

# Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

## Welcome Letter

Dear Marylanders,

Prevention is about more than responding in moments of crisis. It begins earlier by creating opportunities for connection, reducing stigma, supporting wellness, and making sure people know where and how to find help.

The Office of Integrated Wellness and Prevention, formerly the Office of Suicide Prevention, works year-round to promote mental well-being, prevent suicide, problem gambling, and substance use through education, partnerships, training, and public awareness efforts.

Each year, we lead Maryland's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month campaign to bring communities together and share practical tools that strengthen connection and build hope. This year, we invite you to explore the updated Connecting to Hope Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit and join us in creating communities where people feel seen, supported, and empowered to reach out.

In Maryland, suicide remains a serious public health concern and a deeply personal one. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States and affects people of all ages, races, ethnicities, identities, and communities. <sup>[73]</sup>

### Why Hope Matters

Hope is more than optimism. Hope is the belief that support exists, that change is possible, and that life can still hold meaning during difficult times. Connection to ourselves, to friends and family, to community, and to resources can help people feel supported and can make the difference between isolation and reaching out.

You do not need to feel hopeful all the time to connect to hope. Sometimes hope looks small: taking a walk, texting a friend, rereading a favorite book, attending an event, or simply choosing to rest. Pay attention to the things you are still willing to do, even during difficult moments. That is often where hope begins.

Sincerely,

*Patricia Walcott*

Patricia Walcott (she/her)  
Director  
Suicide Prevention Program  
Maryland Department of Health  
Behavioral Health Administration

## Ways to Connect to Hope

### 988 Day

September 8 is 988 Day, a national day of awareness and action that reminds us that support is available before a crisis becomes an emergency. The [988 Suicide & Crisis](#) Lifeline connects people to trained counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Whether you are experiencing emotional distress, concerned about someone else, or simply need support navigating a difficult moment, help is available.

This year, we encourage Marylanders to save 988 in their phones, share it with someone they care about, and use the day as an opportunity to start conversations about mental health, hope, and reaching out early. If you would like to help spread the word about 988, navigate to our Digital Materials section for social media posts to share on your platforms. We hope you will join us in saving lives across Maryland.

### Connecting to Hope Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Toolkit

You can download, read, and share the updated “Connecting to Hope” Suicide Prevention Awareness Toolkit ([bit.ly/ConnectingtoHope](https://bit.ly/ConnectingtoHope)).

Included in the toolkit are resources and media templates that can be shared widely, such as:

- Warning Signs of Suicide
- Risk Factors for Suicide
- Protective Factors for Suicide
- Lethal Means Safety
- Navigating the Behavioral Health System



### Engage with Suicide Prevention Efforts Across Maryland

- Start a conversation about mental health with someone
- Download and read the [Maryland Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in K–12 Schools](#)
- Visit [SAMHSA’s 988 Day Website](#)
- Wear Yellow on September 10th, World Suicide Prevention Day
- Join a Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Walk [health.maryland.gov/suicideprevention](https://health.maryland.gov/suicideprevention)
- Download the Suicide Prevention Month digital materials, including backgrounds, stickers, and social media posts, to help share messages of hope. You can find these resources in the “Digital Materials” section of the Connecting to Hope toolkit, on our [home page](#), [linktr.ee/mdhsuicideprevention](https://linktr.ee/mdhsuicideprevention), or [Dropbox](#). If you have issues downloading these assets, please [email our office](#).
- Sign up for our monthly newsletter [bit.ly/BHAScoop](https://bit.ly/BHAScoop)

Follow us on social media!



@mdhsuicideprev



@mdhsuicideprev



@mdhsuicideprev

Use #ConnectingtoHope in your posts to be part of the campaign!

For information about suicide prevention resources, conferences, training, and events, please sign up for our [newsletter](#), visit [linktr.ee/mdhsuicideprevention](https://linktr.ee/mdhsuicideprevention) or email your questions to [mdh.suicideprevention@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.suicideprevention@maryland.gov). Together, we can prevent suicide!