

Watchdog Demands Investigation into Suicide Prevention Failures and Mental Health Funding

U.S. suicide rates hit a 50-year historical high despite an increase in spending in the mental health market of 52.1% since 2009.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There were an estimated 1.4 million suicide attempts and more than 48,000 deaths by suicide in 2018 making it the tenth leading cause of death in the United States and in Florida one person dies by suicide every two hours on average. [1,2]



Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for Americans.

How much Florida spends on mental health per capita compared to other states is regularly brought up during discussions of how to help people in crisis and Maine is often used to show why Florida should increase access to and funding for mental health services. However, what is

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Too often people rely on unproven suicide risk assessments as a catchall when dealing with a person experiencing a crisis and unfortunately the assessments just don't work according to some experts.”

*Diane Stein, President CCHR
Florida*

never mentioned is that despite a per capita spending of \$375 on mental health, Maine has a serious suicide problem. [3]

Nationally the [suicide death rate](#) per 100,000 population is 14.21 while in Maine it is 18.45 which is significantly higher than the national average. If increasing mental health access and funding was the solution to suicide, wouldn't Maine have the lowest rate in the country?

A review of information provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and American Addiction Centers depicting mental health funding, mental health access and

suicide rates, reveals that increased access and funding is not resulting in a reduction of suicides. Florida, for example, reportedly has low access and the lowest funding and yet Florida also has the 9th lowest suicide rate. [4]

Compounding the problem is that experts have reported that the ability to determine who may hurt themselves or others is basically as reliable as a coin toss. A search for information on suicide results in countless articles detailing how to predict and prevent suicide yet suicide and whether or not a person is dangerous cannot be predicted according to mental health professionals. [5,6]

Psychiatrists Declan Murray and Patrick Devitt revealed in Scientific American that a study of 40 years of [suicide risk assessment](#) research determined that there is “no statistical method to identify patients at a high-risk of suicide in a way that would improve treatment.” [7]

According to the Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), a mental health watchdog organization, the abject failure of the mental health industry in the prediction and prevention of suicide is something that should be addressed by changes to how people in crisis are helped and this is a belief that is shared by others.

“Prediction models in suicidology have made little sense. If practitioners and



If proof is needed that suicide prevention programs and risk assessments do not work all you need to do is look at the increasing number of people taking their lives despite ever increasing mental health programs.



administrators keep getting it wrong, why are they still employed to continue bad work?" said Russell Copelan, MD. [8]

Adding to the problem of helping those in crisis is fact that researchers doubt that certain mental disorders are disorders at all. Recently a team of biological anthropologists called on the scientific community to rethink mental illness stating that with a thorough review of the evidence there is good reasons to "think of depression or PTSD as responses to adversity rather than chemical imbalances. And ADHD could be a way of functioning that evolved in an ancestral environment, but doesn't match the way we live today." [9]



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.

In Florida, the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council were established in 2007 with a focus on suicide prevention. Fast forward to 2021 and every school district in the state is submitting a mental health plan to the Florida Department of Education detailing the mental health screenings and programs being put into place. However, the statistics demonstrate that these efforts are not reducing the number of children committing suicide in Florida. [10]

CCHR believes that the efforts to address suicide are clouded by mental health being a very profitable business. Statistics show that "in 2019, the U.S. mental health market spending reached \$225 billion, accounting for nearly 5.5% of all health spending. Spending in the mental health market has increased by 52.1% since 2009—over the same decade, the U.S. population increased by 7% and the U.S. medical inflation rate increased by 34%." [11]

But profits being put before patients is not new. Almost 25 years ago the Florida Supreme Court published an Executive Summary stating that, "In 1996, the Florida Legislature amended the Baker Act to strengthen patient rights. Despite these enhanced protections, the Subcommittee learned that because in-patient treatment is extremely profitable mental health facilities and professionals sometimes abuse the voluntary admission process. Moreover, some patients deemed to be 'voluntary' may in reality lack the capacity to consent." [12]

CCHR is encouraging officials to look at the information that has been released on the workability of suicide assessment, on the billions spent annually to address the problem and then to demand formal investigations into suicide prevention failures, access to care and the money being spent.

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: "Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the 'free world' tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of 'mental health,'" he wrote in March 1969. For more information on suicide, suicide prevention and psychiatric drug side effects please visit www.cchrflorida.org

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[5] After Decades of Research, Science Is No Better Able to Predict Suicidal Behaviors

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