

**SB 14-088 Creation of the Suicide Prevention Commission**  
**Sen. Newell & Rep Kraft-Tharp**

**Problem (The scary statistics in CO):**

- Colorado is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in U.S. in suicide deaths in 2012; we are consistently in the top 10. This is more than **twice** the number of Coloradans who died in motor vehicle crashes (457).
- **Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth and young adults (ages 10-34) in Colorado.**
- 1,053 Coloradans died of suicide in 2012, **an increase of almost 16% from 2011.**
- The largest number of suicide deaths occurred among men of working age.
- **Rural and frontier areas of the state have higher suicide rates than urban areas**
- In 2012, there were 2,777 hospitalizations from suicide attempts in Colorado.
- National data show a 33% increase in suicides among male veterans ages 18-24 from 2009-2011.

**Background:**

In 1998, Governor Romer's commission on suicide prevention recommended the creation of the creation of the Office of Suicide Prevention, which we implemented. Since then, we have made nominal progress due to a lack of dedicated funds. We have basically a **1-person office**, who is doing his best, to find out why our suicide rates are still getting worse and how we can reverse this trend.

**Next Step SB-088:**

- It will create a Commission to provide public and private leadership regarding suicide prevention in Colorado; its diverse membership will draw from all areas of the state.
- The Office of Suicide Prevention (OSP), in CDPHE, will provide administration support to the Commission with the assistance of the Colorado Suicide Prevention Coalition and the University of Colorado Depression Center.
- The Commission will set evidence-based suicide prevention priorities and lead subgroups of community members and mental health professionals to set strategy and action plans for each priority with a bottoms-up approach
- It will provide a forum to examine current suicide prevention and intervention policies, and make annual recommendations to the Office of Suicide Prevention, the Governor's Office and the General Assembly regarding improvements and innovations that could reduce the number of suicides in Colorado.
- This public/private Commission will advise the Office of Suicide Prevention on the priorities and action plans, and be able to **attract private dollars** and engage the private sector.

It is hoped that the Commission will increase available resources for suicide prevention activities and promote coordination and cooperation among programs and strategies in Colorado. It will ensure that suicide prevention remains a priority for the state and encourage the development of suicide prevention plans at the local level.

## Supporters

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, CO. Chapter

Barb Becker, Director of Community Programs,  
*Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health Network*

Carson J. Spencer Foundation

Colorado Behavioral Health Council

Dale and Dar Emme, Exec. Dir. /Founders  
*Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program*

Depression Center, Anshutz Health Sciences Center

Dr. Michael Doberson  
*Arapahoe County Coroner*

Douglas County Sheriff's Office  
*Youth Education and Safety in Schools Suicide Prevention Program*

Larissa Herda,  
*Chairman and CEO TW Telecom Inc*

Mental Health America of Colorado

Metro Crisis Services

NAMI Colorado

Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention Partnership

Pueblo Suicide Prevention Center

Rocky Mountain Research and Prevention Institute

Second Wind Fund, Inc.

Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado

Ted Harms  
*Executive Director, The Anshutz Foundation*

Chief Jerry Rhodes  
*Cunningham Fire Protection District*  
Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition