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September 12, 2005

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Michigan Surgeon General Debuts State Suicide Prevention Plan

Michigan Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom debuted a new state policy blueprint today designed to prevent suicides and reduce the number of citizens that attempt suicides annually. The Michigan Suicide Prevention Plan, developed by the Michigan Suicide Prevention Coalition (MiSPC), represents a comprehensive effort to engage critical stakeholders and address suicide at a state level, she said.

"Suicide crosses all race, age, gender, and socio-economic boundaries, and it deserves our undivided attention today," Wisdom said, while speaking in the Capitol Rotunda to more than 100 suicide prevention advocates. "For the first time, Michigan has a comprehensive, long-term strategy to address suicide that is fully supported by stakeholders who are daily engaged in this critical work."

The plan, available at www.michigan.gov/injuryprevention, aligns with the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, and addresses this increasingly prevalent public health problem with an integrated approach to suicide prevention over the entire lifespan, Wisdom said. Other goals of the Suicide Prevention Plan include:

- Increase awareness that suicide is preventable and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness
- Reduce the number of suicide attempts among Michigan youth
- Promote efforts to reduce access to lethal means and methods of suicide, including creating public information campaigns designed to reduce the accessibility of lethal means in the home.
- Enhance the recognition of high risk individuals within communities, and improve response times to people that are identified as high risk
- Support and promote research on suicide and suicide prevention
- Develop and implement community-based prevention programs
- Improve access to community mental health and substance abuse services

"Michigan's Suicide Prevention Plan is based on the most valid information we now have about how to reduce suicide deaths and attempts using a community-based, public health approach," said Larry Lewis, chairperson of MiSPC and Michigan's community organizer for the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA).

In 2003, suicide deaths in Michigan (1,018) topped deaths related to homicide (644) and HIV/AIDS (237) combined.

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