



*\*NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take preventative action. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## Health Advisory: Suicide Risk Among Youth

### Summary

[Thurston County Public Health & Social Services](#) has identified a concerning cluster of youth suicide deaths in recent months among youth ages 12-14. While national trends show rising rates, our local data indicates a concentrated spike that requires immediate clinical and community intervention.

This health advisory is intended to provide best-practice guidance and support for health care and social service providers in promoting safety and well-being across all age groups. We recommend implementing consistent, universal [mental health](#) and [suicide risk screening](#) for adolescents and preteens in your care.

- Periods of transition, such as school breaks, social disruption, or other significant changes, can interrupt routines and reduce access to protective supports outside the home for young people. Additionally, connecting youth with culturally responsive resources can help reduce social isolation and promote healthy identity development.

### Actions Requested

- Implementing consistent, universal mental health and suicide risk screenings for adolescents and preteens in your care.
- Broaden health assessments to include a history of abuse or self-harm and carefully evaluate Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ) responses to better identify potential risk.

#### 1. Assess Risk

- Ask [directly](#) about suicidal ideation/plans/intent, recent stressors, trauma, social isolation, and access to lethal means, including firearms and medications
- Identify protective factors and current supports
- Review and remain familiar with [warning signs](#) of suicide risk
  - Provide additional follow-up for individuals with a history of suicidal ideation or behavior

#### Community Health

412 Lilly Road NE, Olympia, WA 98506-5132  
(360) 867-2500 FAX (833) 914-2743 TTY/WA Relay 711  
[www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss](http://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/phss)

## 2. Determine Level of Care

- **Imminent risk:** Do not leave the patient alone; initiate 911 or ED transfer
- **Moderate risk:** Facilitate same-day crisis connection ([988](#), crisis line, [mobile crisis](#))
- **Lower risk:** Develop a [safety plan](#) and make appropriate and timely referrals to [behavioral health and crisis services](#), with follow-up as indicated

## 3. Connect to Resources

- Offer **warm handoffs** whenever possible (call together, stay present)
- Provide written/texted resources to patient and caregiver
- Encourage connection to supportive individuals and [culturally relevant community resources](#)

## 4. Document & Follow-Up

- Document risk level, actions taken, and referrals
- Arrange follow-up contact when feasible

## Resources

- [Suicide Prevention Training for Providers & Community QPR \(Question, Persuade, Refer\)](#) – Our department offers and supports QPR suicide prevention trainings for both community members and providers. These free trainings equip participants with practical skills to recognize warning signs, engage in supportive conversations, and connect individuals to appropriate care.
  - Learn more: [Mental Health Resources & Suicide Prevention | Thurston County](#)
- **Immediate Crisis Response (24/7)** - For patients/clients at imminent risk or requiring urgent support:
  - [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
    - Call or text: **988** | Chat via 988lifeline.org
    - 24/7, free, confidential; supports call warm handoffs when appropriate
  - [Crisis Clinic of Thurston & Mason Counties](#)
    - 360-586-2800 (24/7 regional crisis line)
  - Emergency Response
    - Call **911** or direct to the nearest Emergency Department if immediate safety concerns are present
- **Regional Behavioral Health & Crisis Services** - For crisis stabilization, assessment, and ongoing behavioral health care:
  - [Thurston Mason Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization](#) (TMBH-ASO)

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- Coordinates regional crisis services, mobile crisis response, and involuntary treatment evaluations
  - [South Sound Behavioral Hospital](#)
    - Inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services (youth and adult)
  - [Community Youth Services](#) (CYS)
    - Outpatient behavioral health, crisis services, and family support for youth
- **Youth-Specific Crisis & Peer Support** - For adolescents and young adults needing additional support pathways:
  - [Teen Link](#) (WA State)
    - Call: 1-866-833-6546 | Text: “TEENLINK” to 866-833-6546
    - Peer support line for youth
  - [HearMeWA](#)
    - Call: 888-537-1634 | Text: “HEARMEWA” to 738477
    - Free peer support line for youth and young adults in WA
- **LGBTQ+ Affirming Crisis & Support Services** - For identity-affirming, culturally responsive care:
  - [The Trevor Project](#) (24/7)
    - Call: 1-866-488-7386 | Text: “START” to 678678
  - [Trans Lifeline](#)
    - Call: 1-877-565-8860 (peer support, trans-led)
  - [Stonewall Youth](#) (Olympia)
    - Local peer support groups and youth programming
  - [Pizza Klatch](#)
    - School- and community-based LGBTQ+ youth support groups

**All Thurston County Health Advisories are posted online at:**

[www.thurstoncountywa.gov/health-advisories](http://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/health-advisories)

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