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## **New Initiatives Advance National Suicide Prevention Efforts**

### *Action Alliance Launches "Intervention" Task Forces*

WASHINGTON, DC (April 14, 2011) – The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) announced the formation of five new task forces bringing the total to 11. This announcement comes on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* (NSSP), which established suicide prevention as a national priority, and is being observed today at the American Association of Suicidology Annual Conference in Portland, OR.

“We are confident that the new task forces will bring the Alliance closer to achieving its goal of raising awareness about suicide and putting an end to this tragic loss of life,” said Co-Chairs former Senator Gordon H. Smith, now President and CEO, National Association of Broadcasters, and Secretary of the Army John McHugh in a joint statement. “The Action Alliance now has a strong complement of task forces to comprehensively address the high-level, national issues that have challenged our progress over the past decade.”

The Action Alliance is the public-private partnership launched last September by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to update and move the NSSP forward. The task forces will focus on interventions to (1) improve training of healthcare professionals; (2) ensure quality care in healthcare settings; (3) work with the news media and entertainment industry to ensure their portrayal of suicide does not sensationalize it; (4) partner with faith-based communities; and (5) better protect youths in contact with the juvenile justice system.

In the U.S., suicide claims more than 34,000 lives per year. State and local prevention efforts are having a positive impact on several high-risk groups, as rates of suicide have been falling among teenaged and elder males; and in the last 10 years since the launch of the NSSP, suicide has dropped from the eighth leading cause of death to the eleventh.

Since its formation in September 2010, the Action Alliance has moved swiftly to help fulfill the NSSP’s objectives. For additional information about the eleven



task forces of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention go to <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/Taskforcesoverview.pdf>

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