

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FLORIDA IS AWARDED \$1.5 MILLION FOR YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION
AND EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

TALLAHASSEE- The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention and Florida Office of Drug Control are proud to announce that Florida has been awarded \$1.5 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support youth suicide prevention and early intervention programs. Eighteen states were awarded through the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act which provides authorization and funding for grants combating youth suicide.

“I am very pleased Florida has secured funding which will assist in improving the quality of life for youth and reducing the public health threat of suicide,” said Governor Charlie Crist.

The Florida A.S.A.P. (Adolescent Suicide Awareness and Prevention) Project is a three-year project, which will enhance the state’s capacity to reduce the rate of suicide in youths between the ages of 10 and 24. The A.S.A.P. project will target Duval County, a large area with a youth suicide rate higher than the national average. Organizations in this county will build upon existing state and community evidence-based and culturally competent youth suicide prevention efforts and partnerships. It will enhance a community infrastructure where suicide prevention is a targeted activity of the community’s Children’s Mental Health Task Force, a working collaboration of over 35 state, public and private organizations. The A.S.A.P. Project will include activities such as gatekeeper trainings, adolescent screening programs, social marketing campaigns and crisis support services. Duval County was also a pilot county in the Florida Suicide Prevention Implementation Project.

The A.S.A.P. project is a result of the collaboration between the University of South Florida, Mental Health America of Northeast Florida, and Duval County community partners. The Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention would like to thank these partners for their support and on-going commitment to suicide prevention in Florida.

“This grant will be one of the mechanisms through which we implement Florida’s Suicide Prevention Strategy at the community level. The opportunity to transform lives depends on empowerment at the local level. The activities that will be carried out with this funding are critical to reducing our state’s high suicide rate,” says Office of Suicide Prevention Director, Erin MacInnes.

Established in Spring 2007, the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention functions as a unit of the Florida Office of Drug Control within the Executive Office of the Governor. The office serves to develop suicide prevention strategies, manage statewide initiatives, create policy and serve as a clearinghouse of information for the general public. To learn more, please visit www.HelpPromoteHope.com.