

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***New Recommended Standard Care for People with Suicide Risk Aims to Fundamentally Improve Suicide Care Delivered Nationwide***

*Action Alliance releases evidence-based guidance aimed at making health care safe for people with suicide risk.*

WASHINGTON, DC—First-ever [recommendations](#) to improve standard health care for people with suicide risk was released today by the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) (Action Alliance), the nation's public-private partnership for suicide prevention. While health care organizations nationwide already follow guidelines or standards to address other urgent medical conditions – such as heart attack, stroke, and serious injury from an accident – up until now, guidance on standard suicide care did not exist.

Since the majority (64 percent) of people who attempt suicide [visit a doctor in the month before their attempt](#), it is essential that people who are at risk for suicide receive timely access to treatments and other fundamental health care services that are known to be effective in reducing suicide risk.

“Health care organizations deliver health care services to reduce risk of other urgent medical conditions like heart disease or diabetes, however, they are not treating suicide with the same sense of responsibility or urgency” said Dr. Michael Hogan, former New York state commissioner for mental health and principal, Hogan Health Solutions. “We have a moral imperative to use what we know works in health care to prevent suicide,” added Dr. Hogan. “Just as statins are used in the prevention of heart disease, we have access to an array of feasible, evidence-based practices that should be part of standard care that is provided to those with suicide risk. Doing anything less is unacceptable.”

The new recommendations present feasible, practical, evidence-based actions for primary care, behavioral health, and emergency department settings that health care organizations can adopt immediately. These include:

- Screening patients to identify who is at risk;
- Assessing patients' level of suicide risk;
- Working with patients to create safety plans that include how they will reduce their access to lethal means, such as firearms or poisons; and
- Completing caring contacts – following up with patients by phone, email, or text within 48 hours of their health care visits.

These recommendations are for health care organizations and providers looking to ensure the services they deliver to patients at risk for suicide are informed by the most relevant and robust

suicide prevention research available. Transforming health systems to significantly reduce suicide in the U.S. is a key priority of the Action Alliance. The report is just one Action Alliance-developed tool aimed at better equipping health systems in the U.S. and further advance the goals and objectives outlined in the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) (NSSP) – a joint effort by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the Action Alliance.

“The Action Alliance is committed to ‘promoting suicide prevention as a core component of health care services’ a goal of the NSSP,” said Mr. Robert Turner, Private Sector Chair of the Action Alliance and former Senior Vice President at Union Pacific Corporation. “To advance this goal, we need to work with public and private partners, especially health systems, whom I hope will adopt these recommendations, to reach those who are at risk and reduce the suicide rate 20 percent by 2025.”

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#### **FOR MEDIA PARTNERS:**

Research shows that the media may influence suicide rates by the way they report on suicide. Evidence suggests that when the media tell stories of people positively coping in suicidal moments, more suicides can be prevented. We urge all members of the media working on these stories to refer to the [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#) for best practices for safely and accurately reporting on suicide. For stories of persons with lived experience of suicidality and finding hope, refer to [www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org](http://www.lifelineforattempt survivors.org).

#### **NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION:**

The [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) is the public-private partnership working to advance the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#) and make suicide prevention a national priority. The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) provides funding to [EDC](#) to operate and manage the Secretariat for the Action Alliance, which was launched in 2010. Learn more at [actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org](http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org) and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following the Action Alliance on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).