



Agenda Report

22-1091

Agenda Date: 12/6/2022

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Action to Adopt a Resolution Establishing a Suicide Prevention Policy and Mental Health Promotion for the Community

COUNCIL PILLAR

Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure

BACKGROUND

Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, in 2020, 45,979 people died by suicide in the United States. For every suicide death, there are also:

- 4 hospitalizations for suicide attempts
- 8 emergency department visits related to suicide
- 27 self-reported suicide attempts
- 275 people who seriously considered suicide

Individuals of all races, genders, ages, and other social characteristics express, attempt or die by suicide.

The negative effect of suicide on a community goes well beyond the individual life lost. The emotional toll impacts first responders (e.g. Public Safety Dispatchers, Police Officers, Firefighters, Paramedics, etc.) as well as loved ones (e.g. family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, classmates, faith community, etc.).

In August 2010, and revised in 2011, the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services Department (County) created a County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan (The Plan). Its vision is to prevent death by suicide and create a healthier community.

DISCUSSION

The City of Santa Clara (City) shares the County's mission of raising community awareness to the issue of death by suicide and has a desire to engage in efforts to stop it.

Suicide is complex and a difficult topic of discussion; however, it is preventable.

Resources

Locally and nationally, trained professionals can provide anonymous, compassionate support to individuals in mental health distress (e.g. just need to talk, mental health or substance use crisis, thoughts of suicide, etc.) over the phone, via text, and in-person as follows:

Disaster Distress Helpline, 800-985-5990
 Domestic Violence Crisis Line, 800-799-7233
 Emergency, 9-1-1
 National Alliance on Mental Illness, 800-950-6264 or text 741741
 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, 800-273-8255 or call 988
 Mental Health and Substance Use Services, 800-704-0900
 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 800-662-4357
 Veteran's Crisis Line, 800-273-8255
 Bill Wilson Center, 408-850-6125

In many cases referrals can also be made for outpatient treatment. These services are available in multiple languages.

The County also offers several public awareness campaigns, community outreach materials, support groups, grief counseling services, and commemorative events.

In addition, in December 2019 the Police Department's Community Response Team added two police officers trained as Crisis Intervention Specialists (CIS). The mission of CIS is to seek and support beneficial outcomes for persons with mental illness who have come to the attention of law enforcement in the areas of behavioral health and social service referrals. CIS collaborates with multiple local, community-based organizations for these purposes. At the August 30, 2022, City Council meeting, the Council unanimously approved an Agreement with the County for a pilot program to add one licensed clinician to CIS. The Police Department is working to finalize this Agreement and incorporate this new resource into our crisis response plan.

Statistics

Locally, numerous lives have been lost to suicide and many other residents have attempted suicide or expressed suicidal thoughts, making this a significant public health issue.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (thru 8/25/22)
County of Santa Clara	148	169	164	154	113
City of Santa Clara	6	10	11	11	6

NOTE: Deaths with dignity, or physician-assisted deaths, are not classified as suicides by the Medical Examiner-Coroners' Office and therefore are not included in the suicide death data provided.

Policy

Adoption of a Suicide Prevention Policy and Mental Health Promotion for the Community, to resemble the strategies aligned in The Plan, will call for the collaboration between local and regional organizations to:

- Educate employees and residents on the causes of suicide

- Learn to identify those at risk for self-harm including verbal, behavioral and situational warning signs of psychological distress
- Bring awareness to prevention resources and intervention education
- Build skills to reduce the stigma of mental illness and motivate individuals to access support
- Educate individuals on how to report threats of suicide
- Provide follow-up care for individuals who have attempted suicide
- Promote grief support for those who have lost a loved one

Implementation of the Suicide Prevention Policy and Mental Health Promotion for the Community will be led by the City's Office of Emergency Services (OES).

While this Policy is primarily for the community, the City will offer the following to its employees to bring awareness to suicide prevention:

- For City of Santa Clara Employees
 - Human Resources Department to add materials to the onboarding process for all new full-time employees that promotes healthy mental, emotional and social development. The materials should include a resource guide of easily accessible mental health and suicide prevention resources for employees
 - Human Resources Department to provide an annual communication to employees about internal resources and employee benefits (e.g. Employee Assistance Program) to work through various life challenges
 - Human Resources Department to offer grief counseling to employees following the death of a colleague
 - Police and Fire Departments to offer a safe, open and non-judgmental space to debrief following a natural (e.g. earthquake, flood, pandemic, etc.) or intentional or unintentional human-caused disaster (e.g. terror attack, chemical spill/explosion, public transportation accident, etc.) or critical incident (e.g. occupational safety crisis, incident involving children, threat to individual's physical or psychological safety and well-being, etc.) and connect participants who require additional support with follow-up services
 - Police and Fire Departments to create or enhance Wellness Programs as staff and financial resources allow
 - Police and Fire Departments to provide access to mental health clinicians with expertise in working with public safety personnel
 - Public Information Officers (City Manager's Office, Fire and Police Departments) will ensure the reporting of an attempted suicide or suicide to both the community and/or the media in a responsible manner

Meanwhile, the community benefit of the Suicide Prevention Policy and Mental Health Promotion for the Community may include:

- City Facilities
 - The City will provide facilities for non-profit organization meeting use at various

locations (e.g. park buildings, community centers, library rooms, etc.) should the organization serve the City of Santa Clara and meet the facility use requirements

- All Departments will reinforce maintenance protocols to reduce access to the means of suicide (e.g. pesticides, medications, firearms, etc.)
- For Residents
 - The City will create and maintain a Crisis & Suicide Prevention webpage with easily accessible list of mental health and suicide prevention resources
 - The City will utilize its publications (e.g. City Hall News, Inside Santa Clara) to bring awareness to Mental Health Awareness Month (May) and National Suicide Prevention Month (September)
 - The Police Department will disseminate messaging on its platforms highlighting free, confidential support for individuals in distress, prevention and crisis resources (e.g. Veterans Crisis Line, Crisis Text Line, National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, etc.)
 - Bulletin boards and display cases in City facilities will be made available on occasion to highlight mental health resources
 - The Parks & Recreation Department will provide information and referral services to promote a safe and healthy lifestyle, including crisis services
 - The Parks & Recreation Department will invite mental health providers to participate in the Senior Center's Health & Wellness Fair and other appropriate City sponsored special events
- Coordination with Outside Agencies
 - The City Manager's Office i.e., OES will work with the County to advance the goals of The Plan
 - The City will support the efforts of the Santa Clara Unified School District in the implementation of Assembly Bill 2246 and fostering safe and supportive school communities (e.g. emotional and mental wellness, bullying prevention, safe and caring schools) and helping schools respond to a death in the school community
 - The OES will coordinate with the County to offer free training(s) (e.g. Question, Persuade & Refer, etc.) that could be made available to the public in City facilities
 - The City Council will support Federal legislation aimed at increasing mental health resources, as well as awareness of these resources to prevent deaths by suicide

Staff recommends the City join the other cities in the County (e.g. Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Saratoga, Sunnyvale) that have adopted suicide prevention policies, all with the support of the Suicide Prevention Policy Workgroup.

If adopted, this Policy shall remain in effect until modified by the City Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4) in that it is a

fiscal activity that does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potential significant impact on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact to implementation of this Policy.

Development of the individual initiatives will require one-time staff efforts in multiple Departments and implementation will require on-going staff attention and periodic awareness/training.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office, the Human Resources Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Police Department, Fire Department and the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution Establishing a Suicide Prevention Policy and Mental Health Promotion

Reviewed by: Pat Nikolai, Chief of Police

Approved by: City Manager's Office

ATTACHMENTS

1. Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan (The Plan)
2. Resolution