



# Suicide Is an Urgent Public Health Problem in America

Screening for suicide risk can save lives

More than  
**47,000**  
people  
die by suicide  
each year.<sup>1</sup>

Suicide was the  
**12th-leading**  
cause of death  
in the country  
in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

From 1999 to 2019, the suicide rate **increased 33%** across all sexes, races, and ethnicities.<sup>3</sup>

 Rate increase  
among females:



 Rate increase  
among males:



Screening tools for suicide risk can **help reduce death and connect people to treatment**, but these tools are not widely used.

## About half

of all people who die by suicide interact with the health care system within a month of their death, giving health care providers a critical opportunity to screen for suicide risk.<sup>4</sup>

Eight hospital emergency departments found

## 30% fewer suicide attempts

among patients who were screened for suicide risk and received evidence-based care, such as additional screening and follow-up phone calls, compared with patients who were not screened.<sup>5</sup>



Hospitals and health systems can implement evidence-based suicide screening to identify patients at risk and connect them to lifesaving care.

If you or someone you know needs help, please call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention-lifeline) at 800-273-8255 or text TALK to 741741 to reach a [Crisis Text Line counselor](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention-lifeline).

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System injury data, 2019, accessed Nov. 12, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>.

2 S.L. Murphy et al., "Mortality in the United States, 2020" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db427.htm>.

3 Sally C. Curtin and Holly Hedegaard, "Suicide Rates for Females and Males by Race and Ethnicity: United States, 1999 and 2017," accessed Dec. 13, 2021, [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/suicide/rates\\_1999\\_2017.htm#Fig2](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/suicide/rates_1999_2017.htm#Fig2).

4 B.K. Ahmedani et al., "Health Care Contacts in the Year Before Suicide Death," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 29, no. 6 (2014), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4026491/>.

5 I.W. Miller et al., "Suicide Prevention in an Emergency Department Population: The ED-SAFE Study," *JAMA Psychiatry* 74, no. 6 (2017): 563-70, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28456130/>.