



March 21, 2021

Senator Kerry Donovan
 State Capital Building
 200 East Colfax Avenue RM 346
 Denver, CO 80203
kerry.donovan.senate@state.co.us

Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet, Chair
 PUBLIC & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
 200 East Colfax Avenue RM 307
 Denver, CO 80203
dafna.michaelson.jenet.house@state.co.us

HB21-1119: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, & Postvention

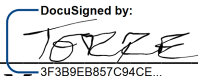
Dear Senator Donovan and Representative Michaelson Jenet:

Slated for Tuesday's agenda is one item near and dear to our hearts. HB21-1119, sponsored by you Senator Donovan, presents a broad scope of Colorado's priorities to focus on suicide, suicide attempts, and the after-effects of those actions on attempted survivors, family, friends, health care providers, first and last responders, educators, and students in schools where a suicide or suicide attempt has occurred. Bravo on this bill.

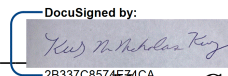
Here in Aspen and Pitkin County we have been inundated with the aforementioned after-effects and high incident rates. Our community has banded together to provide mental health first-aid training. Education is key. School based education is paramount. Courses are offered through Colorado Mountain College, Mind Springs Health and the Aspen Hope Center.¹ Our local middle school has incorporated a trial-based class for life-skills. The Hope Center signed a contract with the RE-1 school district to provide all crisis services and prevention education programs to the schools in the district.² Statistics do not misrepresent facts. We all need HB21-1119.

We applaud your effort to raise the resiliency in Colorado communities. Mental health first aid is a vital component to our community structure. Reducing the stigma of mental illness will aid in community collaborations. Locally, we continue to walk the talk with large scale strategic plans to address mental health.³ In 2019 alone our local law enforcement responded to 199 mental health-related calls in just three short months.⁴ We have all been touched by suicide.

The concern for Colorado lies beyond the statistic. Enhancing care for persons affected by suicide, and, in connection therewith, broadening our focus to include suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention is essential. Thank you for your support of HB21-1119.

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TORRE, MAYOR
ASPEN CITY COUNCIL
 Ward Hauenstein, *Mayor Pro-tem*, Skippy
 Mesirow, Ann Mullins, Rachael Richards

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KELLY MCNICHOLAS KURY, CHAIR
PITKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 Patti Clapper, *Vice Chair*, Steve Child
 Francie Jacober, Greg Poschman

¹ https://www.aspendailynews.com/news/individuals-agencies-pushing-back-against-high-suicide-rate/article_21e0e400-2a90-11e9-910a-767632c60abb.html#:~:text=Data%20on%20suicide%20rates%20for,the%20state%20average%20of%2019.1

² <https://ourhopecenter.org/>

³ https://www.aspendailynews.com/news/mental-health-strategic-plan-a-community-effort/article_2078a69a-f7c-11e9-9717-cf8217f31340.html

⁴ <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/recent-rfv-suicide-cluster-prompts-concern/>