

Implementing Statewide Suicide Prevention Programs for Youth in Alaska

Sheli Delaney

AK GLS

Statewide Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator
State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health

Alaska 988 Implementation Coalition Meeting



Presented by:

Sheli C. DeLaney, M.A.
Statewide Suicide Prevention
Program Coordinator

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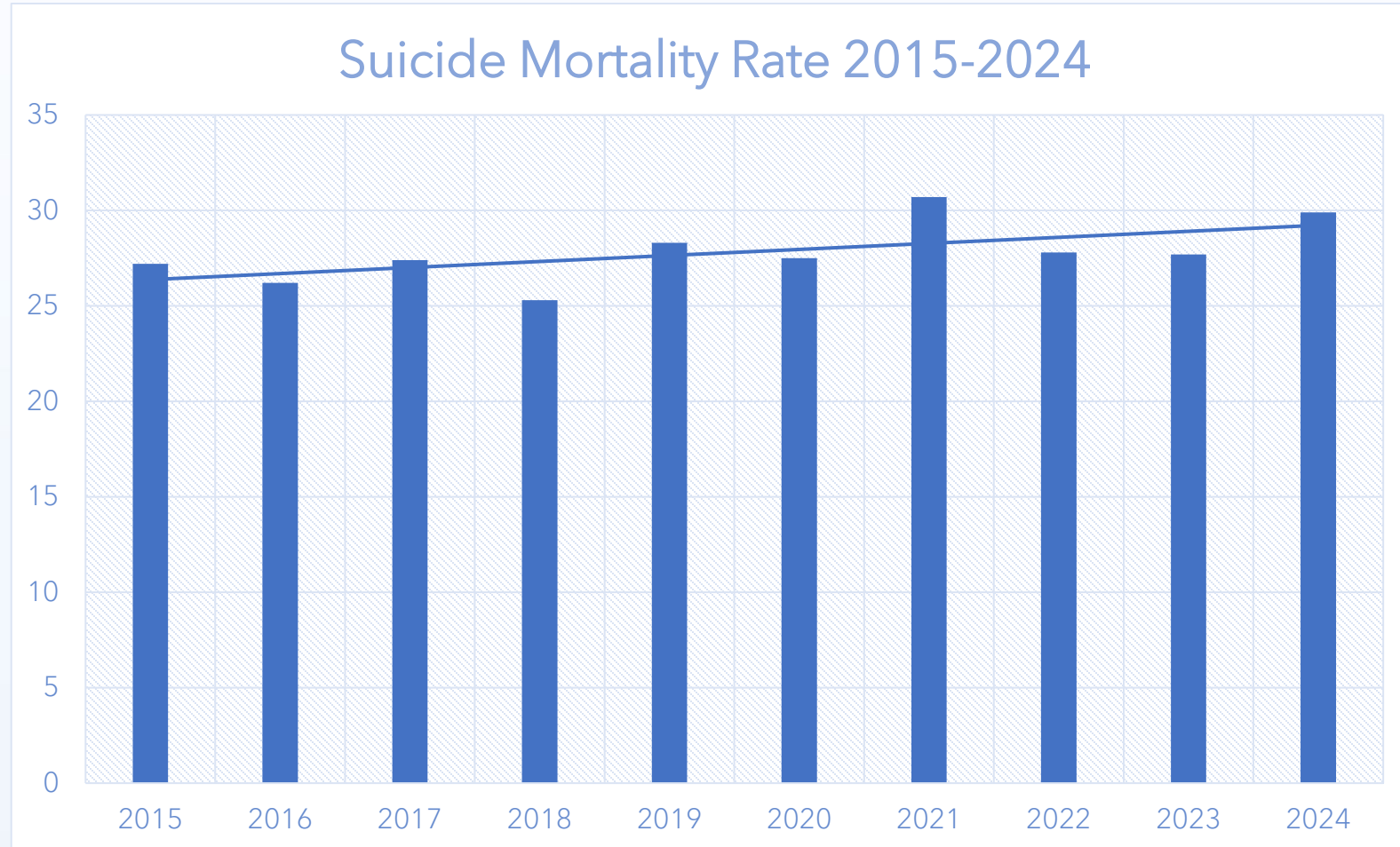
PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Suicide data in Alaska
- Youth Suicide in Alaska
- New messaging campaign
- Alaska Suicide Risk Surveillance
- Zero Suicide implementation at YKHC
- Suicide Prevention Trainings

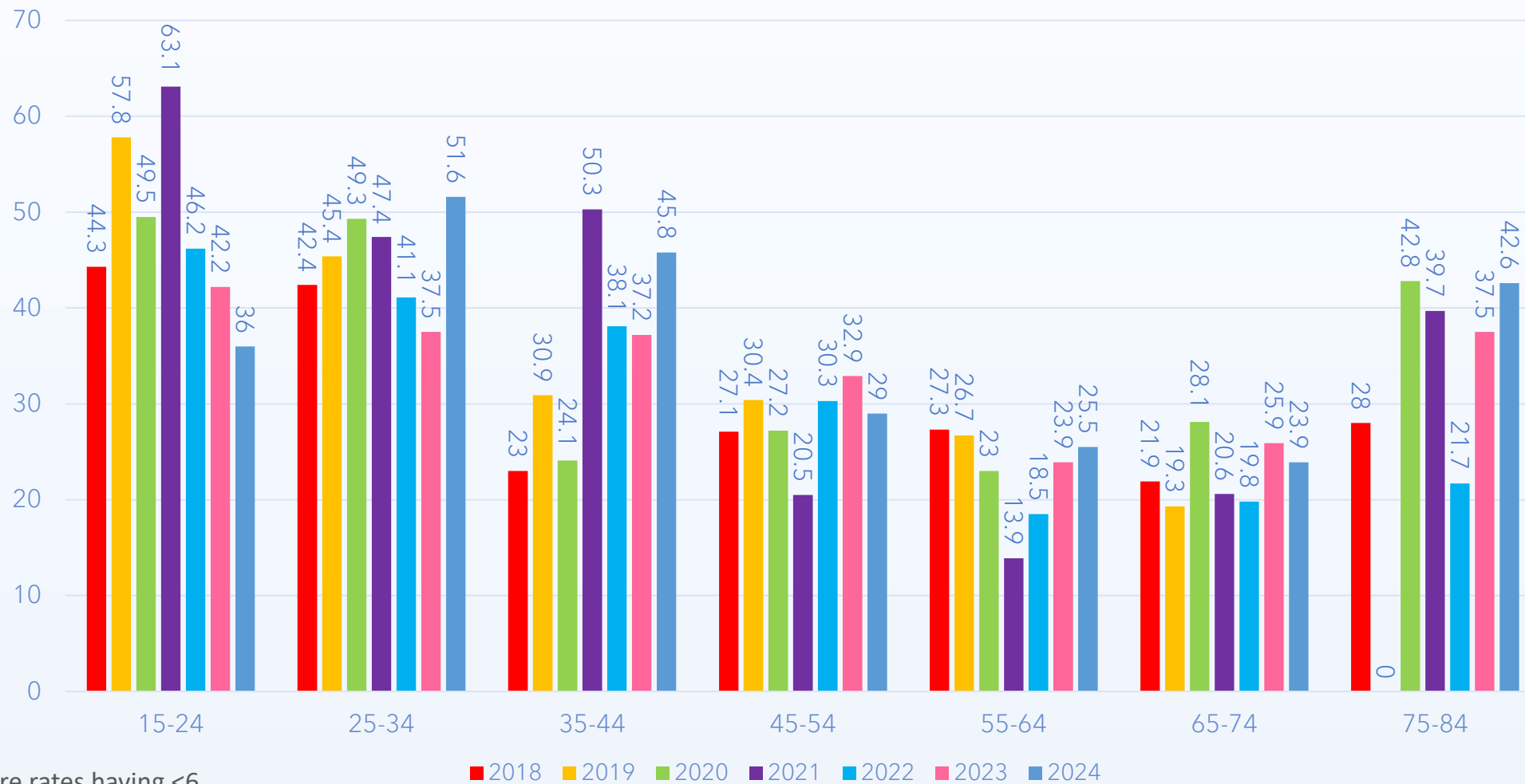


Year	Rate
2015	27.2
2016	26.2
2017	27.4
2018	25.3
2019	28.3
2020	27.5
2021	30.7
2022	27.8
2023	27.7
2024	29.9

2015-2024
Alaska Rate:
28.8



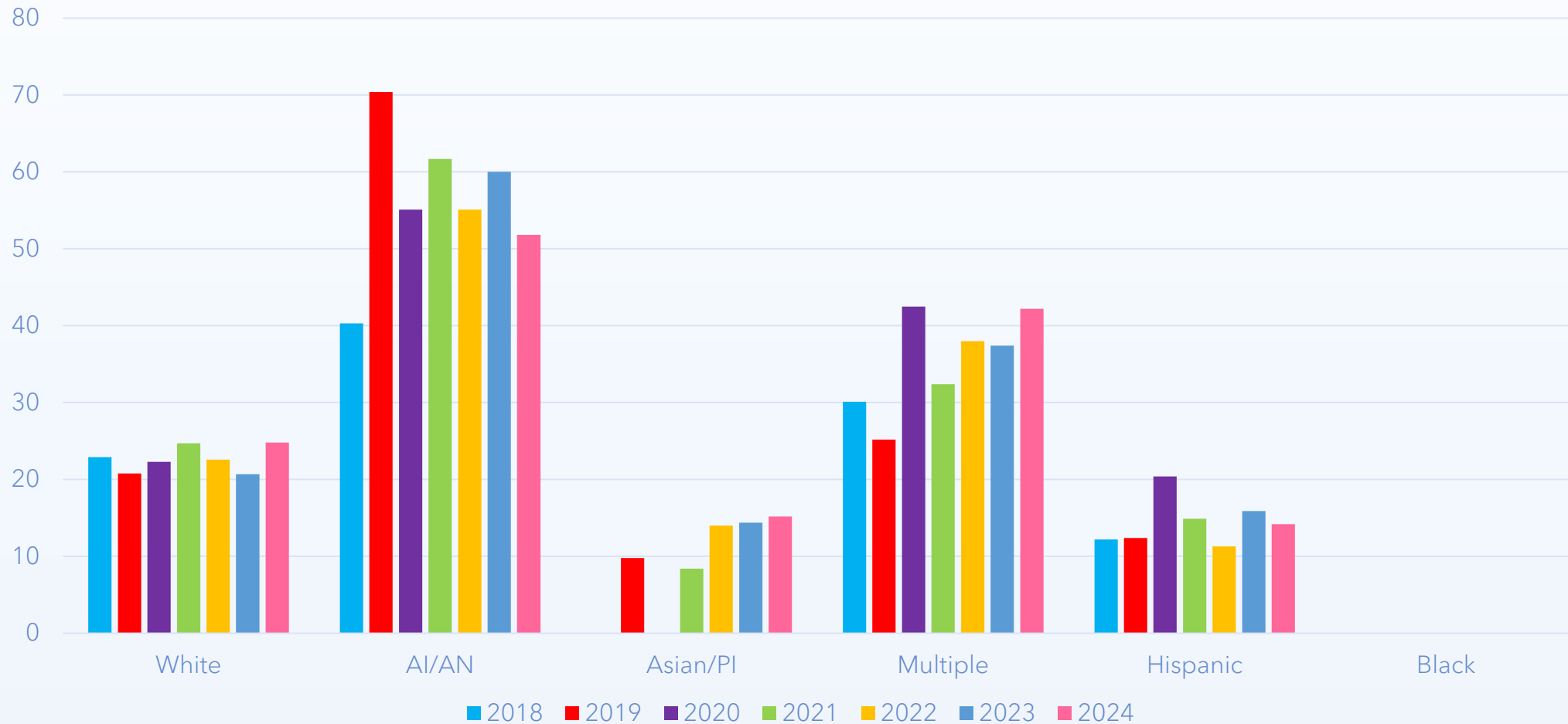
Crude Suicide Death Rate by Age Group (2018-2024)



*Missing values are rates having <6 events, which are not reported.
Crude death rates are per 100,000.
Age categories shown may impact suicide death rates.
Data from Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records 2024 report.



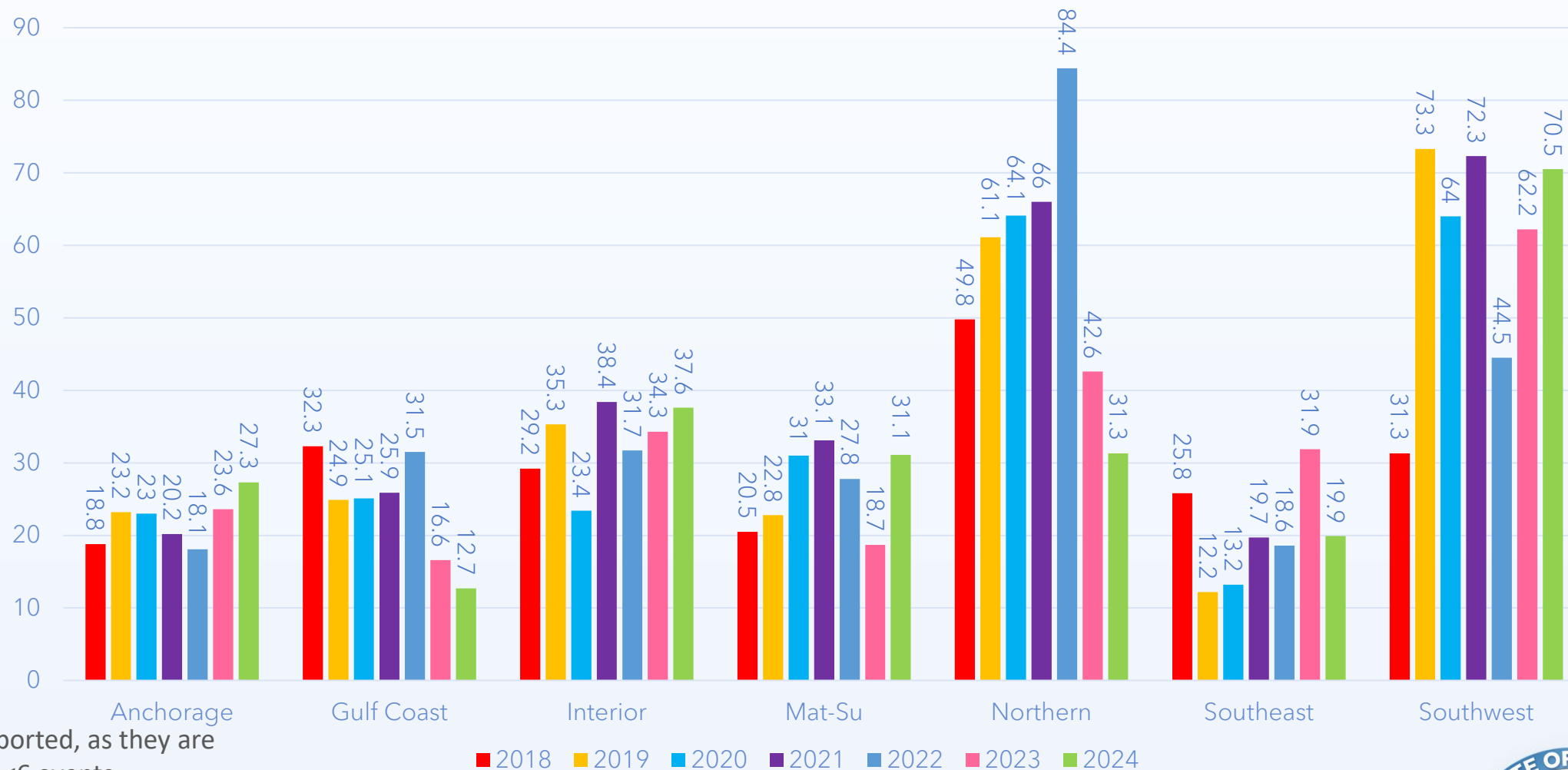
Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate by Race/Ethnicity (2018-2024)



*Missing values are rates having <6 events, which are not reported.
Data table on next slide.
All rates are events per 100,000, adjusted by year 2000 U.S. population level
Data from Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records 2024 report.



Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate by Alaska Residence (2018-2024)



NR = Not Reported, as they are rates having <6 events.

All rates are events per 100,000, adjusted by year 2000 U.S. population level

Data from Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records 2024 report.



Alaska Native Health System

Facts

229 Federally Recognized Tribes (Villages)

SCF:

Primary care services in Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Valley and the Anchorage Service Unit

ANHB:

Statewide health advocate voice

ANTHC:

Statewide specialty and tertiary health care



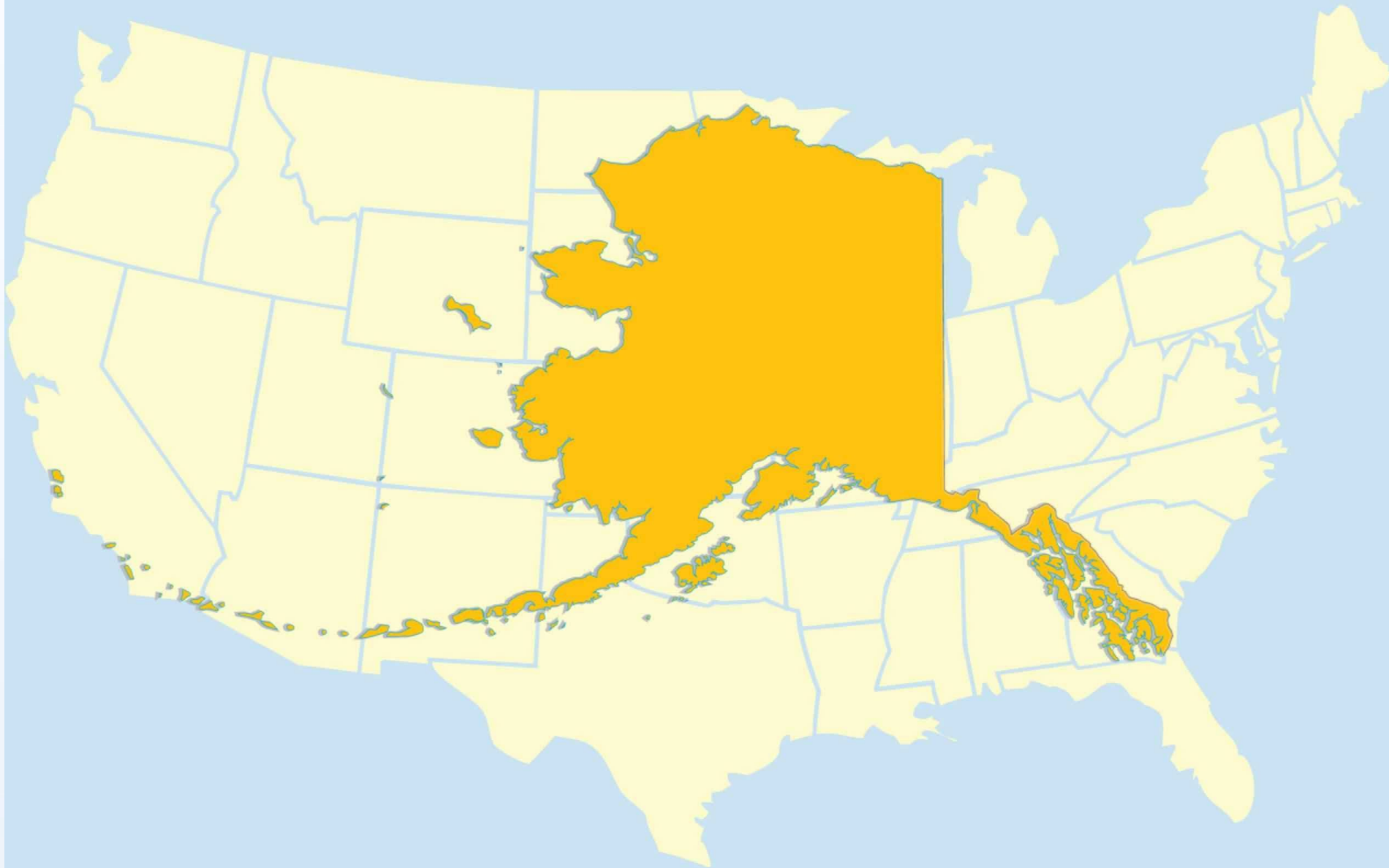
Regional Native Corporations

- Arctic Slope Regional Corp.
- NANA Regional Corp.
- Bering Straits Native Corp.
- Doyon Ltd.
- Calista Corp.
- CIRI
- Sealaska Corp.
- Ahtna Inc.
- The Aleut Corp.
- Bristol Bay Native Corp.
- Koniag Inc.
- Chugach Alaska Corp.

Key

- ★ SCF Services Hub
 - ★ Regional Health Hub
 - Southcentral Foundation/ Anchorage Service Unit
- Also serves Native Village of Eklutna, Ninilchik Village Traditional Council, Seldovia Village Tribe, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, Knik Tribal Council, and Native Village of Tyonek.
 - ANMC jointly owned and managed by SCF and ANTHC.





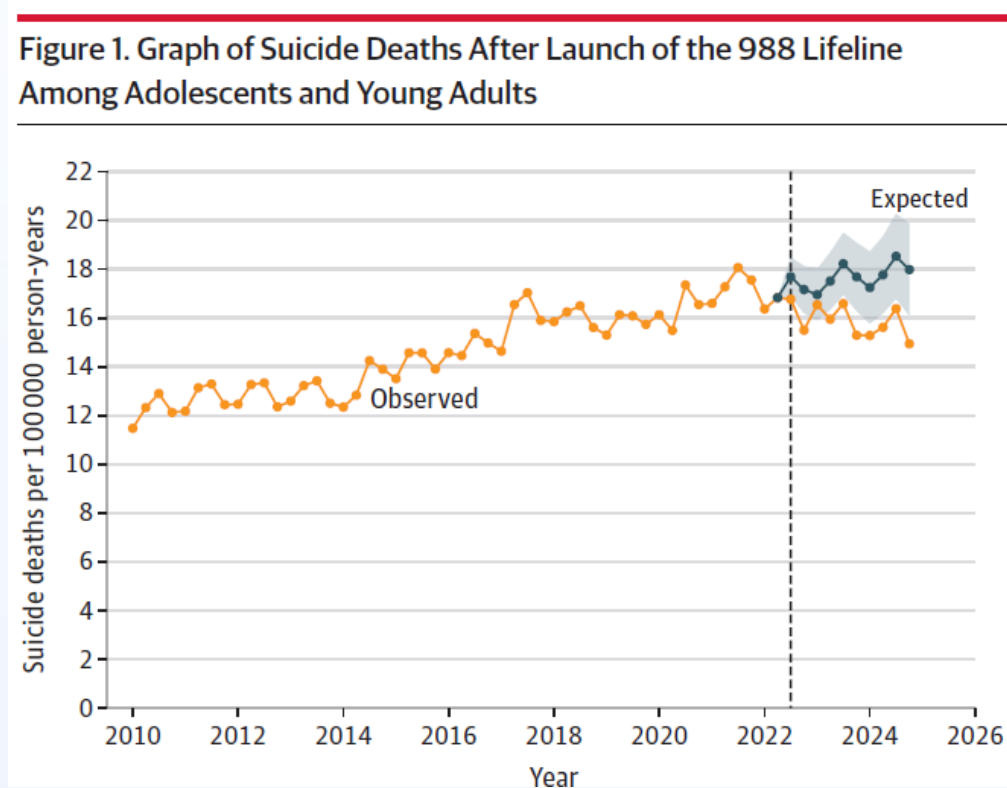
YOUTH SUICIDE IN ALASKA

- The rate of youth (ages 11-19) suicide doubled in 2025 for Alaska
- Epi bulletin forthcoming in August 2026
- SOA Epidemiology to release new dashboard
- DBH suicide prevention will provide recommendations based on input from the public and partners



SUICIDE MORTALITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS AFTER LAUNCH OF A SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE

The researchers found that among individuals aged 15 to 34 years, from July 2022 through December 2024, nationwide observed suicide mortality was lower than expected based on pre-988 Lifeline trends.

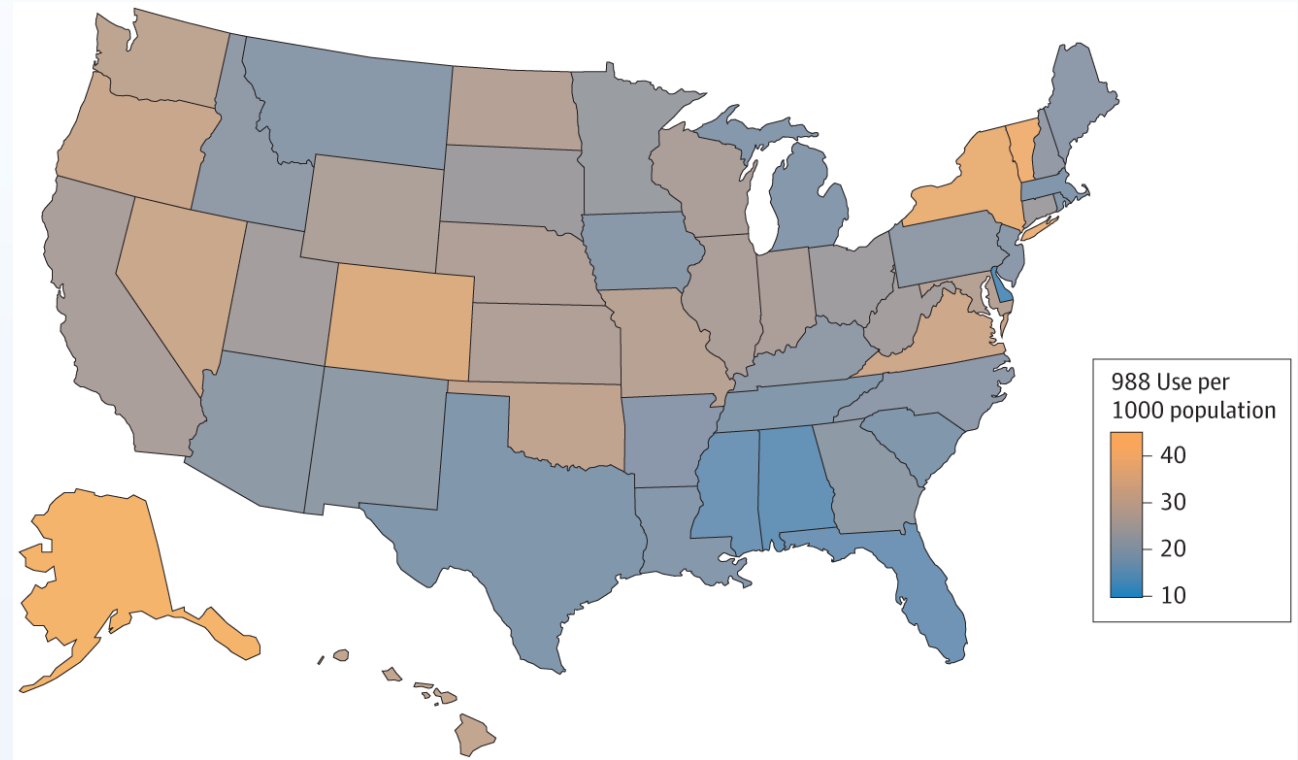


Patel VR, Liu M, Jena AB, et al. Suicide mortality among adolescents and young adults after launch of a suicide and crisis lifeline. JAMA. Published April 22, 2026. doi:10.1001/jama.2026.5157.



USE OF THE 988 SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND STATE LEVELS

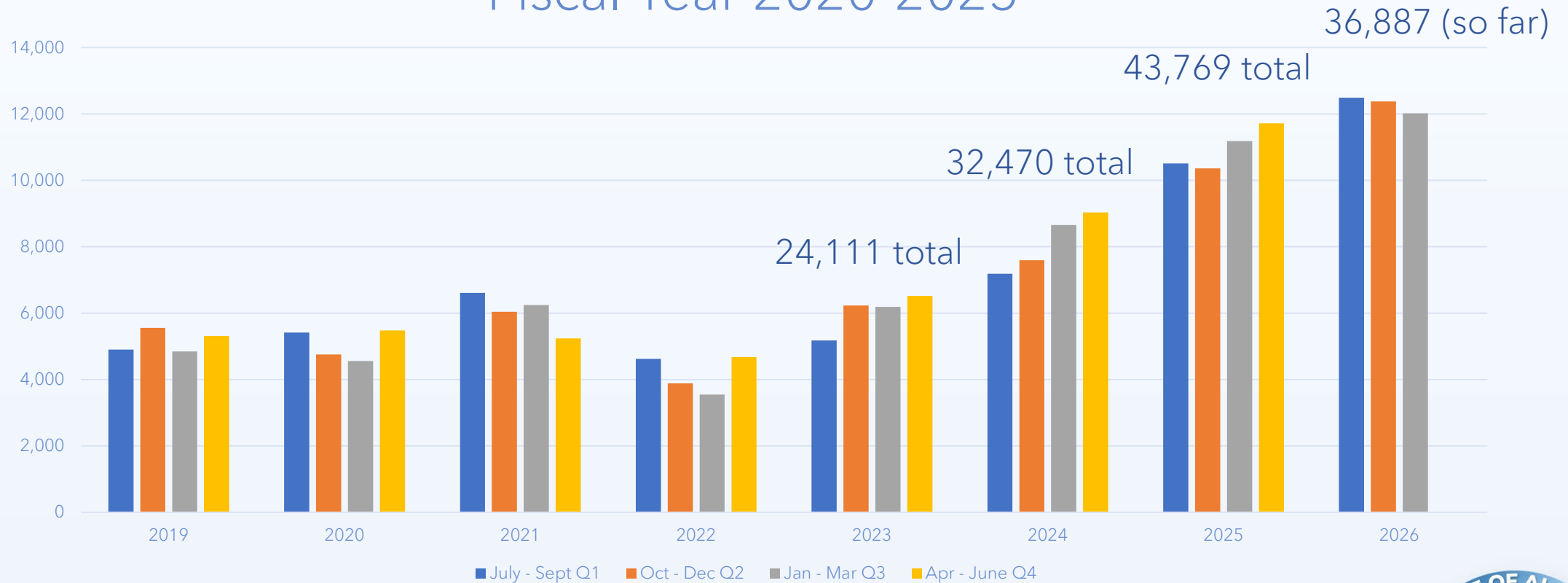
"At the state-level, past-year 988 contact incidence rates ranged from highs of 45.3 and 40.2 per 1000 population in Alaska and Vermont, respectively."



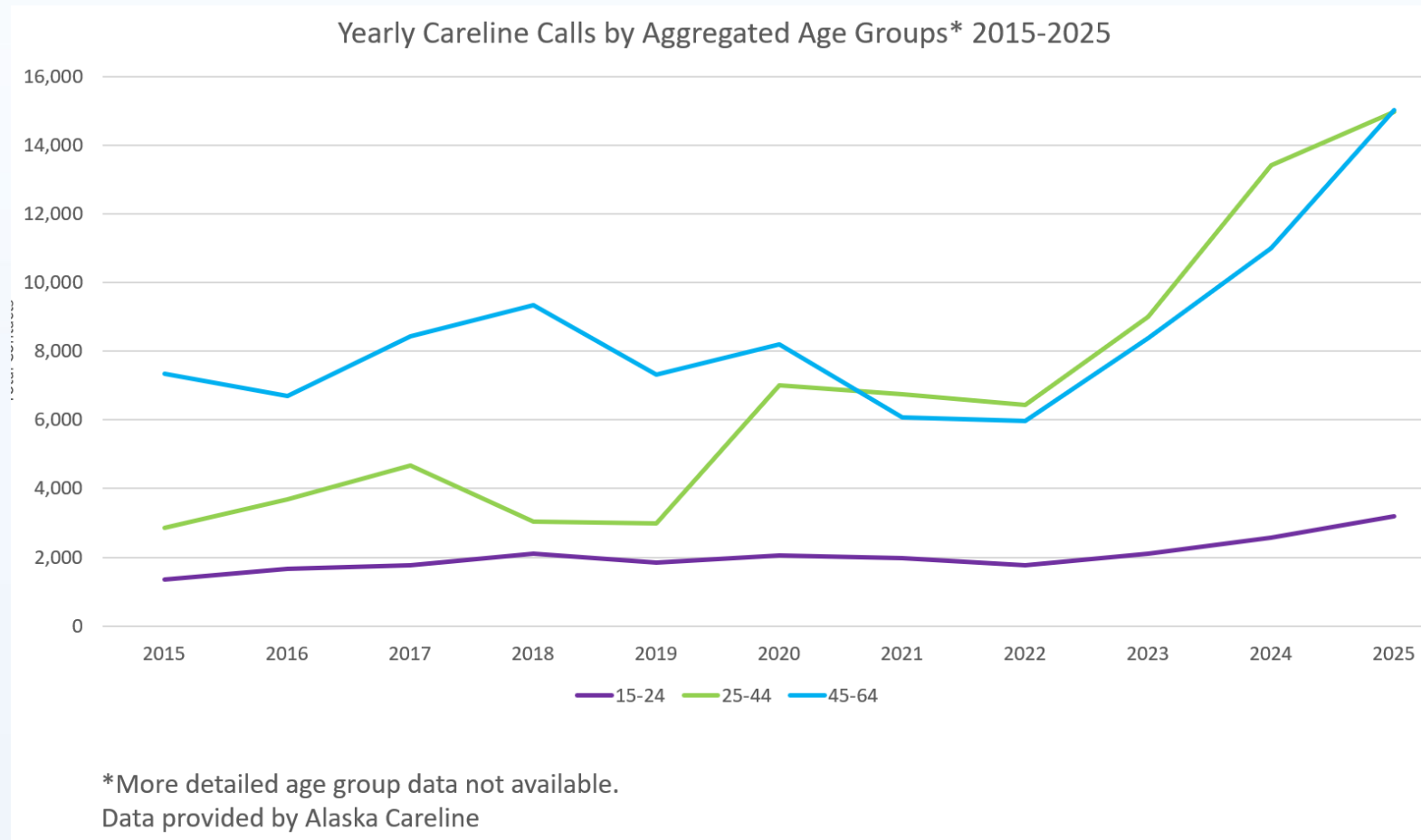
Purtle J, Mauri AI, Bandara S, Stuart EA. Use of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at National, Regional, and State Levels. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(6):e2514323. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.14323



Total Contacts to Alaska Careline (includes 988) Fiscal Year 2020-2025



CALLS TO CARELINE BY AGE GROUPS



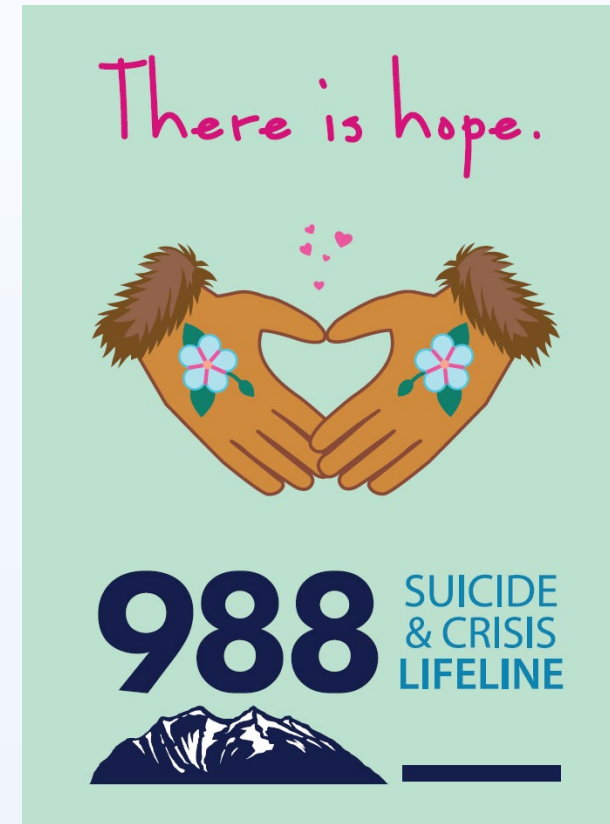
ALASKA SUICIDE DATA SUMMARY

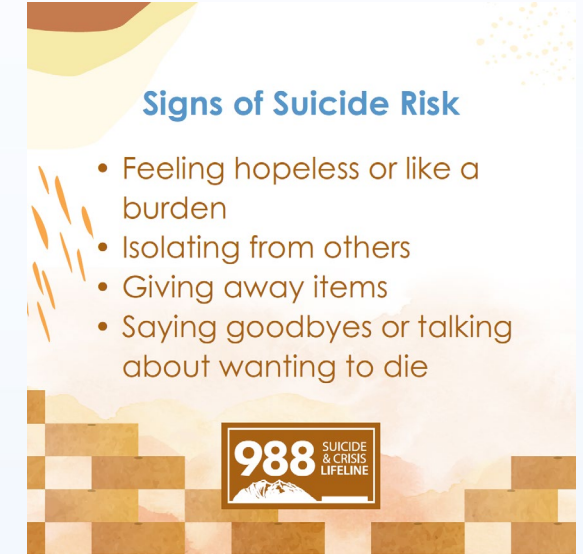
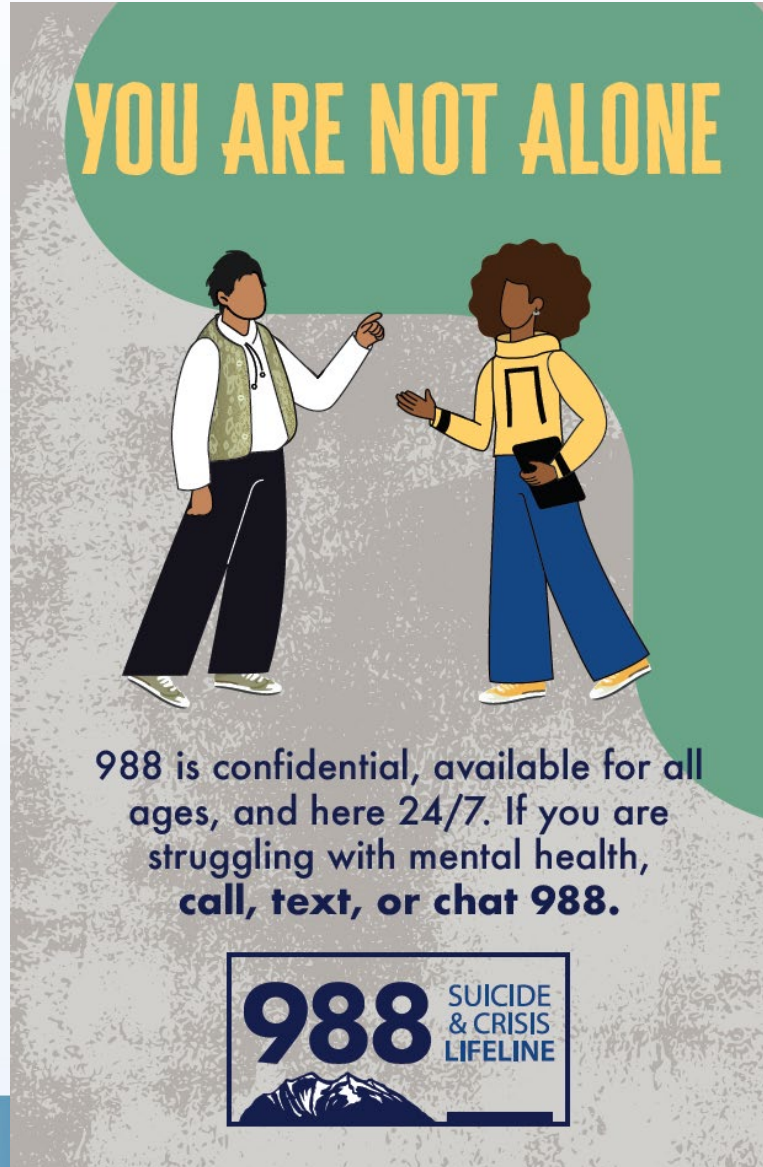
- Ages 15-24 have highest rates of death by suicide
 - Data for children under 15 is too low to report
 - 2024 had lowest rates since 2018
 - Ages 25-34 is second highest, rates increased to highest since 2018 in 2024
- Attempt data:
 - Ages 15-19 have highest rates of hospitalization for attempts
 - Ages 11-14 is second highest
 - Ages 20-24 is third highest
- Men's suicide mortality rates are 3.5+ higher than women's; women attempt at higher rates
- People who identify as AI/AN and Multiple race have highest rates of suicide death compared to other races
- Alaska has highest suicide rates by residence in the Northern, Southwest, and Interior regions
- Lethal means: firearms are number 1 cause of suicide death
- Under 25 – not using 988/crisis line services compared to other ages



MESSAGING PROJECT WITH FUTURE ELDER

- One year project: August 2025-August 2026
- Develop customized 988 messaging
- Focus on youth, Alaska Native, and rural populations
- Multi-media: print, digital, video on social media, streaming, community events, and more
- Funded by NASMHPD (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors)







Yukon-Kuskokwim HEALTH CORPORATION

YKHC: ALASKA'S FIRST ZERO SUICIDE PILOT SITE

- Three-year project (August 2025-August 2028)
- Hire and/or assign staff to form Zero Suicide Team
- Attending trainings, such as Zero Suicide Academy
- Providing support and resources to surrounding villages
- Enhance ability for universal screening, warm transitions, data collection, and care coordination



ZERO SUICIDE RESULTS AT YKHC, Q1

- Q1: The Beginning
 - Zero Suicide Steering Council is established
 - Universal screening in emergency services is introduced, no data on screenings reported
 - Suicide attempts: baseline number established
 - Suicide deaths: baseline number established
 - Staff training efforts get started



ZERO SUICIDE RESULTS AT YKHC, Q2

- Q2: Things start moving
 - 224 patients are screened using evidence-based suicide risk screening tool
 - 135 patients assessed, 71 referred to follow-up care
 - Suicide attempts: at baseline
 - **Suicide deaths: down 17%**
 - 16 staff completed recommended suicide prevention trainings, 13 are enrolled



ZERO SUICIDE RESULTS AT YKHC, Q3

- Q3: Momentum is building
 - 264 patients are screened using evidence-based suicide risk screening tool
 - 189 patients assessed, 99 referred to follow-up care
 - **Suicide attempts: down 38%**
 - **Suicide deaths: down 67%**
 - 15 staff completed recommended suicide prevention trainings, 6 are enrolled



FREE SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAININGS

- UAA Center for Human Development
 - CAMS and CAMS4Teens (Collaboration and Management of Suicidality)
 - CBT-SP (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention)
 - Be Sensitive, Be Brave
- Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) for direct staff providing inpatient and outpatient care
- Lethal Means Safety: PC CARES training about hold conversations with parents about lethal means reduction
- The Connect Program
 - In person, on site suicide prevention, postvention, and youth leadership trainings available for FY26
 - [eLearning](#) for healthcare providers, mental healthcare providers, school staff, and community members



SAFE HOMES CAPACITY BUILDER

OVERALL GOAL:

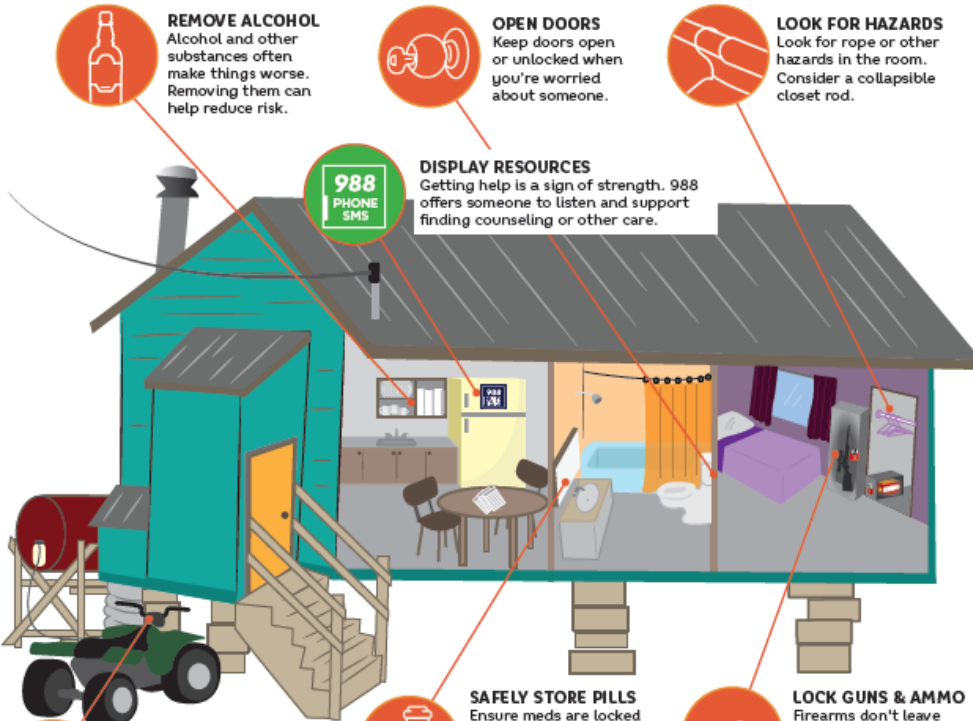
Participants are qualified to have 1:1 conversations with a concerned parent AND to share the information with their colleagues to have similar conversations



10 minutes can save a life!
Give someone who is dealing with suicidal thoughts a few more minutes to get the help they need.

What simple changes could make *your* home safer?

Prevent suicide by making it harder for someone to find a loaded gun, pills, alcohol, or car keys. Put harmful items out of reach and out of sight.



- REMOVE ALCOHOL**
Alcohol and other substances often make things worse. Removing them can help reduce risk.
- OPEN DOORS**
Keep doors open or unlocked when you're worried about someone.
- LOOK FOR HAZARDS**
Look for rope or other hazards in the room. Consider a collapsible closet rod.
- 988 PHONE SMS**
DISPLAY RESOURCES
Getting help is a sign of strength. 988 offers someone to listen and support finding counseling or other care.
- TAKE KEYS AWAY**
Take keys away from anyone who has been drinking. Don't let them drive... anything.
- SAFELY STORE PILLS**
Ensure meds are locked or hidden and only used as prescribed. Dispose of unneeded pills. Medications are the most common method used by teens who attempt suicide.
- LOCK GUNS & AMMO**
Firearms don't leave time for second thoughts in a down or impulsive moment. Lock and unload guns to keep your family safe.

If you or someone around you needs support, call or text the Alaska Careline at 988.



DBH SUICIDE PREVENTION IN UTQIAGVIK

- North Slope Borough Health Department Integrated Behavioral Health hosted
- Connect Training program conducted April 21-22
- Community planning April 23
- Met with IBH, Samuel Simmonds Hospital Staff, and Utqiagvik Police Department



ALASKA
**Suicide
Prevention**
CONFERENCE

April 22-23, 2026
Virtual Event

*“Excellent...the
content was both
highly relevant and
resourceful”*

Jennifer Bornemann
Administration for Strategic
Preparedness and Response,
US Department of Health and
Human Services



OUR TEAM

- Sheli DeLaney, Suicide Prevention Team Lead:
Sheli.Delaney@alaska.gov
- Anneliese Hudson, 988 Program Coordinator:
Anneliese.Hudson@alaska.gov
- Lanisha Wuitschick, GLS Project Assistant:
Lanisha.Wuitschick@alaska.gov
- Eric Morrison, Statewide Suicide Prevention Council
Program Coordinator:
Eric.Morrison@alaska.gov



Thank you!





BREAKING WAVES:

NAVIGATING LIFE'S JOURNEY

Felicia Nichols, Suicide Prevention Coordinator

This presentation was developed under a grant number 6 H79 SM086152 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)) grant number BH16IHS0148-03-02. The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA, HHS or IHS.



The Breaking Waves program is for youth ages 12 - 24 years old and offers skills to navigate life's journey safely without being pulled off course by alcohol and substances, by creating an environment that encourages involvement in tribal culture, traditions, and values. This program is intended to help prevent substance use and suicide while empowering individuals to cope effectively with life challenges through connection. Activities include recreation outdoor and adventure-related outings, culturally inspired projects, kayaking intensive with beginner kayak skills, Elder & Youth Gathering and more!

hasxu̕



Igyax



Traditional stories, tribal history, significant current events, cultural activities and language are woven throughout each chapter to help develop skills, values, beliefs and practices in a meaningful and relevant manner. Guest speakers from the community may be invited as valuable resources for enriching each chapter with personalized expertise and knowledge as well as mentorships and promotion of positive relationships within the tribe and Alaskan communities.

ABOUT THE CURRICULUM



- Chapter 1 The Importance of Tradition and History
- Chapter 2 Who I Am: Beginning at the Center
- Chapter 3 How Am I Perceived? Media Awareness and Literacy
- Chapter 4 Community Help and Support: Help on the Journey
- Chapter 5 Moods and Coping with Negative Emotions
- Halftime Break
- Chapter 6 Staying Safe: Suicide Prevention
- Chapter 7 How Can I Help? Suicide Intervention
- Chapter 8 Who will I Become? Goal Setting
- Chapter 9 Overcoming Obstacles: Solving Problems
- Chapter 10 Listening: Life Skill
- Chapter 11 Effective Communication: Expressing Thoughts and Feelings
- Chapter 12 Safe Journey without Alcohol and Drugs
- Chapter 13 Strengthening Our Community
- Chapter 14 Honoring Ceremony

CURRICULUM EXAMPLE



Chapter 1: The Importance of Tradition and History Overview

Title: [The Importance of Tradition and History](#)

Time: 120 minutes

The goals of this chapter

...are to introduce and discuss the history of the Unangaꣳ people, a traditional Unangaꣳ concept used to frame daily life and teach life skills, and a schedule set by nature that the Unangaꣳ peoples livelihood revolved around.

Unangaꣳ Value:

Wan [alaꣳum](#) ilan anaꣳim anꣳaꣳinangin usuu Aguugꣳuꣳ agach ngiin aꣳiqaa. E / Algas ama anaꣳim anꣳaꣳingis huzungis Aguugꣳum agacha ngiin aꣳiqaa haqataasada. W/ Respect and be aware of the Creator in all living things.

Metaphor: Four Seasons

Participants will:

- Learn how the Iqyaꣳ and Uluꣳtaꣳ can be used as a metaphor for life's journey.
- Learn the concept of respecting our waters and how Unangaꣳ ways of living are shaped by the water.

Guest speaker(s):

Activity Outline	Core Content Components	Instructional Method	Timing
Welcome and Group Agreements	· Welcome participants · Group Agreements + Mandatory Reporting	Minilecture Whole Group Activity	5 minutes 10 minutes
Introducing Activity Concepts	· Intro to Curriculum · Reawakening of our culture · Building Husituꣳ	Minilecture Brainstorm Building Husituꣳ	10 minutes 15 minutes 20 minutes
Metaphor	· Four Seasons	Brainstorm/Minilecture	15 minutes
Substances Use	· Substance Use Highlight-Alcohol	Minilecture and Group Discussion	10 minutes

COLLABORATION & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The curriculum was developed in close collaboration with community partners to ensure it aligns with the needs of the target population and community. We prioritize flexibility in both content and delivery, allowing us to tailor the program to meet each client's unique goals, context, and capacity. This adaptive approach ensures relevance, accessibility, and measurable impact.



MEET THE TEAM



*Wellness Project
Coordinator*
Felicia Nichols, PSIII

I'm Felicia, originally from Unalaska, spawned and raised. I have a lifelong passion for recreation, and with 16 years in recovery, I've dedicated much of my life to helping others reconnect with activities they love as a pathway to wellness, prevention, and recovery.



*Training & Outreach
Specialist*
Mona Paukan

Mona is from St. Marys, Alaska and brings a wealth of experience working with students, families, and communities, along with a strong passion for supporting youth and community wellness.



*Community Wellness
Coach*
Kayla Lopez

I've lived in Unalaska most of my life and I love spending time outdoors. I can often be found hiking, camping, fishing, running, and berry picking with my dogs. I am excited to be working with APIA as part of the Breaking Waves team. Being involved in a program that supports youth wellness, cultural connection, and community resilience means a great deal to me, and I am looking forward to continuing to grow, learn, and serve our region through this work.



*Community Health Services
Administrator*
Sarah Dushkin, MBA

I was born and raised in the small island village of Sand Point, Alaska, where both of my parents are from. Growing up in this tight-knit community, I spent my summers working alongside my family and neighbors as a commercial salmon fisherman. This experience taught me the values of hard work, perseverance, and collaboration, while also instilling a deep respect for the natural environment and the traditions of my community. My upbringing in Sand Point has shaped not only who I am but also my desire to contribute to communities larger than my own.



COLLABORATION TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Our team is trained in a range of evidence-based substance use and suicide prevention curricula, which we offer to both staff and clients. As your community partner, we provide these trainings at no cost, and they can be delivered on-site at your offices, at APIA facilities, or virtually, depending on your preference.

The trainings we currently offer include:



- **LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** is a two-day in-person workshop where you'll learn how to recognize when someone may be thinking about suicide, and how to provide a skilled intervention and develop a safety plan with the person to connect them to further support.
- **LivingWorks safeTALK** is a four-hour in-person workshop where you'll learn how to be more alert to someone thinking of suicide, how to reach out to them, and how to help them keep safe by promptly connecting them to further support.
- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)** is an interactive course for professionals responsible for the care and safety of consumers at elevated risk for suicidal behaviors in all settings and across the age span.
- **Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)** is a powerful addition to existing strategies to reduce the risk of suicide death in at-risk people while respecting their rights and autonomy.
- **Mental Health First Aid Youth and Adult** is an evidence-based, early-intervention course that teaches participants about mental health and substance use challenges.
- **Prime For Life®** provides a judgment-free way of understanding how alcohol and drug-related problems develop, what we can do to prevent them, and why sometimes we need help.

OTHER IDEAS AND WAYS TO COLLABORATE



We are looking to connect with community members who have experience or knowledge in recreational or cultural activities. If you know someone within your organization - or the broader community, who might be interested in partnering or contracting with us to support local programs, we would love to hear from you! Our goal is to build vibrant, inclusive activities that reflect and serve our community, and your connections can help make that possible.

Join us in revolutionizing access to suicide
and substance use prevention—because
everyone deserves support, hope,
connection and a path forward.

Q&A?

Thank you!



Qagâasakuq!

Maraming Salamat!

Fairbanks Native Association: Community Synergy



Prevention

In-Service training
Free community
training
Screenings

Intervention

Community based
screenings

Postvention

Post hospitalization
Crisis Planning
Enrollment in appropriate
services

A decorative border at the top of the slide features a brown textured background with intricate floral embroidery in red, blue, and green. A white scalloped line separates this from the dark blue background below.

Thank You!

Taylor Morgan, Program Director
E: tmorgan@fairbanksnative.org