide prevention campaign to increase community awareness of the national suicide and crisis hotline (988) among rural populations.

- The campaign will run from April through June 2024
- Project includes targeted placement of:
  - Video ads on streaming services, cable, and social media
  - Static imagery on social media and TDH website
- Ads will run in English and Spanish







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# Program Resources

# Monthly Newsletter

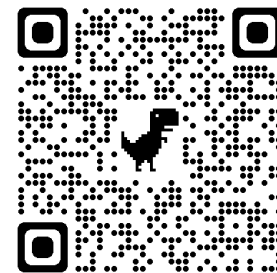
## Includes:

- Program Announcements
- Partner Profiles
- Available Trainings
- State and National Resources
- Data Highlights

If interested in highlighting an organization or upcoming event, contact LaDonna Merville at [LaDonna.Merville@tn.gov](mailto:LaDonna.Merville@tn.gov).



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Scan to Subscribe

# Program Website

- Information on risk factors and warning signs
- Resources, data, and training information
- [www.preventsuicidetn.com](http://www.preventsuicidetn.com)

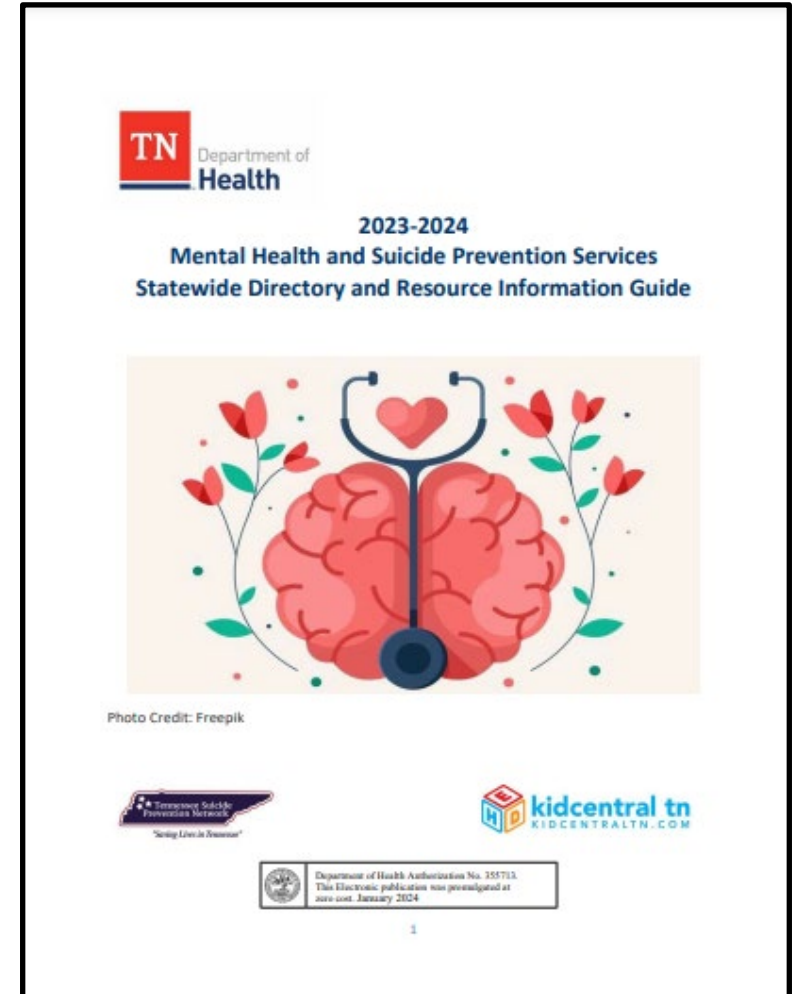
The screenshot shows the Tennessee Department of Health website's Suicide Prevention page. At the top left is the TN Department of Health logo. To the right is a search bar labeled "Search Health" and a "Go to TN.gov" link. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Contact Us", "Program Areas", "News", "Health Professionals", "Parents", "Individuals", "Statistical Data", and "Career Opportunities". A breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: "Program Areas > Family Health and Wellness > Violence and Injury Prevention > Suicide Prevention". The main heading is "Suicide Prevention". Below this is a "Join Our Mailing List" button. The content area features a grid of nine tiles: "About Suicide Prevention" (with a wooden block spelling "SUICIDE"), "Data and Surveillance" (with a magnifying glass over a chart), "Resources" (with an illustration of people at a computer), "Get Help" (with a signpost for "HELP", "SUPPORT", "ADVICE", "GUIDANCE", and "ASSISTANCE"), "Contact Us" (with icons for email, phone, and social media), "Legislation" (with wooden blocks spelling "LEGISLATION"), "Suicide Prevention Task Force" (with an illustration of a meeting), and "Trainings" (with a circular graphic containing the word "TRAINING").



# Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resource Directory

## Includes:

- Overview of Suicide in TN
- Warning Signs
- Risk and Protective Factors
- When to Access Help for Mental Health
- Accessing and Paying for Mental Health Services
- All Resources and Services Available Statewide
- Charts of all Suicide Prevention Programs/Services, Laws/Policies, and Groups/Coalitions



# 2022 Annual Report

- Focuses on data (deaths, attempts, ideation, risk factors) for 2020 and 2021
- Includes success stories
  - Syndromic Surveillance
  - Communications
  - Advisory Group Expansion
- Includes prevention recommendations



## Suicide Prevention in Tennessee

2021-2022 Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Health | Family Health and Wellness



# Get Involved: Tennessee Suicide Prevention Advisory Group

- Quarterly convening of stakeholders representing all sectors involved in suicide prevention activities
- Meeting objectives:
  - Review data, programs, and services
  - Identify opportunities to improve statewide suicide prevention efforts
  - Promote accountability and coordination
- *Advisory group member role: to provide current knowledge, critical thinking and analysis to increase the confidence of the decision-makers who represent the TDH Suicide Prevention Program.*



**THANK YOU!**

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***LaDonna Merville, Suicide Prevention Communications Specialist***