



**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Vice Chair  
United States Congress Joint Economic Committee  
G-01 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Vice Chair Maloney,

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is pleased to see the Joint Economic Committee's Report on *Guns and Suicide*. Over 47,000 Americans die by suicide each year, and over half of those deaths are by firearm. AFSP recommends that Congress utilize the important data highlighted in the report to develop and enact legislation that will prevent suicide and focus on the following priorities:

- Education for firearm owners about the warning signs for suicide, as there is no single cause and suicide most often occurs when several stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair;
- Policies and strategies for lethal means reduction and safe storage;
- Policies and strategies to ensure that prevention strategies are tailored to different community needs based on geographical area and the populations most at risk;
- Increased federal funding for suicide prevention research at the National Institute of Mental Health;
- Strategies to prevent suicide for Service members, Veterans, and their families and additional at-risk professionals;
- Increased funding for crisis intervention centers to expand their infrastructure to handle growing call, chat, and text volume.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. AFSP creates a culture that's smart about mental health through education and community programs, develops suicide prevention through research and advocacy, and provides support for those affected by suicide. Led by CEO Robert Gebbia and headquartered in New York, and with a public policy office in Washington, D.C., AFSP has local chapters in all 50 states with programs and events nationwide.

AFSP can serve as a resource to you and your Congressional colleagues as discussions move forward surrounding suicide prevention, education, and research. We have attached our 2019 Suicide Facts and Figures as an additional resource tool.

Sincerely,

John H. Madigan, Jr.  
Senior Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer

# Suicide Facts & Figures: United States 2019

Suicide can be prevented, yet it continues to be a public health problem and a leading cause of death in the United States. More investment in suicide prevention education and research will reduce the number of untimely deaths of Americans each year.

## Basic Facts

On average, **129 Americans** died by suicide each day. \*



**1.4 million** Americans attempted suicide. \*



**90%** of those who died by suicide had a diagnosable mental health condition at the time of their death.

**Firearms** accounted for more than half (**51%**) of all suicide deaths. \*



## Demographics

Men died by suicide **3.5x** more often than women. Women were **1.4x** more likely to attempt suicide. \*



**47,173** Americans died by suicide. Suicide was the **10th leading cause of death** in the United States. \*

- **2nd** leading cause of death for ages 15-34 \*
- **4th** leading cause of death for ages 35-54 \*
- **1.6x** higher rate among American Indian/Alaska Native adolescents and young adults \*

In 2016, the suicide rate was **1.5x higher** for veterans than for non-veteran adults.



## Cost

**950,000+** years

The number of years of potential life that were lost to suicide before age 65. \*



**\$69 billion**

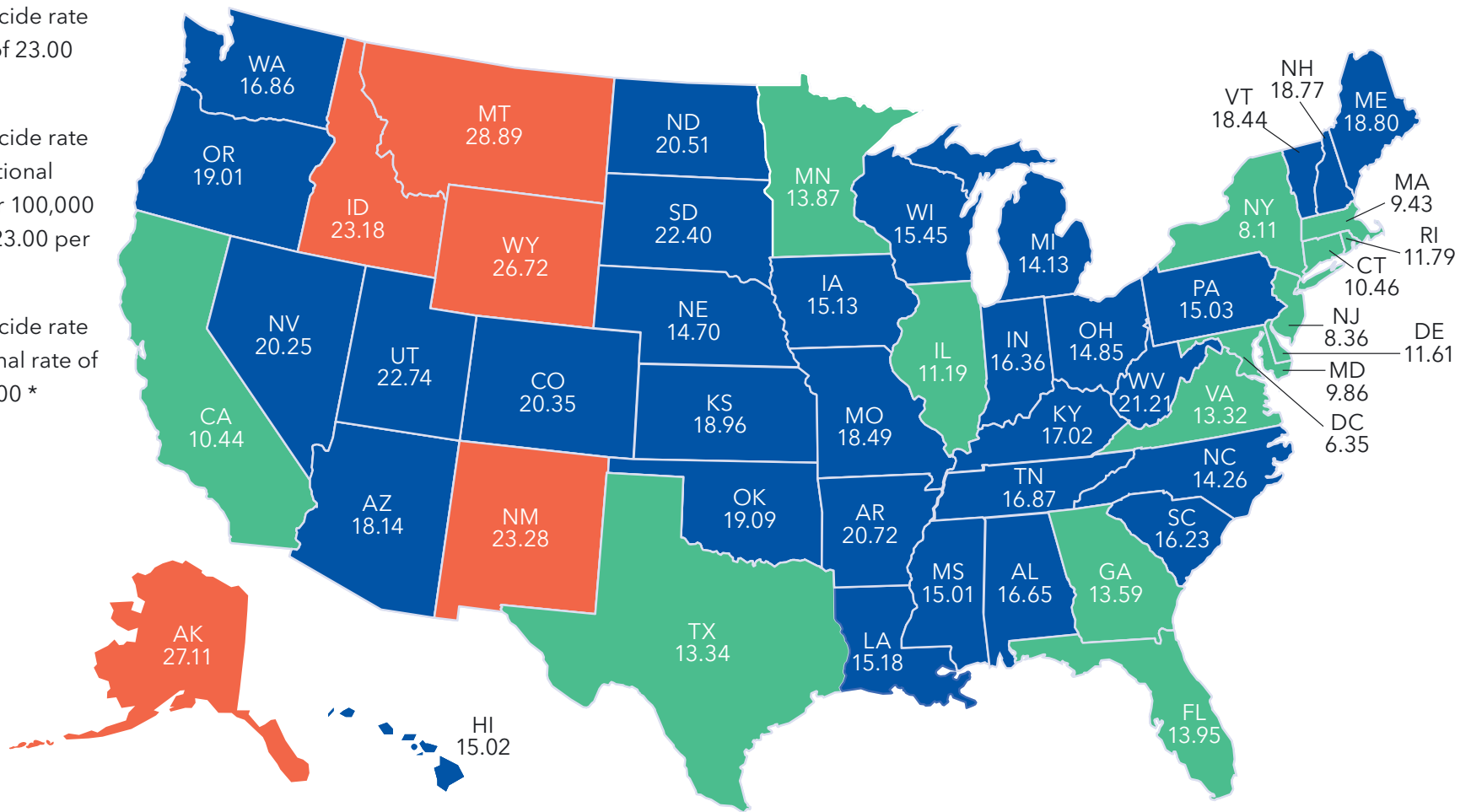
The combined medical and work loss costs in the United States in 2015. \*

\*Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017. Find additional citation information at [afsp.org/statistics](https://afsp.org/statistics).

# Suicide Facts & Figures:

## United States 2019

- States with a suicide rate above the rate of 23.00 per 100,000 \*
- States with a suicide rate between the national rate of 14.00 per 100,000 and the rate of 23.00 per 100,000 \*
- States with a suicide rate below the national rate of 14.00 per 100,000 \*



\*Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017. Find additional citation information at [afsp.org/statistics](https://afsp.org/statistics).