

## **Education, Access to Services, Elimination of Stigma Are Essential for Preventing Suicide**

"The high rate of suicide in any age group is distressing. While the statistics may not always stay in the front of our minds, specific tragedies, such as the recent deaths of college student Paige Aiello and high school graduate Riley Branstrom, certainly do, making an increasingly urgent case for major initiatives to be undertaken to hopefully reverse this tragic trend," said Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D., CEO of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide was the third leading cause of death among individuals between 15 and 24 years of age and the second most common cause of death in the 25- to 34-year old population as of 2012. While suicide was the fourth and eighth leading cause of death in the 35-to-54-year and the 55-to-64 year age group, respectively, as of last year's research, the CDC more recently reported a 30 percent increase in suicide throughout these two age groups between 1999 and 2010. In addition, the risk of suicide is greatest among elderly Caucasian men, based on the rate of 31.1 suicides per 100,000 each year, according to the American Association of Suicidology.

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