



# MONTANA

The **Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant** provides funding for health problems in Montana that range from emergency medical services to intended pregnancy. PHHS Block Grant dollars fund several different Montana health programs.

PHHS Block Grant funds allow Montana to use dollars **where** we need them, **when** we need them to protect the public's health. Montana focuses the majority of its PHHS Block Grant funds in the areas of chronic disease prevention and health promotion; public health improvement/capacity building in local health departments; communicable disease control and prevention; school health; emergency medical services and injury prevention; immunization; oral health; poison control; rape and sexual assault; family planning; suicide prevention; and tuberculosis. Programs that serve our state's unique health needs through the PHHS Block Grant include the following:



### **Community Health Promotion Programs—Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Section**

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to deliver community health promotion programs in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, cardiovascular health, diabetes, and breast and cervical health to more than 30 Montana communities. In fiscal year 2006, the Montana Breast and Cervical Health Program (MBCHP) provided screening services in all 56 counties and screened over 2,750 women. The Montana Cardiovascular Health Program (CVH) expanded its Walk-to-School Day efforts, reaching 29 schools with more than 7,000 students participating. The number of certified diabetes educators has increased from less than 35 to more than 60.



### **Emergency Medical Services—Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention Program**

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to provide technical assistance and expertise to local emergency medical services providers and local governments. In the past two years, the number of unintentional injury deaths in Montana has fallen by 5.5%.



### **Tuberculosis—Tuberculosis Prevention Program**

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to develop a statewide, targeted testing and treatment program reducing the number of infected individuals in the state. Tuberculosis case rates in Montana have declined.



### **Public Health Improvement/Capacity Building**

PHHS Block Grant provided funds to develop a Montana Public Health Improvement Plan, perform public health standards assessment in a multitude of local/tribal health jurisdictions, explore voluntary accreditation, and public health statute modernization.

## Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

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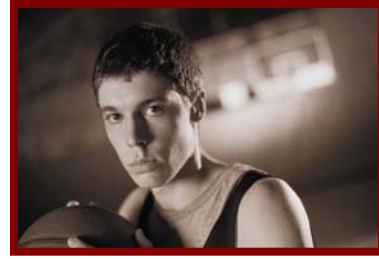
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## Montana Can Save Teen Lives and More Than One Million Dollars with PHHS Block Grant Suicide Program

### Issue:

"Mental illness is like an atom bomb suddenly falling on your family," says a mother in Montana as she struggles to get help for her son who has attempted suicide by overdosing and drinking antifreeze. Despite numerous attempts to find help for her son, he continues to spiral down. "A psyche ward is desperately needed in our community, where people in crisis can go and be safe," she says. "Mental health services are not adequate in this community."



All too often this lack of service results in a grim statistic: Every two weeks, a Montana youth commits suicide.

In addition to the immeasurable cost of life, suicide creates a ripple effect throughout communities in the state, impacting, on average, six other people and resulting in a cost for suicide and self-inflicted injuries of \$103 million/year.

Montana's youth are at high-risk for suicide due to the challenges of living in remote, low populated frontier regions where services and resources are few or non-existent. In addition to isolation, severe poverty and violence are common.

According to surveys of high school students across the state and on the American Indian Reservation schools, suicide is ever-present:—

- 26% of students and 30% of students on Montana's American Indian Reservations reported they felt "so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities;"
- 19% of students and 17.5% of American Indian students had seriously considered suicide during the past year;
- 78% of those considering suicide had actually made a plan to attempt suicide; and
- 10% of high school students and nearly 11% of American Indian reservation students reported they had actually attempted suicide at least once during the last 12 months.

### Intervention:

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) used \$50,000 in Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant (PHHSBG) funds to help local communities prevent youth suicide. Five grants of \$10,000 each were awarded to county public health departments that are currently trying to find out why children in Montana die and what their communities can do to prevent these deaths. Approximately 81,310 youth and young adults between the ages of 10–24 reside in these five counties. Services provided with the PHHSBG funding included—

- Certifying two trainers who can provide training to communities on how to recognize if a person is suicidal and what to do if someone is suicidal.
- Increasing the availability and lowering the cost of mental health care providers to low-income youth who need to see a professional, but cannot afford their services.
- Organizing a mental health care database that youth organizations can use to locate services available in their community.

### Impact:

Thanks to PHHSBG funding, rural communities around the state are beginning to tackle the issue of teen suicide. In Missoula, after six students committed suicide at Sentinel High School, funds supported a community meeting of more than 100 parents, school staff, and concerned residents who came together to address this communitywide problem. In addition, a suicide prevention expert appeared on TV programs, providing tips and advice. And, in the frontier community of Sanders County, a brochure was developed and distributed to adults and teachers on how to find mental health professionals for at-risk youth. Another county wants to incorporate into the local high schools the Yellow Ribbon program, a program designed to educate professionals (e.g., teachers), adults, and students on how to help a suicidal person.

These are just a few of the initiatives underway to prevent adolescent suicides. Prevention efforts are working to ensure that parents, teachers, and other adults have the tools they need to reach out to and protect Montana's youth.

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