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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DuPage County Coroner and Health Department Support Suicide Prevention

Help is Available from Many Sources

DUPAGE COUNTY—September is National Suicide Prevention Month. All month, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness.

In DuPage County, data provided by the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) indicates rates of suicides have been increasing at an alarming rate over the past several years. In fact, addressing mental health concerns has been listed in the Impact DuPage's top 3 health priorities for our community. More recently, data provided by DuPage County Coroner, Richard Jorgensen, M.D. indicates the rate of deaths by suicide increasing as the impact of COVID-19 continues. Over the first six months of 2020, there were 54 deaths by suicide, compared to 44 during the same time period in 2019, an increase of 22.7 percent.

“Death by suicide is particularly difficult because it represents the premature end of a life, made worse when occurring in young people, leaving family, friends and the community with grief and unanswered questions,” Dr. Jorgensen said.

An evaluation of each case of death by suicide revealed the deceased person had a history of mental health issues, depression, personal, financial or marital problems, as well as previous drug dependence or rehabilitation, were divorced, never married or living alone, Dr. Jorgensen reported.

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, DCHD's Crisis Services is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (630) 627-1700. Visit <https://www.dupagehealth.org/183/Crisis-Services> for more information.

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**STAY SAFE
DUPAGE**



**WEAR
A MASK**



**WATCH
YOUR DISTANCE**



**WASH
YOUR HANDS**

“The despair that leads people to making the decision to end their life indicates a sense of hopelessness that is unimaginable. Making sure that all residents and the people in their lives know they are valued, loved and that there are effective treatments that can help are critically important, and very real steps to take,” said Karen Ayala, DuPage County Health Department Executive Director.

Stress is all around us, particularly with the increased anxiety and uncertainty with COVID-19, that stress is extremely understandable, but if symptoms worsen, you may need the help of a professional to assist you in the process.

In DuPage County, services are available, including:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 for free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
- **DuPage County Health Department (DCHD)- Behavioral Health Services.** A wide range of services are available for DuPage County residents who are experiencing symptoms related to mental health or substance use, which may be impacting your daily life. Treatment programs are offered at our public health centers in Wheaton, Addison, Westmont and Lombard.

Additionally, DCHD offers Caring Contact Cards to engage individuals in behavioral health services and are currently being sent to individuals enrolled in the Crisis Services Follow-Up Program. The goal of Caring Contact Cards is to communicate care and concern and build connection through colorful, inspiring messages to those at increased risk of suicide. On some cards, consumer art is added as a source of inspiration and to communicate messages of hope to those in need of support.

Help is also available from other sources, including:

- **The Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances.** If someone you know is suffering from an opioid use disorder or other substance use disorders, call the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances at 1-833-2FINDHELP to speak with a trained professional for support and advice or to be directed to customized resources or visit HelplineIL.org.
- **Call4Calm.** This free textline is available if you or someone you know needs emotional support. Text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers seeking assistance remain anonymous and will provide only their first name and zip code, which enables the service to link you to a counselor in your area who is knowledgeable about available local resources.
- **Veteran's Crisis Line.** To reach caring, qualified responders within the Department of Veterans Affairs, connect with the Veterans Crisis Line. This free support is confidential, available 24/7, and serves all veterans, service members, their families and friends. Call 1-800-273-8255 or text: 838255. Support is available for the hearing impaired, call 1-800-799-4889.

To learn more about the many services offered by DCHD, please visit www.dupagehealth.org.

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