

Healthy Communities Strategy

Suicide Prevention

Strategy Purpose

According to the most recent available data (2018), suicide is the leading cause of death for North Carolina youth ages 15 to 17, and the second-leading cause of death for NC youth ages 10 to 14¹. Men, the elderly, and veterans have higher suicide rates than other population groups^{2,3,4}. Suicide cuts short the emotional and economic contributions of those lost, impacting their families and society.



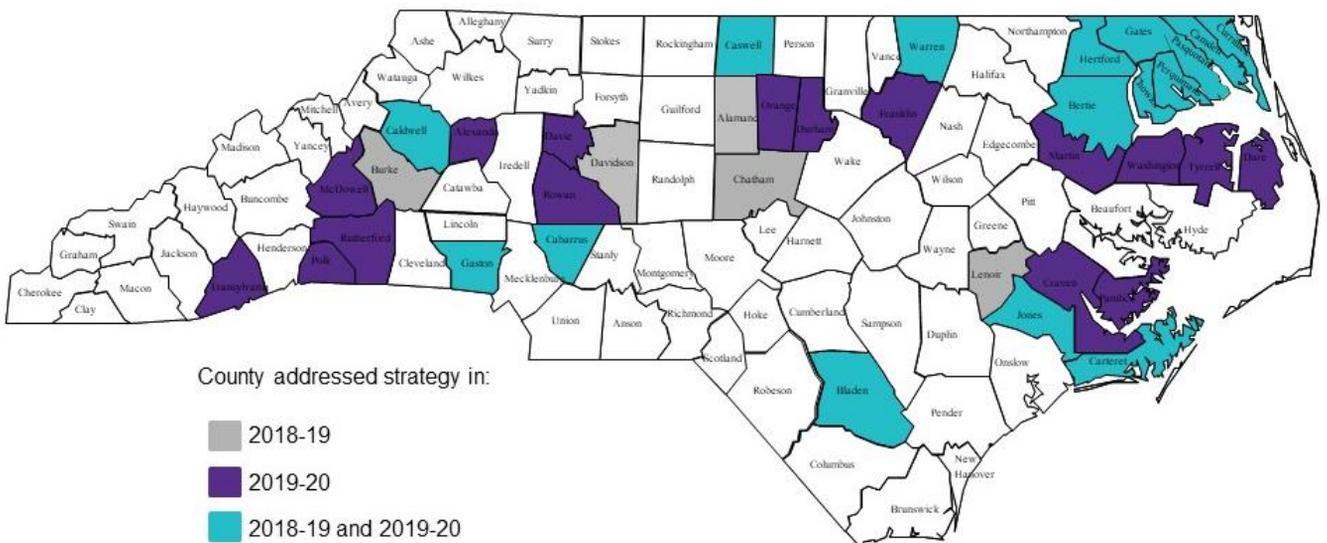
This strategy focuses on training individuals to recognize warning signs for suicide risk and working with organizations to establish policies and/or programs to address suicide prevention and receive training for suicide prevention.

Successful suicide prevention programs and strategies that work include:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST)
- Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR)
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training
- Counseling for Access to Lethal Means (CALM)

Strategy Participation

In total, 26 District or Local Health Departments (LHD) covering 35 counties have worked on this strategy from 2018 to 2020.



County addressed strategy in:

- 2018-19
- 2019-20
- 2018-19 and 2019-20

1. <https://www.ncleg.gov/DocumentSites/Committees/NCCCFI/Intentional%20Death%20Prevention/2019-2020/presentations%20and%20handouts/Youth%20Suicide%201-13-2020.pdf>
2. <https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/VDRS/NC-VDRSSuicideNorthCarolina2016-Oct2018.pdf>
3. <https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/VDRS/NC-VDRSElderSuicide2012-2016-Oct2018.pdf>
4. <https://www.injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/DataSurveillance/VDRS/VeteranSuicide-2013-2017-FINAL.pdf>

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Statewide Results

Since June 2018, LHDs have worked with businesses and organizations to implement suicide prevention trainings and policies. During this time, LHDs addressing this strategy have:

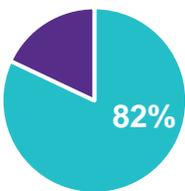
- Hosted or arranged **63** MHFA, ASIST, or QPR group training sessions
- Trained **1,740** individuals in effective suicide prevention techniques.
- Introduced **6** new organizational policies designed to improve suicide prevention efforts.
- Achieved **3** new policy changes, including one LHD expanding after hours for in-house behavioral health programs.



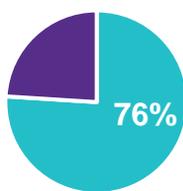
Local Spotlight:

Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) utilized Healthy Communities funding to establish an impressive suicide prevention infrastructure. In 2018-19, CHA enacted an organization-wide policy to have all staff members trained in QPR suicide prevention training, a goal that was accomplished in March 2020. Preliminary evaluation of employees receiving suicide prevention training suggests that their policy of requiring all staff to receive training has been **impactful**.

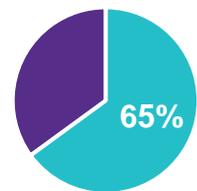
Percentage of Trained Staff that:



Rate their knowledge as high for recognizing suicide warning signs.



Expressed confidence knowing how to ask someone if they were considering suicide.



Said they were comfortable trying to persuade someone to seek help.

CHA has trained numerous partners with access to higher-risk populations for suicide including, but not limited to, the Taking Responsible Actions in Life (TRAIL) teen task force, the Boys and Girls Club of Cabarrus County, and the Concord High School, among others. CHA's work has been exemplary in both identifying priority populations and effectively implementing suicide prevention programs and policies. In this time, CHA delivered **17** QPR and **8** MHFA training sessions where nearly 1,000 people were trained.

