

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: In 2020, suicide was the leading cause of violent death in Arkansas, and Arkansas ranked 11th in the nation of suicides per capita; and

WHEREAS: The 91st General Assembly of Arkansas mandated that the Arkansas Department of Health establish and maintain a suicide prevention hotline; and

WHEREAS: In the United States, someone dies by suicide approximately every 11 minutes and in Arkansas, on average, every 15 hours; and

WHEREAS: Suicide affects everyone, but some groups are at higher risk than others in Arkansas. Men are more likely than women to die from suicide. However, women are more likely to express suicidal thoughts and to make nonfatal attempts than men. In the United States, the prevalence of suicidal thoughts, suicide planning, and suicide attempts is significantly higher among young adults ages 18-25 years than it is among adults 26 years and older. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 14 and adults ages 25 to 34. The number of Veteran and Military suicides exceeded 6,300 each year from 2008-2018; and

WHEREAS: On March 5, 2019, the President signed Executive Order 13861 calling for the development of a comprehensive plan to empower Veterans and end suicide through coordinated suicide prevention efforts, prioritized research activities, and strengthened collaboration across the public and private sectors. This plan is known as the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide or PREVENTS; and

WHEREAS: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their families that brings together interagency teams to address Veteran suicide at the state level, and the PREVENTS national public health campaign will seek to increase awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention to reduce suicide for all Americans; and

WHEREAS: Collaborative statewide suicide prevention efforts should be utilized and encouraged to the maximum extent possible. The stigma associated with mental illness and thoughts of suicide works against suicide prevention efforts by discouraging persons who are at risk for suicide from seeking lifesaving help and by further traumatizing survivors of suicide; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas is dedicated to reducing the frequency of suicide attempts and deaths and to easing the pain of survivors affected by the deaths of loved ones who have died by suicide through extensive training, educational programming, and collaboration with all parties who have a vested interest in suicide prevention; and

WHEREAS: Suicide is a national and state public health problem, and suicide prevention is a statewide priority. No single suicide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities, and the State of Arkansas encourages initiatives based on goals contained in the Arkansas Strategy for Suicide Prevention, which is consistent with the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention; and

WHEREAS: In 2022, the national crisis line for mental health emergencies was changed to 988 in an effort to better assist individuals through a shorter, more easily remembered number. Those who call 988 are connected with an experienced, professional crisis counselor who can direct the caller to additional resources or facilities, if necessary;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim September 2022, as

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

and September 4th through September 10th, 2022, as

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS WEEK

and September 10th, 2022, as

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

across the State, and I encourage my fellow citizens to join in this important observance recognizing that many suicides are preventable and to please call 988 if they find themselves in crisis.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 22nd day of August, in the year of our Lord 2022.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:



John Thurston, Secretary of State