



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT**

PROCLAMATION

**“NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH
September 2023”**

- WHEREAS,** September is recognized throughout the United States as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month to raise awareness about suicide prevention resources that are available throughout our communities, with the goal of learning how to help those around us and how to talk about suicide without increasing the risk of harm; and
- WHEREAS,** suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, orientation, income level, religion, or background; and
- WHEREAS,** according to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 48,000 people died by suicide in 2021, and provisional data indicates more than 49,000 people died by suicide in 2022; and
- WHEREAS,** according to the CDC, in 2020 suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10-14 and 25-34, the third leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 15-24, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35-44.; and
- WHEREAS,** American Samoa is not different from any other community in the country; and the recent suicides remind us of the urgency of this situation; and
- WHEREAS,** American Samoa chooses to publicly state and place our full support behind local educators, mental health professionals, athletic coaches, police officers, faith-based leaders, parents, and all other key stakeholders as partners in supporting those who are struggling by being available to one another and leveraging our resources to protect our communities; and
- WHEREAS,** local government and non-government organizations are on the front lines, initiating conversations that are uncomfortable and often not discussed in public, as suicide and mental illness remain too taboo a topic to speak on; and

WHEREAS, every member of our community should understand that throughout life's struggles we all need the occasional reminder that although we are all silently fighting our own battles, there are many people ready to listen and help.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LEMANU P. S. MAUGA, Governor of the Territory of American Samoa, do hereby proclaim September 2023 as “National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month” in American Samoa. Fully recognizing that suicide prevention and awareness must be a community initiative that we all support if we are to incite positive change. I call upon all residents of American Samoa to take the time to inquire as to the wellbeing of your family members, friends, and neighbors, and to genuinely convey your appreciation for their existence by any gesture you deem appropriate. Be the one to ask, keep them safe, be there, help them connect, and follow up to remind them that they are not alone and suicide isn't the answer. I encourage everyone to engage in related programs and activities orchestrated by Government and Non-Government Organizations throughout this month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my signature and the seal of my office on this 18th day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three.



LEMANU P. S. MAUGA
Governor