



*Empowering Elders.
Strengthening Communities.*

Mike DeWine, Governor
Ursel J. McElroy, Director

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Connect with older adults in your life to lower the risk for suicide *National Suicide Prevention Week is Sept. 8-14, 2019*

Columbus, Ohio – In recognition of Sept. 8-14, 2019 as National Suicide Prevention Week, Ursel J. McElroy, director of the Ohio Department of Aging encourages all Ohioans to connect with older friends and loved ones and become aware of resources that can prevent suicide.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in our country, with approximately one death every twelve minutes. In Ohio, men age 75 and older have the highest rate of suicide.

“Connect with the older adults in your life,” McElroy said. “Spend some quality time with your neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family members. See how they are doing and assure them that they are not alone. Small gestures can show you care and make a difference in someone’s life.

Factors that increase the risk of suicide include hopelessness, lack of social support, loss of relationships, financial loss, substance abuse, physical illness, anxiety or other mental health disorders, history of trauma and abuse, and access to lethal means, such as firearms and medications.

“If you experience suicidal feelings, lean on your support network of family and friends, or talk to your health care provider, therapist, or clergy member,” added McElroy. “If your loved one talks about suicide or behaves in a way that makes you believe he or she might attempt suicide, do not try to handle the situation alone. Get help from a trained professional as soon as possible.”

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255. Ohio residents can also text “4help” to 741741 to access the Crisis Text Line.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services offer a suicide prevention for older adults at www.mha.ohio.gov/Families-Children-and-Adults/Suicide-Prevention .

Your area agency on aging can help you access local resources to prevent isolation and feelings of loneliness. Call 1-866-243-5678 to connect with the area agency serving your community.

Video message from Director McElroy: <https://youtu.be/2OTTkZiycc4>

Radio/podcast partners: [Download audio clips on this topic from Director McElroy.](#)

About ODA – The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit www.aging.ohio.gov.

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