

# People's Health

Outcomes • Planning • Evaluation



## Know the facts: Local suicide rate surpasses state rate

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Suicide is now the 10th leading cause of death for Americans, surpassing deaths from motor vehicle crashes.
- Factors that can put a person at risk for suicide include history of previous attempts, family history, alcohol or drug abuse, depression or other mental illness, stressful life event or loss, and easy access to lethal methods.
- Suicide is often related to depression, which can be treated with medicine and psychotherapy/ counseling.
- Alcohol increases impulsivity, which is a significant risk factor for suicide. Intoxicated people are more likely to attempt suicide using more lethal methods.
- During 2010-2012, more than 85% of gun deaths in Shasta County were suicides and more than half of all suicides were completed with firearms.

### WHERE WE WERE (BASELINE):

20.4 suicides per 100,000 population during 1999-2001 (3-year average annual age-adjusted rate) in Shasta County.

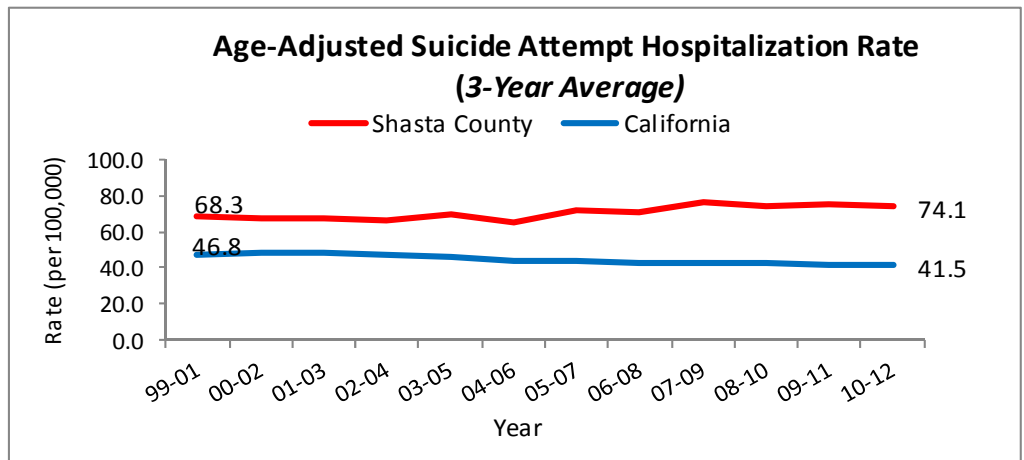
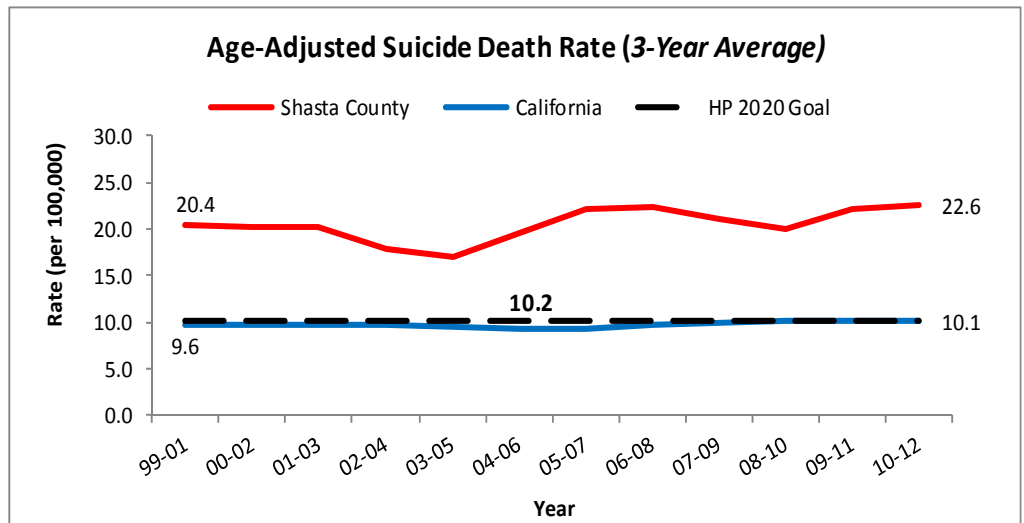
### WHERE WE ARE:

22.6 suicides per 100,000 population during 2010-2012 (3-year average annual age-adjusted rate) in Shasta County.

### WHERE WE WANT TO BE:

The Healthy People 2020 goal is to reduce suicides to no more than 10.2 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted rate).

**DEFINITION:** Number of suicides and suicide rate (age-adjusted deaths per 100,000 population, ICD-10 codes U03, X60-X84, and Y87), and number of suicide attempts resulting in hospitalization and hospitalization rate for Shasta County residents (ICD-9 codes 950.0-958.9), 1999-present.



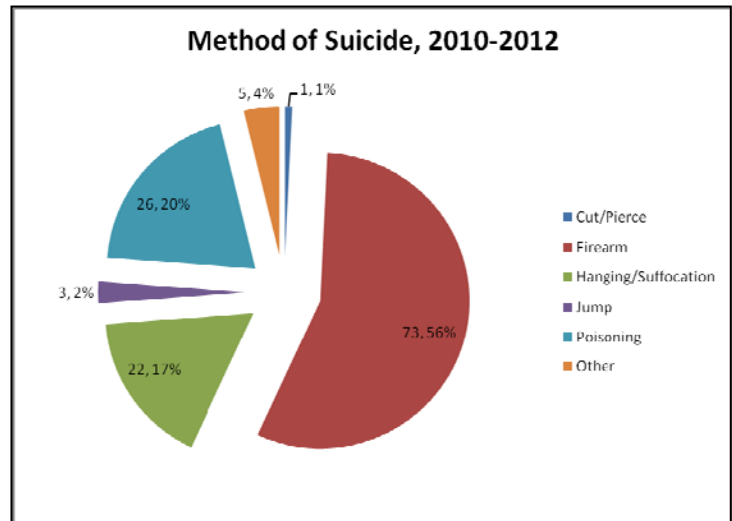
**Contributing Staff:** Ali Abadi and Stephanie Taylor. Last updated: November 2014.

## KEY POINTS:

- In 2010, there were 713,000 emergency department visits for self-inflicted injuries and 38,364 deaths due to suicide in the United States, 51% of them by firearms.
- In California, suicide death rates were stable and sometimes lower than the national target of 10.2 per 100,000 population during 1999-2012. Hospitalization rates decreased from 46.8 to 41.5 per 100,000 population.
- During the same time period, suicide deaths in Shasta County increased slightly from 20.4 to 22.6 per 100,000. Hospitalization rates also increased, ranging from 68.3 to 74.1 per 100,000.

## PRIMARY PREVENTION ACTIVITIES:

- Promote healthy relationships with family and friends, and help people who are at risk of suicide connect with community activities and organizations to prevent social isolation.
- Work to eliminate stigma of mental illness and increase the percentage of clinically depressed people who receive treatment.
- Reduce access to firearms by depressed people through safe firearm storage, including use of trigger locks, gun cabinets, separation of ammunition from an unloaded firearm, and/or temporarily storing firearms at a responsible relative's or friend's home.
- Train health care providers to more effectively identify and address depression that may lead to suicide attempts, particularly in the elderly, among whom depression may not be as obvious.
- Reduce substance abuse (particularly alcohol) and incidence of chronic disease among seniors.
- Advocate for crisis intervention services.
- Learn the warning signs of suicide and appropriate interventions, such as those taught in Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) classes.
- Get involved with local suicide prevention efforts—visit [www.shastasuicideprevention.net](http://www.shastasuicideprevention.net).



### From the Desk of Andrew Deckert, MD, MPH Shasta County Public Health Officer



Suicide is an important public health problem that does not get enough attention, in part because of the social stigmatization and blaming of victims and their families and friends. This might lead to underreporting of suicide attempts and inadequate health care for people who attempt suicide. We can all learn to recognize the warning signs, including hopelessness, substance abuse, anger, anxiety, withdrawal and mood changes. Some factors that can help protect a person from suicidal thoughts and behavior include skills in problem solving, easy access to mental health facilities, family and community support, and cultural beliefs that discourage risky behaviors and suicide.

Suicide prevention is everybody's business. To your health!