

Make Suicide Prevention a National Priority

Dana M. Cea

To the Editor—Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States [1], and most suicides are the result of untreated mental illness [2]. We know today that more research, advocacy, and education can help prevent these needless deaths. Like so many others, I know about this personally because I lost my father to suicide in 2011.

For too long, suicide has been swept under the rug, and families have been made to feel ashamed for losing a loved one to mental illness. Now, some solutions may be within our grasp. For example, studies have shown that placing additional barriers on bridges reduces the number of suicides [3, 4]. Once deterred from suicide, people often do not try again. There are similar findings in other areas, such as neurobiology and clinical treatment, but more research is needed. Just as federal funding made the difference in preventing cancer and HIV/AIDS, more funding for suicide prevention research will save lives.

My fellow advocates traveled to Washington, DC, to tell our members of Congress how important this issue is to us. If you suffer from a mental illness—or you know someone who does—take 5 minutes right now to call your US Representatives and Senators at 202-224-3121, and tell them to make suicide prevention a national priority. For more information on what advocates are speaking to Congress about and how to approach your Representatives

and Senators, please visit www.afsp.org/advocacy2015.

You might just save a life. NCMJ

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