



Department of Health report finds self-reported suicide attempts among New Mexico high school students have decreased by 35 percent over the past decade. The study for New Mexico students in grades 9-12 suggest that suicide attempts went from 14.5 percent in 2003 to 9.4 percent in 2013. This is the most recent year for which fullest data is available.

The 2013 YRRS Report, suggested that Statewide High School Mental Health looks at data from 2003 to 2013, the most recent data available, and is being released in conjunction with September's National Suicide Prevention Month and National Suicide Prevention Week, September 6-12.

Department of Health Secretary Retta Ward said the decrease in teen suicide attempts shows progress. "But there is still a lot of work to do" she said. "It speaks to the success of continuous prevention efforts to reach children and young adults. It also shows more parents, health care professionals, and educators are recognizing youth suicide warning signs, such as depression and substance abuse."

The Department of Health's Office of School and Adolescent Health continues to promote mental health among students by providing training and funding for 54 school-based health clinics, which provide behavioral and primary health services for students.

In addition to finding a double-digit decrease in the number of teens reporting attempting suicide, the report finds:

Suicide attempts resulting in an injury that required treatment by a doctor or nurse decreased by nearly 60 percent from 8 percent in 2003 to 3 percent in 2013 among high school students.

One in 5, or 20 percent of New Mexico high school students engaged in Non-Suicidal Self-Injury such as cutting or burning themselves on purpose without the intent to die. NSSI is correlated with anxiety and depression, and is a strong predictor of suicide.

Among middle school students, grades 6-8, 14 percent of respondents made a plan to kill themselves and 8 percent had tried to kill themselves.

Although self-reported suicide attempts have decreased among New Mexico high school students and suicide rates for New Mexico youth 10-19 years of age have decreased from 11 deaths for a population of 100,000 (2003-2005) to 9 deaths per a population 100,000 (2012-2014). Despite the good news, New Mexico youth experience a 60 percent higher suicide rate than other youth in the United States.

The Department of Health partnered with the New Mexico Public Education Department and University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center to create this report, which describes results from the 2013 New Mexico YRRS questions about mental health. The YRRS is a biennial survey about risk behaviors among public middle school and high school students in New Mexico.

Secretary Ward believes this information is important, but the focus should remain on New Mexico youth and children. “Suicide and suicide attempts are affecting too many youth and young adults,” she said. “Parents and guardians should look for changes in their child, such as talking about taking one’s life, or feeling sad or hopeless about the future.” These are important changes to notice, others include: changes in eating, sleeping habits, or losing desire to participate in activities.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, please call the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line 24/7 at 1-855-NMCRISIS (1-855-662-7474) to speak with a counselor or to find treatment near you.

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