

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF  
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 33 FY 04/05  
DATE February 18, 2005

**AN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN MAINE'S  
YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS**

**WHEREAS**, the health and safety of Maine's young people is of utmost importance to the health of our state; and

**WHEREAS**, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Maine's young people aged 15-24, taking a total of 115 young lives from 1998-2002, an average of 23 each year; and

**WHEREAS**, the suicide rate among Maine youth is 50% above the national average, the eighth highest in the country and the highest in New England; and

**WHEREAS**, every child's death is a tragedy and suicide claims more young people's lives than homicide, cancer, heart disease, AIDS and birth defects combined; and

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that for every young life claimed by suicide there are up to 100 non-fatal suicide attempts by youth; and

**WHEREAS**, in any given high school classroom, it is likely that there are two female and one male student who are actually contemplating taking their lives; and

**WHEREAS**, with advanced planning, training and education, school personnel and students can play a significant role in identifying and assisting suicidal students; and

**WHEREAS**, increasing public awareness of suicide warning signs and how to recognize and respond effectively to suicidal behavior can save lives; and

**WHEREAS**, the loss of a friend or loved one to suicide is one of the most devastating events that can be suffered by Maine families and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, it is incumbent upon State government to provide leadership as well as resources to address preventable health problems;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby declare that Maine's youth suicide prevention efforts be strengthened, and by the authority vested in me, do hereby order that:**

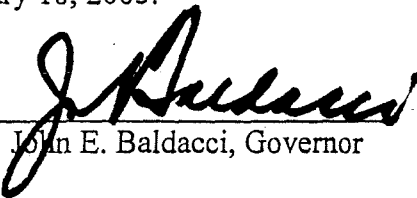
1. The Commissioners of the agencies appointed to the Governor's Children's Cabinet shall:
  - Assign specific staff persons to participate in a strategic planning process in order to:
    - i. update and revise the statewide Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program (MYSPP) implementation plan, which shall include roles and responsibilities for each Department represented on the Children's Cabinet;
    - ii. outline strategies to improve the quality and accessibility of data pertaining to suicide and self-injury, within the revised implementation plan;
    - iii. submit the revised MYSPP statewide implementation plan to the Office of the Governor by August 31, 2005; and
    - iv. assess and propose regulatory or legislative actions that are likely to contribute to the reduction of youth suicide and suicide attempts.
  - Identify and seek financial resources to support the activities of the revised statewide MYSPP plan priorities.
2. The Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health shall continue to provide leadership to the MYSPP in collaboration with the agencies that participate in the Governor's Children's Cabinet.
3. These agencies shall form partnerships with members of the private sector including service providers, suicide survivors and youth organizations to strengthen Maine's efforts to prevent youth suicide.

**Implementation Costs:**

The costs for implementing the tasks included in this Executive Order shall be absorbed by the participating agencies.

**Effective Date:**

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 18, 2005.

  
John E. Baldacci, Governor