

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST DECLARES APRIL 8, 2008
SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY AT THE CAPITOL**

~A day to promote education and awareness about suicide prevention~

TALLAHASSEE- Today, Governor Charlie Crist proclaimed April 8 as Suicide Prevention Day as Bill Janes, Director of the Office of Drug Control highlighted Florida's progress in reducing the number of youth suicides. This year's observance is the first since the creation of the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention and a 28 member coordinating council.

"Suicide is a preventable tragedy and we can help address it by raising awareness and educating Floridians," notes Governor Crist. "By partnering with stakeholders and forming a connected prevention network we can help curb the incidence of suicide and thereby enhance the vitality of our state, our communities, and our citizens."

Suicide prevention is an integral public health issue in Florida. Since 2001, the suicide rate among youth ages 10-24 has been reduced by 14.9 percent. Florida is on track to reduce the youth suicide rate by one-third by 2010.

Suicide Prevention Day was established to educate the public and increase awareness about suicide. The Florida Office of Suicide Prevention has recently formed a partnership with the Department of Education to educate school administrators on the link between academic achievement and suicide prevention. The *Well Aware* campaign is a series of bulletins that aims to help administrators deter violence, identify at-risk children, foster resiliency, and enhance coping skills among students

"This is the first Suicide Prevention Day that we have an established Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention to lead prevention efforts in Florida," states Bill Janes, Director of the Office of Drug Control. "Suicide is a silent epidemic because of the associated stigma and reluctance to talk about it. We have established suicide prevention as a Florida imperative, and I am confident that we will accomplish our goal of reducing the suicide rate."

About the Office of Statewide Suicide Prevention

In 2007 the Florida Legislature created the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention within the Office of Drug Control and the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council to develop a statewide plan for suicide prevention. The Council is comprised of 28 voting members, including four appointed by the Governor. The office and the council continue to increase awareness and education about suicide prevention amongst instructional and administrative school personnel. To learn more about other suicide prevention initiatives, please visit http://www.flgov.com/suicide_prevention.

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